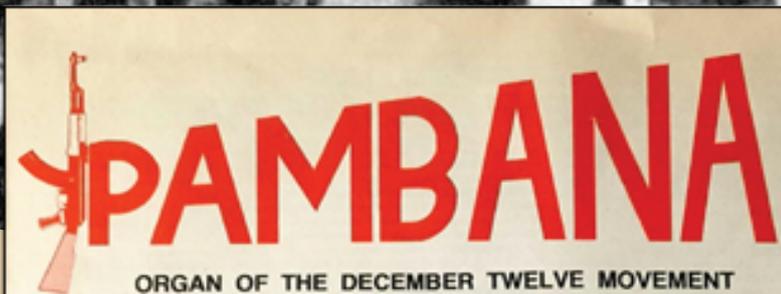
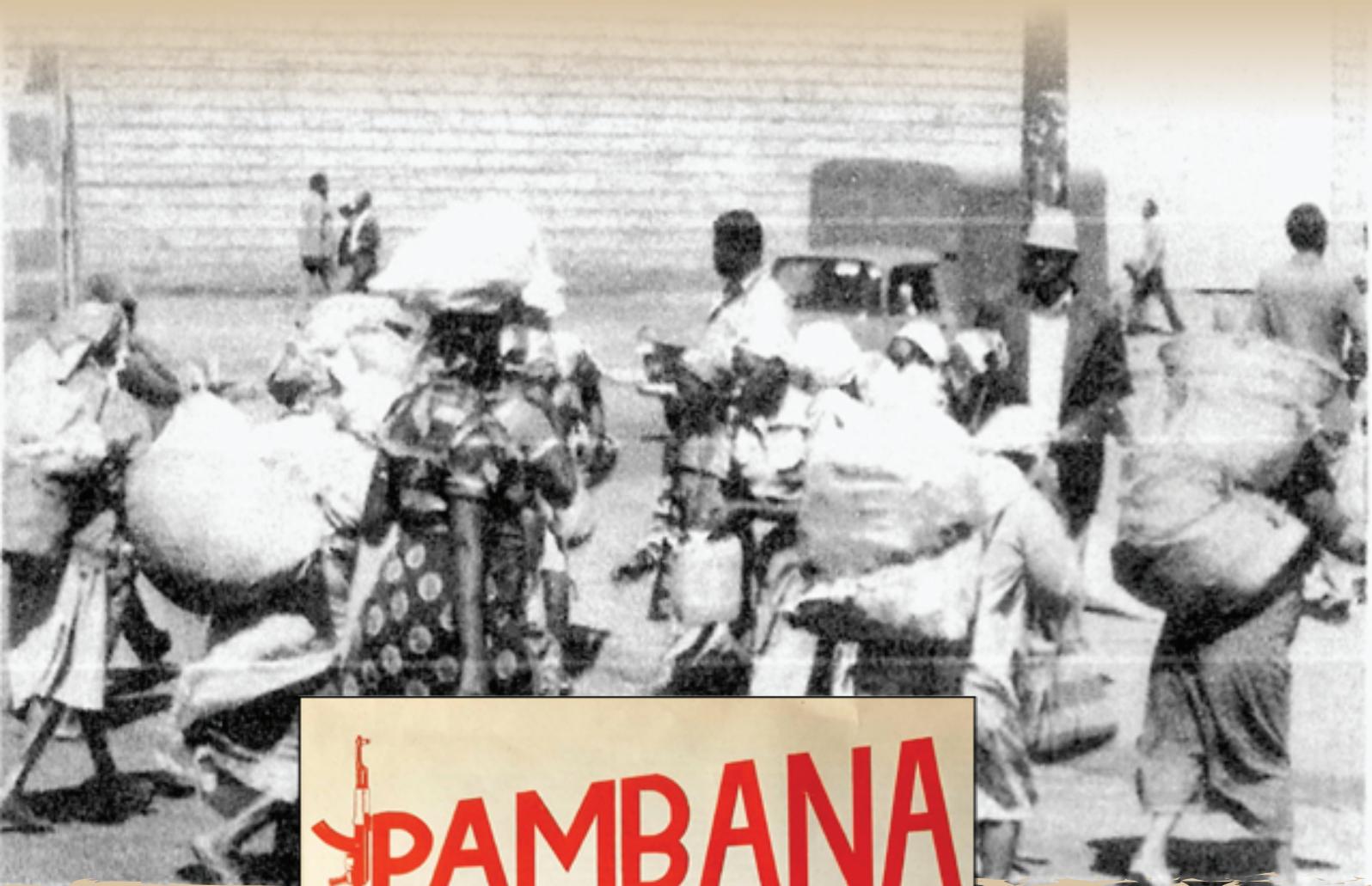


No.5 2022

# The Kenya

## SOCIALIST



## DECEMBER TWELVE MOVEMENT'S LESSONS FROM THE UNDERGROUND

Is Women's Household Labour a Form of Exploitation?  
Uhuru na Ukoloni Mamboleo



*Never Be Silent Simama Imara*

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- Promote socialist ideas, experiences and world outlook
- Increase awareness of classes, class contradictions and class struggles in Kenya, both historical and current
- Expose the damage done by capitalism and imperialism in Kenya and Africa
- Offer solidarity to working class, peasants and other working people and communities in their struggles for equality and justice
- Promote internationalism and work in solidarity with people in Africa and around the world in their resistance to imperialism
- Make explicit the politics of information and communication as tools of repression and also of resistance in Kenya

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# Editorial: The World is Changing; will Kenya Follow Suit?

The world is changing. Or is it? Vladimir Putin sees ‘truly revolutionary, tectonic changes in geopolitics, the global economy, in the technological sphere, in the entire system of international relations’ [which are] ‘fundamental, pivotal and inexorable’.<sup>1</sup> And yet, imperialism is still destroying people, their countries, their cultures and their livelihoods with increased vigour. Are these the last kicks of a dying horse, or normal imperialism at work: doing what it does best — kill, maim and loot resources?

Marco Fernandes,<sup>2</sup> quoting the United Nations, says that there are 800 million undernourished people in the world today and that 250 million have lost their jobs during the pandemic. The underlying cause of such poverty and suffering is capitalism and imperialism -- the elephants in the room.

Tectonic changes are not always obvious while they are taking place. Empires disintegrate and disappear, but gradually, not all of a sudden like a bursting balloon. Their disappearance becomes obvious much after their death. Decades after the end of the British Empire, many still have the mindset that refuses to absorb the reality of the end of empire. Is the USA Empire going the same way? Are we seeing the beginning of the last days of this superpower? There are many signs of the endgame, but only time will tell.

Marco Fernandes also shows a number of changes that are taking place on the ground. The first is the growth of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), ‘one of the most important initiatives in the world’, in political and economic terms. China is now the largest economy in the world in terms of GDP and PPP (Purchasing Power Parity). Other BRICS countries are also fast catching up: India is the third largest economy, Russia the sixth and Brazil the eighth.

As the European Union expands and NATO goes global, BRICS is set to expand, too, possibly with the addition of Iran and Argentina in the initial phase. At the same time, many Latin American countries are rejecting USA-imposed governments and forming a ‘new wave of progressive governments’ (Fernandes). These include Colombia, Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico, Chile and Peru, with the possibility of Brazil joining

them later in the year. That in itself shows a turning of the tide against imperialism.

A glance at the map of Latin America<sup>3</sup> shows what a big difference the changes in these countries have made — USA losing power over a large part of its ‘backyard’, with Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua already challenging USA control.



Credit: Pinterest <https://www.pinterest.com.au/pin/275564070941490478/>

The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are important tools of control Western imperialism has traditionally used over the South. BRICS now provides alternatives to these monster-controlling arms of imperialism. The New Development Bank challenges the monopoly of the World Bank and the Contingency Reserve Arrangement confronts the IMF, thus providing alternatives to the imperialist institutions.

1. Available at: <https://www.veteranstoday.com/2022/06/19/vladimir-putin-the-old-world-order-is-over/>. [Accessed: 28-06-2022].
2. Why Global South is ditching the West? A Brazilian perspective from Marco Fernandes. Interview with Li Jingjing. 26-06-2022. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwwqV6G24zI>. [Accessed: 28-06-2022]. 16 minutes.
3. See the map reproduced with this article and available at: <https://www.pinterest.com.au/pin/275564070941490478/>. [Accessed: 14-07-2022].

USA has increasingly used the US dollar as a weapon against those whom it cannot control by other means. It freezes the deposits of many countries. For example, it has used economic sanctions against Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Venezuela, Iran, Afghanistan and now Russia. But here also, BRICS has come out with new weapons of defence by the increasing use of the R-currencies: China's Renminbi, Russia's Roubles, India's Rupees, Brazil's Real and South Africa's Rand. Increasingly, trade between these and other countries takes place in these currencies, creating an alternative to the use of the USA dollar.

In addition, the BRICS countries are discussing two important initiatives to free them further from the imperialist financial and economic stranglehold: the establishment of a new global reserve currency and the establishment of a new free-trade deal among themselves. China's Belt and Road initiative is also changing financial and trade features of the world.

Another control mechanism that the USA uses over the rest of the world is its monopoly over the Internet. Fernandes says that alternatives to the Western dominated Internet space, in both the hardware and software fields, are now available in China. But in addition to Latin America and the initiatives from the BRICS countries, others are also resisting the imperialist hold over the world.

A very good example is the refusal of many countries in Asia, Africa and West Asia to obey the dictates of USA-Europe to isolate Russia over the Russia-Ukraine war instigated by NATO aggression. As the Indian foreign minister, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, said: "The world cannot be Eurocentric [as] it used to be in the past."<sup>4</sup>

It is remarkable that many, if not all, of the countries that refused to follow 'His Master's Voice' have been under imperialist control for many years.

And yet there is more: more resistance to capitalism and imperialism. This time, not from governments, but from organised people and their organisations. Vijay Prashad<sup>5</sup> mentions the situation in India, a member of BRICS and the third largest economy in the world. While the BJP government has been taking the country towards even more right-wing policies, people have been resisting.



*Kisan March, India*

Two facts from India: the 2016 strike of 160 million workers and the 2018 Kisan Long March of over 60,00 farmers over 200 kilometres. These are not spontaneous movements. They are organised by the Communist Party of India (Marxist), which in 2018 had a million members, 80 million in mass movements, 14 million members of the All India Women's Democratic Association and over 12 million in All India Kisan Sabha.<sup>6</sup> It is the organisations behind these actions that make the crucial difference in resisting capitalism and imperialism.

Thus there are signs of major global changes already under way. Indeed, the world is changing. How then does the situation in Kenya reflect these changes, if at all? That is the question today. Kenya is firmly rooted in the global capitalist framework and it will not be easy for any resistance movement or progressive or socialist party to free the country from the death-clasp of international capital. And yet, this has happened in other countries. What is required are committed socialist movements that can come together in an organised way and prepare the ground over many years, perhaps decades. This is how, for example, the Left won in Colombia in 2022, as Prashad and Silva<sup>7</sup> show:

4. Shankar, Priyanka (2022): Why are some nations neutral on the Russia-Ukraine war? Al Jazeera (23-06-2022). Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/6/23/why-global-south-nations-stay-neutral>. [Accessed: 29-06-22]
5. Prashad, Vijay (2018): The Necessity of Communism. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SS4YoxoswFQ> [Accessed: 29-06-2022].
6. Prashad, Vijay (2018): The Necessity of Communism. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SS4YoxoswFQ> [Accessed: 29-06-2022].
7. Prashad, Vijay and Taroa Zúñiga Silva (2022): Colombia Votes in Its First Left Government. People's Democracy, June 26, 2022. Available at: [https://peoplesdemocracy.in/2022/0626\\_pd-colombia-votes-its-first-left-government](https://peoplesdemocracy.in/2022/0626_pd-colombia-votes-its-first-left-government). [Accessed: 29-06-2022].

The new path was paved by struggles that go back more than 60 years. The candidates that won the election — president Gustavo Petro and vice president Francia Márquez — both came from the heart of these struggles, from Left movements and social movements, from the obstinate fight of ordinary people to build lives that were not merely surrendered to the wealthy and powerful old colonial elites and the new narco-elites. They assembled the main organisations of these struggles into the Pacto Histórico por Colombia (Historical Pact for Colombia), which was their electoral platform.

There is no evidence of the existence of such militant organisations in Kenya. No doubt, the ‘obstinate fight of ordinary people’ takes place everywhere, but they have not been organised into a central, Left organisation. The last political party that organised on the basis of socialist principles was the Kenya People’s Union, which had a short life from 1965 to 1969 when it was banned.

The December Twelve Movement (DTM) then organised underground in the 1970s and 1980s to avoid political and military attacks from the government. It is the lessons of DTM that form the basis of the main article in this issue of *The Kenya Socialist*.

Yet all is not lost. progressive or socialist political parties emerge in the course of active struggles. There are many social movements that are active in Kenya. It was the coalition of such movements that ensured the adoption of the path-breaking 2010 Constitution. At the same time, progressive youth have come together in many social organisations and in the over 20 Social Justice Centres that are raising awareness among youth and taking action against police brutality, the high cost of living for working people, the availability of water, among other social problems. Such protests, however, often miss out the key issue -- the elephant in the room — capitalism, which is the cause of all the problems faced by working people.

After the repressive governments of Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi, there has been more space for progressive ideas and thoughts to be discussed and disseminated. Many study groups have emerged recently, something that DTM had to undertake underground.

Interestingly, DTM’s underground Library has found a new home in one other impressive initiative —

the Ukombozi Library — ‘Kenya’s First Socialist Library’.<sup>8</sup> Ukombozi Library also hosts many study sessions on and off site and is fast becoming the centre of radical space in Kenya. A group of progressive organisations has emerged over the years, comprising, among others, Ukombozi Library, All Africa People Revolutionary Party, Revolutionary Socialist League, Kenyans for Palestine, Vita Books, Organic Intellectual Network, Women in Social Justice Centres, Mathare Social Justice Centre, and the Dagoretti Social Justice Centre. They cooperate in organising joint public meetings and campaigns and provide a framework for more cooperation in the future.

Ukombozi Library is featured in another article in this issue of *The Kenya Socialist* (TKS).

Other articles tackle the question of women’s work at home, African Liberation Day and the way forward for the Left in Kenya — all topics of discussion and debate in many study groups.

The current issue of TKS takes an important step forward by including an article in Kiswahili, Kenya’s main working-class language, spreading fast in Africa. This is part of our attempt to reach out to a larger readership in Kenya — and Africa. It is interesting to note that Otsieno Godrick translated the article from English for his study group. This also highlights the growth of study circles as an important new feature, as well as the role that young intellectuals are playing in political and economic struggles. They are beginning to provide the ideological support for political action.

The issue also carries an item about the sponsorship by Vita Books and Ukombozi Library of the 10 Kenyan participants in the online course on trade unionism run by the Marx Memorial Library and Workers’ School in London.

Initiatives such as the foregoing have the potential to increase awareness about socialism and help in organising resistance. The need is now for a united organisation of the Left to emerge from such initiatives. As Prashad<sup>9</sup> points out, ‘between theory and practice, is an organisation’. The article on DTM showed how the movement provided the organisation

8. See: <https://www.rosalux.de/en/news/id/41361/kenyas-first-socialist-library/> [Accessed: 29-06-2022].

9. Prashad, Vijay (2018): *The Necessity of Communism*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SS4YoxoswFQ> [Accessed: 29-06-2022].

for linking theory with practice. It remains to be seen if the current initiatives on the ground in Kenya lead to the formation of such an organisation for socialism. The demand for change by young Kenyans is captured

by the photos from the Njaa (Hunger) demonstrations in Nairobi in May 2022.

Shiraz Durrani  
June 29, 2022



# Shiraz Durrani :<sup>1</sup> Lessons from the Underground: How DTM Linked Theory With Practice in Kenya

## Introduction

Kenya was among the leaders in Africa in its anti-colonial struggle waged by workers and peasants under Mau Mau. This resistance achieved independence in 1963 and broke the back of British colonialism.

But capitalism and imperialism were not to be defeated so easily. Using well-developed tactics of looting, creating disunity based on class, race, religion, gender and other real or created divisions, the agents of capitalism and imperialism installed a capitalist-friendly class as the new elite ruler.

The new rulers were then handed colonial era laws and institutions backed by local and foreign armed forces to ensure their survival in power. Thus, capitalism soon saw off the challenge from democratic and socialist forces. In came Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi. Oginga Odinga, Bildad Kaggia, Fred Kubai, Makhan Singh, the Mau Mau and trade union activists were eliminated from political life. Pio Gama Pinto was assassinated in 1965. Massacres, murders, disappearances, and exiling were the order of the day. The Kenya People's Union was suppressed in 1969. This saw the end of all peaceful and democratic attempts to oppose capitalism and KANU-B.<sup>2</sup>

And so began the second phase of Kenya's resistance. Several underground organisations began springing up, the most prominent being the December Twelve Movement (DTM) which later became Mwakenya (MK). Their policies and ideological struggles were a continuation of the struggles of earlier periods. History cannot be compartmentalised into neat blocks as events overflow from one generation to the next, from one decade and from one century to the next. A look at the achievements and challenges of the December Twelve Movement (DTM) can help to set the period in a better perspective. The history and record of Mwakenya, which succeeded DTM around 1985, remains outside the scope of this article.

Kenya was not the only country attacked by imperialism, which ensured that attempts to liberate

Africa failed. Imperialism created Africa in its own image. First, it split the continent into countries to suit its own purpose to loot and exploit. Within each country, it divided people who had previously lived relatively peaceful lives into antagonist classes, religions, regions, races, and many other social divisions -- real or created by imperialism. A situation similar to what Kenya faced obtained in almost all countries of Africa, of course with local particularities. Any solution found in one country thus has relevance to many others.

Imperialism ensured that Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba, Thomas Sankara, Muammar Gaddafi and many others did not succeed in liberating their countries and Africa from the clutches of capitalism and imperialism. It ensured that the Kenya People's Union failed.

Any open political parties and movements could not survive. In this situation, underground political movements seemed the only way to challenge imperialism. That is what the December Twelve Movement in Kenya did. The work of DTM has significance far beyond Kenya's borders, and far beyond its own timeframe.

## December Twelve Movement and Its Ideology

The struggle for liberation from capitalism and imperialism in Kenya took a new turn with independence in 1963. Gone, at least from the surface, were the colonialists and the White settlers who had dominated the political and economic policies before. In came the 'new' capitalists under Kenyatta and KANU-B (Kenya African National Union) with the same agenda as the colonialists.

People resisted and opposed the capture of the country by the new ruling elite which had the support of imperialist Britain and USA.. The new capitalists captured not only state power and national resources; they captured the history of resistance, too. Included in this suppression was the history of December Twelve Movement (DTM), which has either been removed from the history books or its significance has been dismissed as the 'shadowy December 12th Movement'(Hornsby, 414), while Maxon and Ofcansky (2000, 52) describe it as a 'dissident

1. The author was a member of the December Twelve Movement and some facts mentioned in the article are from personal recollections.  
2. This refers to the Party that turned capitalist around 1966, the time of the KANU Limuru Conference.

opposition organisation' without any other details. There have been few attempts to examine its documents or to assess its record and achievement and so the movement is not known as widely as it should be.

Another reason that DTM has remained outside the public domain is the prominence given to Mwakenya, its successor, as it became national news once the Moi government decided to use its existence as an excuse to detain, jail and torture all those opposed to his dictatorship. The limelight that Mwakenya found itself in pushed DTM further into the shadows. While Mwakenya was a successor movement of DTM, there were many differences between the two organisations, which have also not been investigated.

At the same time, as DTM was an underground movement, not many of its documents were collected and preserved by public libraries and archives, partly out of political expediency, given the prevailing atmosphere of fear created by Moi. Activists at the time could not preserve many of the movement's documents, as being found with one was dangerous under the Moi government. The fact that many of its activists have chosen to remain silent about the organisation, even now, has pushed the story of DTM even further into the shadows of history.

Kinyatti (2019, 332) traces the origin of DTM to the Workers Party of Kenya (WPK), which he says was founded in December 1974:

The publication of *Cheche Kenya* (1981) and *Pambana* (1982) prepared the ideological path for the transformation of WPK into the December Twelve Movement (DTM) in May of 1982.

If the above is correct, then the question about its activities in the period 1974 to 1981 remains unanswered. Yet, this was the period when many activities by DTM were taking place, particularly in the cultural, educational and academic fields as well as in organising underground cells. These imply that the 'ideological path' was well set by the early 1970s. In addition, many pamphlets were published but are difficult to acquire now, as they were produced and distributed underground.

The absence of these pamphlets is a loss of part of the history of resistance in Kenya. Ong'wen, in a forthcoming memoir, gives some background on DTM's pamphleteering work and mentions one in particular:

Anonymous leaflets had been produced and distributed by the Movement [December Twelve Movement] on previous occasions. For example, since April 1975, the Movement had produced a newsletter titled *Mwanguzi* but its authorship was attributed to Kamati ya Ukombozi wa Kenya (Committee for the Liberation of Kenya). A committee in anyone's mind would denote a handful of people. So, the State was not as much bothered. But a movement would be a completely different animal and the earlier it was tamed the safer the regime would feel. On March 2, 1980, to coincide with the fifth anniversary of the heinous assassination of JM [Kariuki], the Movement produced and circulated a leaflet titled, 'JM Solidarity: Don't Be Fooled, Reject These Nyayos.' The one-pager observed that Jomo Kenyatta was widely hated because his regime deprived the Kenyan people of their rights while administering to predatory appetites of a minority of locals and foreign imperialism.

Reflecting on the oppressive political situation at the time, Wachira (2019, Minute 47) sees the need for a core group of people who were 'dedicated, selfless, progressive, underground, anonymous, not blowing their own horn, completely dedicated to people'. DTM provided such a core.

Kenyan politics is often seen from the perspective of the activities of registered political parties. In this case, it is the formation of the Kenya People Union (KPU) in 1966 and its banning in 1969 that is generally regarded as the active period of resistance to capitalism and resistance to KANU and Kenyatta's regime. Forgotten in this rush to compartmentalise history is the growth and activities of underground movements. Wachira (2019) mentions activities that took place in the early 1970s that were to lead to the publication of *Cheche Kenya's Independent Kenya* in 1981. Wachira (Minute 47) sees the events of this period as being a bridge to the multi-party movement in the 1990s, saying that the previous generations had built foundations on which others stood and built up later. Open political expression of alternative views was not possible, he says, and the underground was the only alternative. In order to be effective, however, the underground needed to have over-ground activities so as to reach people whenever conditions allowed. Such activities included writing and distributing pamphlets, cultural activities such as plays, travelling theatre,

village theatre, and journalists' press pieces. There was, he says, a continuous, seamless set of activities that reflected the underlying clamour for change. It was in these circumstances that the underground brought out Cheche Kenya's *InDependent Kenya* in 1981 -- which was published by Zed Press in London in 1982. Cheche Kenya went through various name changes before settling for December Twelve Movement.

DTM was anti-imperialist and anti-capitalism, as is clear from its publications. Its vision for Kenya was a socialist one. In addition, it took a clear class position in the class struggle in Kenya, as Ong'wen says in his forthcoming memoir: "Class sentiment and class organisation was at the core of resistance spearheaded by the DTM".

### How was DTM Organised

DTM was organised into cells or units as Mazrui and Mutunga (2014) call it:

Our "uniti" had other problems, of course, including liberalism and indiscipline among some members at particular moments. These were addressed openly with the kind of criticism that they deserved. In a way this was part of the process of maturing as a political organization ... He [referring to a member of the cell] would easily lie (to himself and others) or distort the truth to maintain the cult of personality, which he was so eager to construct around himself. As a result, a reasoned, healthy and self-reflective critical discourse of our own beliefs, ideas and conclusions was virtually impossible under these circumstances. And whenever uncomfortable questions were raised, there was always the undemocratic resort to claims of "orders from the 'higher' uniti" as a way of evading open discussion and accountability. Some of us had, in fact, planned on confronting these internal tendencies of dictatorship and non-accountability more aggressively. Sadly, thanks to [the member's] adventurism and hoarding, we were arrested before we could do so.

This shows a number of important facts about DTM. First, that the tradition of a 'healthy, reasoned and self-reflective critical discourse of our own beliefs, ideas and conclusions' was the norm in the work of cells. Second, DTM members were aware of the danger from liberalism and the need to challenge such tendencies.

There was another instance in another cell where members challenged their leader over his liberalism and being paralysed with fear in the face of Moi's repression and, in fact, suspended him from leadership. His was, perhaps, a unique case. So fearful had he become that as the leader of the cell, he could not even look after or dispose of the DTM rubber stamp. He then passed the stamp on to a cell member to dispose of it. This she did expertly without fear or panic. It thus became clear to cell members that leaders do not always lead. Following the leader's suspension, cell members approached another member at a 'higher' level in the organisation several times for guidance and support. Unfortunately, he did not respond to the pleas from the cell. This particular cell was a strong one with a large network of sub-cells going deep into the countryside and among urban workers and in working class residences in Nairobi. It could have replaced the leadership, which was jailed or exiled, but it lacked the contact details of other cells. The opportunity to revive DTM was thus lost, further weakening it just at the time it needed to be strong in the face of Moi's intensifying repression.

Yet, such incidents indicate that DTM was a mature political movement where members engaged in criticism and self-criticism, thereby strengthening the organisation. Had DTM survived, such experiences would have steeled it in its would have steeled it in its fight with with the ruling class. As it was, the experience of DTM members in exile, with the support of others, was to lead to the formation of Umoja and the revival of Mwakenya. Many former DTM members are active in the struggle in different ways in Kenya and elsewhere.

Mazrui and Mutunga (2014) further highlight another aspect of the work of the uniti:

During our years in the organization, all intellectual/scholarly projects of individual members of the organization — including Maina [wa Kinyatti]'s *Thunder from the Mountains* and Ngugi [wa Thing'o]'s *Detained* — were essentially projects of the movement. The manuscripts circulated amongst, and received comments from, all of us. Those publications captured the collective intellect of the movement as well as the lasting revolutionary spirit of the time.

This highlights another way in which history has been distorted: the collective work by a political group, in this case the December Twelve Movement, has

come to be seen as the work of individuals, thereby de-emphasising and de-politicising the collective political effort. Under capitalism, the individual is supreme, and the collective is relegated to the margins. The efforts of DTM to place emphasis on the collective is defeated by capitalist perspectives to make the individual reign supreme. It has not helped when individuals then also remain silent about the collective effort that went into such 'individual' works.

DTM was not a mass party like KANU, not anyone could join it just by paying membership fees. Members had to demonstrate ideological clarity in study sessions and then show in their practice that they were ready to join the organisation in its struggle against capitalism and imperialism. Ong'wen provides an insider's perspective on the organisational aspect of DTM:

In May 1982, the first issue of *Pambana: Organ of the December Twelve Movement*, was published. This was as a result of intense discussions in the cells and study circles. G coordinated our study circle. I was not yet a full member, only a candidate of the Movement but belonged to one of the, presumably, many study circles. Study circles were focused discussion groups through which potential cadres were identified and apprenticed before eventually being introduced to the Movement as members of a cell.

The other way to restore the history of DTM is by looking at its publications. While many pamphlets and other publications have been lost, some key documents have survived and are examined in the section that follows.

## InDependent Kenya (1981)



*InDependent Kenya* was an important departure in the history of Kenya. The Kenya People's Union (KPU) had come out with its Manifesto and Wananchi Declaration but it was prevented from issuing detailed analysis on Kenya by the incessant attacks from the government. DTM, being underground, had no such distractions from the government and so could focus on clarifying its ideological position, in organising study and political cells, and in producing analyses of the situation in Kenya with its recommendation for change. *InDependent Kenya*, distributed in Kenya in 1981, played this part admirably. The authors explain the background of the book:

This study has been produced by a discussion group, which has met over a lengthy period to investigate and debate the issues of national interest (xii).

It was thus a collective work of the DTM and not the product of an individual working on their own. They then show 'where we are now, what has become of our country, and why', explaining the 'situation in its proper perspective':

For we have not been brought to our present impasse solely by this or that individual. The system, which dominates and oppresses us, is larger than the personalities who serve it. What we must actively oppose is the system, not simply any particular individual or even the entire ruling clique. In the future, individuals will come and go, but the system will remain the same, or worse, unless we can look beyond personalities to the underlying realities, which have denied us meaningful independence. Future politics must again deal with these realities -- with issues -- not merely with personalities. By recognising the issues at stake, we will gradually be able to regain the singleness of purpose and the power we possessed when we took up arms against the system of colonialism, not merely against this or that colonial governor. That system has been perpetuated in 'independent' Kenya in a different guise. That system remains the enemy. We can only go forward if we are clear on this fact and prepared for sacrifice and united resistance.

DTM thus clarified perhaps one of the most misunderstood realities in Kenya after independence: it is the system that needs to be changed, not merely the individuals who front it. Mwakenya was later to return to this theme when it stated, *Hata Bila Moi*,

*Umoi Tunapinga!* (Mwakenya, 1992). That clarity is needed today as much as it was in 1981. The system it wanted to replace capitalism with was socialism, although it is difficult to understand why it did not mention this goal clearly in its publications.

It should be noted that the original *InDependent Kenya* was a cyclostyled document that circulated among members of DTM, its supporters and sympathisers. Behind the production of the book were not just the writers, but teams of dedicated activists who typed, duplicated, bound and distributed the document. Their presence has again been deleted from the pages of Kenya's history. The publication of the document as a book by Zed Press in London in 1982 indicates yet another aspect of DTM: its links with progressive people overseas and its ability to broadcast its message far and wide. The book, which reached Kenyans all over the world, ran to 119 pages and is divided into five chapters:

1. Birth of Our Power: Should we Forget the Past?
2. KANU and Kenyatta: Independence for Sale
3. Looters, Bankrupts and the Begging Bowl
4. The Culture of Dependency: Hakuna Njia Hapa! [There is no way here]
5. Conclusion: Twelekeeni [Let's go!]

This is followed by nine (9) appendices headed: A Sampling of How the System Works, providing case studies to show the exploitative system at work. The conclusion sums up:

We have demonstrated in the foregoing chapters that 'independence' is a hoax in Kenya. For independence to be more than a word, the colonized must take charge of their own affairs and obliterate colonial social and economic forms, creating fresh ones in all spheres. But in Kenya, the entire colonial system was passed on virtually intact, and has been perpetuated in a practically unchanged form over the last two decades. Instead of British governors and their PCs [Provincial Commissioners], we now have Kenyan governors and their PCs, using the same, or even more repressive, laws and institutions to subdue our people's expectations. Kenya's rulers have, in fact, surpassed the colonialists in their determination to eliminate popular participation and association and to ensure docility.

The book, its content, its appearance on the Kenya scene in a dramatic fashion during a period of increasing repression and increased awareness of

the damage that capitalism was doing to the lives of people, were indeed ground-breaking. The blurb on the book cover explains the content:

*InDependent Kenya* is a devastating expose of Kenya during the 20 years since Independence. In vigorous language and with lots of concrete examples, the authors tell the real story of Kenya today — the extent of corruption, the enrichment of certain individuals, the suppression of all opposition. They also analyse the country's distorted economy, polarised class structure, and cultural dependency on the West. The book ends with an outline of the various political possibilities for the future, the authors arguing that the struggle for scientific socialism, while inevitable if the Kenyan people are to free themselves from poverty and repression, can only result from a lengthy and difficult period of political organization and struggle.

It explains the authorship of the book thus:

The authors are a group of Kenyans from various parts of the country. They have had to remain anonymous because they are still living there. The text had already circulated quite extensively in mimeographed form before political activity became almost impossible with the brutal repression that followed the air force uprising in late 1982.

This book remains an important contribution to Kenya and its resistance archives.

### **Pambana No. 1 (May 1982) — This is War, Class War**

*Pambana*, the underground newspaper of DTM, was circulated widely in the country. Ong'wen gives the background to the publication in a forthcoming memoir:

During the discourse, it was noted that even with independence in 1963 the story did not change as far as ownership, focus and content of the mainstream press in Kenya was concerned ... A need was thus felt for a consistent and regular communication and propaganda organ to expose the duplicity of Kenya's flag independence and articulate the people's aspirations and alternative worldview. Prior to the launch of *Pambana*, the movement developed a course content on "Leafleting and Pamphleteering."

The DTM was not under any illusion that the neo-colonial regime would let it run a newspaper or operate a radio station that would present the alternative. Even in the most unlikely event that the regime became so charitable as to allow it, the Movement did not have the wherewithal to establish it. What made the leaflet and pamphlet the preferred media to a newspaper or radio was that it was within the financial means of the Movement, which was solely raised from members' contributions.

Wachira (2019) says *Pambana* was distributed 'in all big cities, in the highlands and countryside'.

The first issue of *Pambana* came out in May 1982 and was in Kiswahili and English. Under the heading, 'Our Stand', it proclaimed *Huu si Uhuru; Huu ni ukoloni mambo-leo* — This is not independence; this is neo-colonialism. It goes on to explain that Kenya had become a victim of neo-colonialism and that its revolution 'has been arrested and derailed':

KANU and its government have disorganized all spheres of economic production, have scattered all communal efforts at organization, have sowed unprincipled discord and enmity among our peoples, and have looted unspeakable sums of money and national wealth. They have finally given our entire country over to US imperialism to use as a political and military base. All these crimes have been wrought in the name of "progress and prosperity" and ... smatterings of "love, peace and unity".

This is NOT independence.

This is neo-colonialism in its worst form.

Kenyans have been massively betrayed. The revolution we launched with blood has been arrested and derailed.

The Editorial — reproduced in this issue of TKS — declared: 'Our people want change, revolutionary change' and looked at the role of revolutionary newspapers in 'awakening, mobilising and unifying' people' quoting Lenin, 'A Spark Can Light A Prairie Fire'.

*Pambana* carried national news showing the repression from the Moi government and people's resistance to it. This included an article entitled, 'Criminal Government Scandals and Cover-ups' which summarised 'various documents and information' acquired by *Pambana*'. Included here is an item, 'The President himself received cash payments of some six million from the

Bank of Baroda to facilitate cover-ups and currency smuggling, and quash investigations'. Another item records: 'The new crop of foreign banks in Nairobi are really conduits of currency smuggling and banking abroad for multinationals and big officials'. Another important section was entitled, 'Land Battles', which reported on events in 'Gatundu [which was] the scene of a major confrontation between landless people and landed thieves ... The farm was owned by a wife of Kenyatta ... Kenyatta's nephew, a government minister ... joined hands in organising this major effort in robbery.

*Pambana* showed that DTM was aware that the struggle in Kenya could not be fully successful without the victory of similar movements around the world. It thus carried a section entitled, 'International Struggles' which included articles on the People's War in Central America.

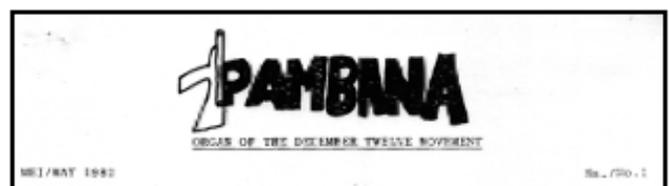
*Pambana* concluded:

December Twelve, 1963 was the day most Kenyan masses united with the hope of a national reality, a true independence. Unknown to them this was not to be. It signifies to us a betrayal and the basis of a new, higher unity and a revolutionary rebirth.

*Pambana* recognised the part played by Cheche Kenya (*InDependent Kenya*) which it describes as a 'great pioneering summary. [We] take up the challenge therein', it adds. It sees the important role that DTM and *Pambana* played in Kenya:

We, the December Twelve Movement, have chosen to make our contribution by starting the first truly revolutionary people's paper. Hitherto, no paper represented the wishes and activities of the poor and oppressed Kenyans correctly.

This paper is dedicated to gathering, uniting, encouraging and protecting all those who would defiantly stand for our country's and people's true interests and who would sacrifice and fight towards our unity and victory.



## EDITORIAL

Cheche: a spark can light a prairie fire

This is a historic moment. Today we celebrate. The challenge of CHECHE Kenya lives.

This first issue of PAMBANA marks a major milestone, indeed even a turning point in our country's history. It is the first truly people's newspaper. It constitutes a step towards creating our people's own voice and our institutions. The government-controlled, foreign-owned press as well as the laughable Voice of Kenya lies to us always. They misrepresent Kenya's reality and praise every crime and evil act the ruling class commits. They apologise for them and continually attack our people's struggles or at best ignore them. These newspapers sow confusion and disunity in their attempts to put "a lid on trouble" and stop the wheel of history. Our people want change, revolutionary change. The government and its mouthpieces want to keep Kenyans down. Just as these government controlled, foreign-owned papers cannot be free; they cannot be neutral. In many real ways, they support our enemies.

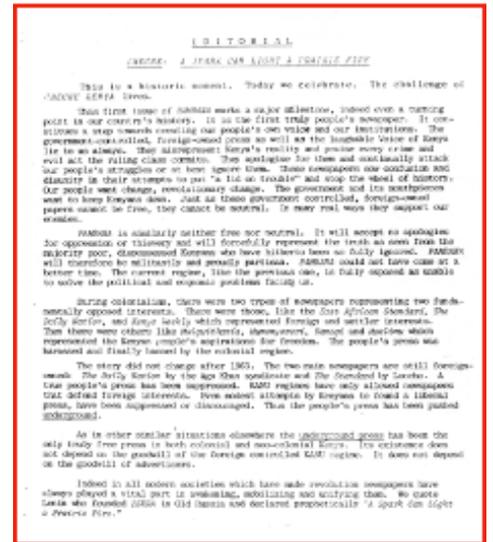
PAMBANA is similarly neither free nor neutral. It will accept no apologies for oppression or thievery and will forcefully represent the truth as seen from the majority poor, dispossessed Kenyans who have hitherto been so fully ignored. PAMBANA will therefore be militantly and proudly partisan. PAMBANA could not have come at a better time. The current regime, like the previous one, is fully exposed as unable to solve the political and economic problems facing us.

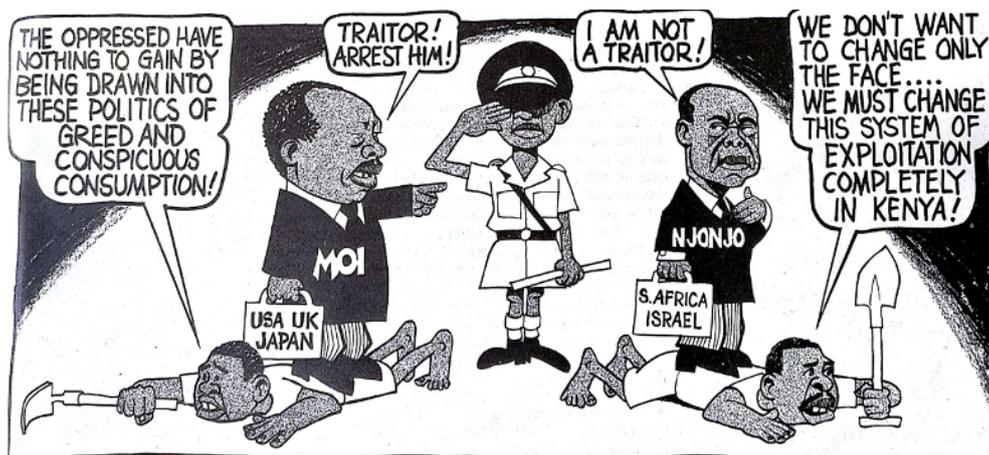
During colonialism, there were two types of newspapers representing two fundamentally opposed interests. There were those, like the *East African Standard*, *The Daily Nation*, and *Kenya Weekly*, which represented foreign and settler interests. Then there were others like *Mwigwithania*, *Mumenyereri*, *Ramogi* and *Mwalimu*, which represented the Kenyan people's aspirations for freedom. The people's press was harassed and finally banned by the colonial regime.

The story did not change after 1963. The two main newspapers are still foreign owned: *The Daily Nation* by the Aga Khan syndicate and *the Standard* by Lonrho. A true people's press has been suppressed. KANU regimes have only allowed newspapers that defend foreign interests. Even modest attempts by Kenyans to found a liberal press have been suppressed or discouraged. Thus the people's press has been pushed underground.

As in other similar situations elsewhere, the underground press has been the only truly free press in both colonial and neo-colonial Kenya. Its existence does not depend on the goodwill of the foreign controlled KANU regime. It does not depend on the goodwill of advertisers.

Indeed in all modern societies which have made revolution newspapers have always played a vital part in awakening, mobilizing and unifying them. We quote Lenin who founded ISKRA in Old Russia and declared prophetically: A Spark Can Light A Prairie Fire.





Reproduced from *Pambana* No. 2 May (1983)

## Pambana 2 (July 1983)

The Moi government used the coup attempt in 1982 to hit out at all those it saw as opposed to its rule. This included DTM leaders and members, but also many activists who were not members but were arrested and punished for political reasons. The government had read the first issue of *Pambana* and saw a danger to itself, which it then tried to kill by arresting the DTM leadership. However, it was not completely successful in this, and many of its cells continued the attacks on the government. It was some of the cells, which survived intact, that produced the second issue of *Pambana* in May 1983. The Editorial summed up events after the coup attempt of 1982:

The Kenyan comprador ruling clique cunningly exploited the attempted coup of August 1, 1982 to kill thousands of innocent people, especially our young patriotic Kenyans, and to cow people into accepting the regime's murderous rule. The regime used the occasion to silence the voices of patriotic youth who sincerely believed in changes that would lead to democracy and socialism.

Here in Kenya, the oppression of Kenya is systematically done on behalf of Euro-American imperialists by the KANU-led ruling class. The imperialists milk our country dry while their watchdogs, the KANU-led regime, rule over us like gods.

The main article explained the imperialist nature of the government in Kenya.

DTM's main plank is captured in the cartoon it carried in *Pambana* 2, shown here, emphasising the imperialist support for the Kenyan ruling class, the nature of bourgeoisie parliamentary politics, which was not for working people whose oppression and

exploitation it ensured, and the need to change the system of exploitation.

Another section in *Pambana* was entitled, 'Workers' Struggles: The Current Situation': under which it says 'Workers Reject Government Sponsored Trade Unions'. It is noteworthy that while the government used all the colonial laws at its disposal to subdue the militant trade

unions, particularly the East African Trade Union Congress under Makhan Singh, workers under militant shop stewards continued to strike and demand workers' rights. The article continues:

Since May 1982, workers' struggles in Kenya have developed to a higher combative level. Instead of workers trying to solve their economic problems through the corrupt government-controlled trade unions, the workers have started to struggle against them. They have found out that these official trade unions are some of the instruments used to exploit and milk them.

This is an important development noted by *Pambana*. Workers were not defeated by the legal manoeuvring by the government to deprive them of their rights. The article went on to list strikes and action against police by militant workers. There then follows a section entitled 'Women Lead the Struggle'. It concludes by talking about classes:

We do not want to discuss individuals but classes. Our concern is the people's lives and the causes of their poverty, in other words, the exploitation they are subjected to. The lines have been drawn. Kenyan national politics has been divided into two camps. On the one hand are the comprador and their imperialist masters and, on the other, all the exploited masses and patriots of Kenya.

This was the key point in Kenya, which the ruling classes had kept hidden. It is to the credit of DTM that it brought the class issue to the forefront of the struggle for liberation. Nor did it forget Kenya's militant history for independence and the example set by Mau Mau and Kimaathi. Under the heading, 'Six Lessons from the Life of a Patriot', *Pambana* reminded its readers the lessons taught by Kimaathi:

## SIX LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF A PATRIOT

Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi was born in Gatanga sub-location, Tetu Division Nyeri, on October 31, 1920. That was also the year when Kenya was declared a British colony after being ruled as a British protectorate and as a company property from 1888. Colonial rule against the people was imposed through the coercive machinery of the law, the army, and the police. People were forced to leave their land to become serfs and squatters in the big farms stolen from them by foreigners, and to become wage slaves in the new capitalist industries and plantations. The people of Kenya united in their opposition to every form of British colonial oppression. Kimathi grew up under these conditions of brutal colonial aggression on one hand and the resistance of the people against it on the other. He sided with the forces of resistance. His life is a lesson to us today as we struggle against neo-colonialism. Every revolutionary Kenyan must learn from his life.



1. As a student, Kimathi organised night classes in which he passed on to the youth all he himself had learned during the day. In those days, not all young people were able to attend school. Because of teaching others, Kimathi became an example to be followed. He became a selfless agent for the spread of education among workers and peasants.

*The life of a revolutionary must be an inspiration to others. A revolutionary must be prepared to educate the people politically and also learn from them.*

2. In colonial schools, and even in his brief period in the colonial army, Kimathi courageously organised against brutality and tirelessly tried to raise the people's consciousness about the need for unity against oppression.

*Fighting against oppression is the duty and responsibility of every patriotic Kenyan.*

3. Even as a clerk and as a teacher, he continued fighting oppression and organising the people. Very often he found himself in trouble with his employers. He was forced to change jobs many times.

*Patriotism demands sacrifice even if it means giving up one's job and a comfortable family life. Revolutionary struggle is a lifetime commitment.*

4. He joined the Kenya African Union (KAU), which was then the democratic organisation of Kenyan people. He spoke out against colonialism. He was not afraid to show his real feelings of hatred for oppression. He knew he was fighting for justice.

*A patriot must be imbued with hatred of all forms of oppression.*

5. He volunteered to work as a political education teacher for KAU. He was later elected the General Secretary of the Murang'a branch of this organisation. He worked hard day and night. No task was too big or too small.

*For a revolutionary no task is too menial or too big. A revolutionary must be prepared to work hard day and night. The revolution is not a tea party.*

6. Kimathi started his revolutionary struggle in his home area before he was given higher responsibility at the national level as a member of the KLFA (Mau Mau) High Command and later as the Commander-in-Chief of the KLFA. All revolutionary work starts at home or wherever one is.

*If you cannot struggle against oppression wherever you are you will not gain the necessary experience for participating in and explaining our national revolutionary struggle.*

A revolution starts with you wherever you are.

Pambana then took up the topic that is closest to the lives of working people: food. Under the heading, 'The Politics of Food', it exposed the hidden hands of imperialism in the form of the World Bank whose prescriptions for Kenya were the real reason for food

poverty in the country. The article explained that it was the capitalist system that was the cause of food shortages and showed that countries that have adopted socialism were rapidly resolving their food problems. Here are selections from the article:

## The Politics of Food

For many years now from newspapers and radio, we have been fed with government propaganda and that of the World Bank or other foreign “experts” that food shortages are a normal state of affairs in our country. They say there is not sufficient arable land in Kenya. They tell us that our population is too high and rapidly increasing and that not everyone can be fed. They tell us that we do not have enough Kenyan expertise. They tell us that capitalist agricultural production is the only type of agriculture possible.

These are brazen lies spread by imperialists and their agents so that they can continue exploiting our country. The production process and the distribution of wealth is done in a way which enables the imperialists to make high profits. For a capitalist, maximising profit is the overriding concern. The aim is to invest as little as possible and with as little risk for the highest possible returns. A capitalist even makes profits from our misery. When the capitalist is a foreigner as is the case in our country, this means the continuous drainage of our wealth to foreign countries, thus making our country poorer and poorer as theirs become richer and richer.

We must therefore know and understand that there are other systems of agricultural production, which would enable us to produce more food, sufficient for everyone and even have a surplus. There is no doubt this is possible. It has happened in other countries, which have dared to throw out imperialists and have afterwards adopted a system of agricultural production that puts people’s basic food requirements first. Let us have a look at some of these countries.

The article gave facts from these countries that have challenged capitalist food production and adopted socialism: China, Cuba, Nicaragua and North Korea. It concluded:

Only after getting rid of imperialist-backed oppression, shall we be able to take new directions in food production:

1. Productive land must be in the hands of the masses;
2. The people must be responsible for the production and distribution of food;
3. Production of food crops and not cash crops must be given priority;
4. Food should feed Kenyan people first before it is exported. Feeding people is more important than earning foreign exchange for importing BMWs, Volvos, Mercedes Benzes and other luxury items.

China, Cuba, Nicaragua, North Korea and many other socialist countries have banished hunger and starvation by adopting a different path of development. But in Kenya, despite the fact that we have some of the best agricultural land in the world, many poor people still suffer from hunger, malnutrition and as in the case of northern Kenya, from mass starvation. The majority of our people go hungry in a country where the weight-reducing industry (massage-parlours, hormone-injections, weight-reducing clinics, saunas, etc.) for the overfed few is thriving.

In Kenya, imperialist foreigners and a few rich come first, but in Cuba, China, Nicaragua and North Korea, the peasants and working people come first. In these countries, the people had to wage an armed struggle to free themselves

from the stranglehold of imperialist-backed oppression before they could be responsible for their own food production. A relentless struggle against the alliance of the comprador *mbwa-kali* ruling class and Euro-American imperialism is the only way we Kenyans can use the wealth of our country to satisfy our own needs and banish hunger. The defeat of imperialism in its neo-colonial stage is a necessary first step for our development as a Kenyan people.

The article not only highlighted the main enemy of people — imperialism — but also showed DTM’s awareness about the political situation of Kenya and the way to overcome these challenges. Sadly, for working people in Kenya, *Pambana* did not survive after the second issue. It was the last newspaper to represent their interest. No similar paper has emerged to date. Such was the contribution of DTM and *Pambana*.

While the above publications from DTM show its stand, another perspective on its work is provided by Ong’wen in his forthcoming memoir:

During our struggle to register a student union, we forged political relationship with progressive forces — mainly from the academia — that had been organising in the underground. The December Twelve Movement (DTM) was already deeply entrenched. Some of us joined or established DTM study circles. The overt struggles gave us the platform to operationalise some of the programmes for covert plans. It also provided forums and arena for identification of ideologically motivated students who could be recruited into the underground movement.



## Transition from DTM to Mwakenya: The Struggle Continues

The Moi government's repression following the attempted coup in 1982 had grave consequences for DTM. Many of its leaders were detained, following the capture of the movement's documents from one of the early detainees who had kept them -- against the movement's policy, as indicated by Mazrui and Mutunga (2014), quoted earlier. This was a major blow to the organisation.

However, many cells continued to function, but without the overall coordination that the DTM leadership had provided. Among these was the Kabete Cell, which continued its pioneering work by producing the play, *Kinjikitile-Maji Maji* and other activities under *Sauti ya Wakutubi* and *Sehemu ya Utungaji*.<sup>3</sup> Other DTM cells also continued various activities and it is believed that some of them later emerged under the new name, Mwakenya.

At the same time, many DTM members in various countries around the world joined with local activists to form Umoja in 1987 in London. Umoja merged with Mwakenya in 1996 and re-energised it. It is thus true to say that DTM did not die in 1980s but continued to exist in Umoja and later in Mwakenya.<sup>4</sup>

It is in the context of the above history of DTM that the later history of Mwakenya-DTM, its ideology, organisation, tactics, and policies need to be seen. If they worked in Kenya even for a brief period, then that experience could be of value to other situations. Particularly relevant is the experience of the December Twelve Movement. What then are the lessons to be learnt from this pioneering underground resistance movement?

The first lesson is that it is impossible to organise against capitalism using its own playing field of the bourgeois parliamentary system, backed by bourgeois laws, courts and armed forces, not to mention its total control over education, mass media and culture. Any meaningful resistance has, of necessity, to organise and operate underground, with over-ground manifestations as appropriate.

Second, the organisation needs ideological clarity and awareness of what it is struggling against —

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3. Some details of these are available in Durrani, 2008 and 2014.

4. The story of Umoja will be carried in a future issue of *The Kenya Socialist*.

knowing its enemies and its friends, to put it another way. DTM, in many of its documents, set out its anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist agenda, developing its ideas further in various areas of the economic, social, cultural, and political arena. Yet it shied away from stating clearly that it was aiming at socialism, although socialism was obviously its unstated aim. This is surprising, as the Kenya People's Union had come out clearly for socialism before DTM-MK emerged. One requirement for a successful resistance movement is to state clearly what it is fighting for. While democratic parties may feel they cannot openly state their socialist ambitions, there was no reason for DTM to do so, as it was an underground movement. It thus lost an important opportunity to put socialism on the national agenda. There is perhaps a lesson here for other resistance movements.

Correct leadership is also required for putting into practice organisational policies. Again, various lessons can be learnt from the experiences of DTM, which ceased its activities because of the brutal attack on most of its leaders by the Moi government. Other leaders, within and outside Kenya could have tried to create a new structure under a new leadership to bring the underground cells together. Some did, indeed, try but the fact that they did not succeed indicates the need for better preparedness for such eventualities.

The need for a strong organisational structure that can meet changing circumstances was another requirement. While DTM had a strong central leadership, it operated in small local cells with its leaders linked up organisationally to the next level. This then led to the top leadership. Such a structure allowed it to maintain secrecy and made possible central leadership and local autonomy as a form of democratic centralism. Yet DTM cells were isolated from each other and lacked a central authority to organise and coordinate activities when its leaders were detained or exiled. Added to this was the fear that paralysed some in a position to address the new situation. Underground organisations organised for the need of security and secrecy need to pay attention to this experience of DTM.

The need for ideological clarity among members was a priority. Regular study sessions formed part of cell meetings. Turning ideas into action then ensured that cadres had understanding as well as practical experience in all aspects of revolutionary work. Resources for study were held in different centres but a central underground library was also maintained.

An essential feature of underground work was to maintain close links with workers, peasants, students, professional groups, among others. DTM organised cells at all these levels, ensuring that information about people's needs and conditions flowed to all levels in the organisation, which then helped to formulate policies and action plans to meet people's needs.

Communication with people was strengthened by the production and distribution of leaflets, pamphlets and the newspaper, Pambana. All this required organisation throughout the country via the cell structures. Also necessary were physical distribution and by mail in working class areas, through matatus and at food kiosks, among others. Similarly, regular pamphlets in Kiswahili and English analysing the local situation were written and distributed widely. Underground typing pools, duplicating and cyclostyling facilities were established as part of the information and communication strategy. These are basic requirements for an underground organisation.

Discipline among members was paramount. This is particularly so for recruitment and training of new members. DTM was strict in recruitment and admitted new members only after a long process of study and proven action in resistance activities at political, social or cultural levels. However, this practice was not followed under Mwakenya, at least in the initial stages. This allowed members who did not have ideological clarity and experience to capture leadership positions, bringing liberalism into the organisation. The need for constant struggles for a clear political line is essential if resistance is to succeed.

It is to the credit of DTM members in exile that they continued the struggle in countries of their exile. Various organisations in different countries came together to form Umoja in 1987 in London. Umoja became an important part of Mwakenya after that. An overseas partner is a useful asset to support local actions.

Taken as a whole, the work of DTM and Mwakenya provides a model to deal with the iron grip of imperialism in Africa. This is particularly relevant as the so-called colour revolutions tend to be instigated or infiltrated by imperialism.

There are thus lessons to be learnt from the collapse of the DTM and Mwakenya under intense attacks, both political and physical, from the Moi government,

with its notorious torture chambers at the Nyayo House in Nairobi. Some of its internal weakness as well as intense attacks, from an enemy armed to the teeth, played their part in their decline. Perhaps there is a lesson here that confronting an armed enemy with just political means — underground or overground — is not a formula for success. Mass mobilisation of people, together with other tactics, would have to be included in the anti-capitalist arsenal.

While it is not possible to predict the future direction of events in Kenya, it seems likely that the experience of December Twelve Movement and Mwakenya will be of increasing relevance, just as that of Mau Mau from an earlier period has been. Mau Mau's and DTM-Mwakenya's message of resistance at every level needs to be on the agenda, too. It is for this reason that imperialism and comprador policies have conspired to keep their documents hidden; it is for this reason that activists today need to learn the real history of Kenya's resistance to capitalism and imperialism. It is fortunate that Ukombozi Library in Nairobi has set up the Kenya Resistance Archives to collect and disseminate material from DTM, Mwakenya and Umoja, among others.

The attacks on socialism in Kenya by imperialism were by no means isolated incidents. Almost every country which has struggled against capitalism and imperialism has faced intolerable attacks from imperialism in the form of economic sanctions, covert and overt support for real or created opposition, assassinations, coups instigated from USA and supported by its allies in Europe, Canada and Australia, drone attacks on leaders and strategic targets... the list is endless and stretches over decades. Vietnam stood against European and USA attacks for decades, as is Cuba doing today.

Libya, Iran, Malaysia, Indonesia and Latin America as a whole have been attacked when they sought independence from imperialism and its agencies; millions of activists have been killed by imperialism to suppress socialism. Palestine stands out as perhaps the most important example of imperialist attacks when the entire country has been captured by Israel with the support of USA.

It is not only 'small' countries that have been under attack. China and Russia face daily attacks now that imperialism has identified them as its greatest 'enemies'. Nor was the Soviet Union free from such attacks. Tickle (2021) reports on a situation like that in Kenya under Jomo Kenyatta and Tom Mboya, who

had agents of USA ‘guiding’ them in implementing capitalism. Socialism in USSR faced even bigger challenges as Tickle (2021) records:

The first Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, was surrounded by “hundreds” of CIA agents who told him what to do throughout his tenure as leader. That’s according to Ruslan Khasbulatov, the former chairman of Russia’s parliament.

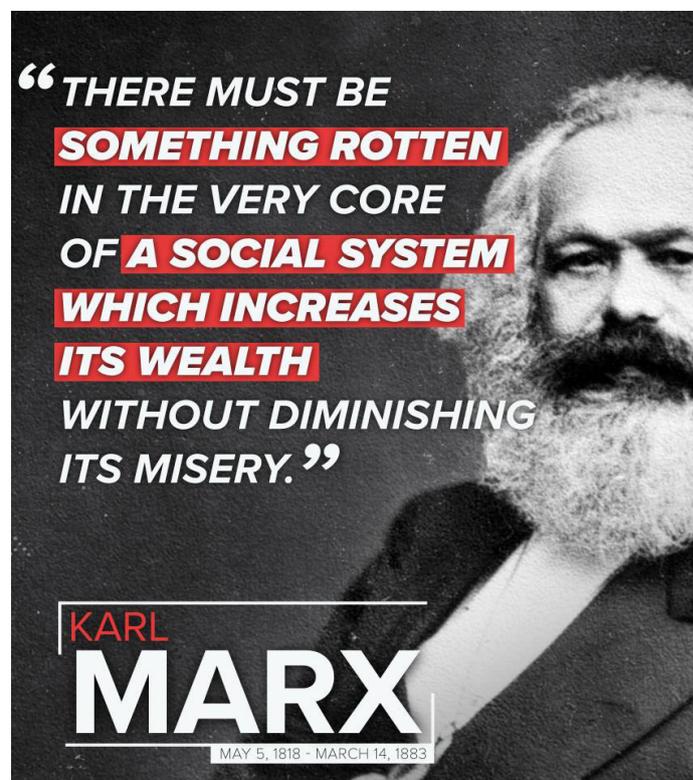
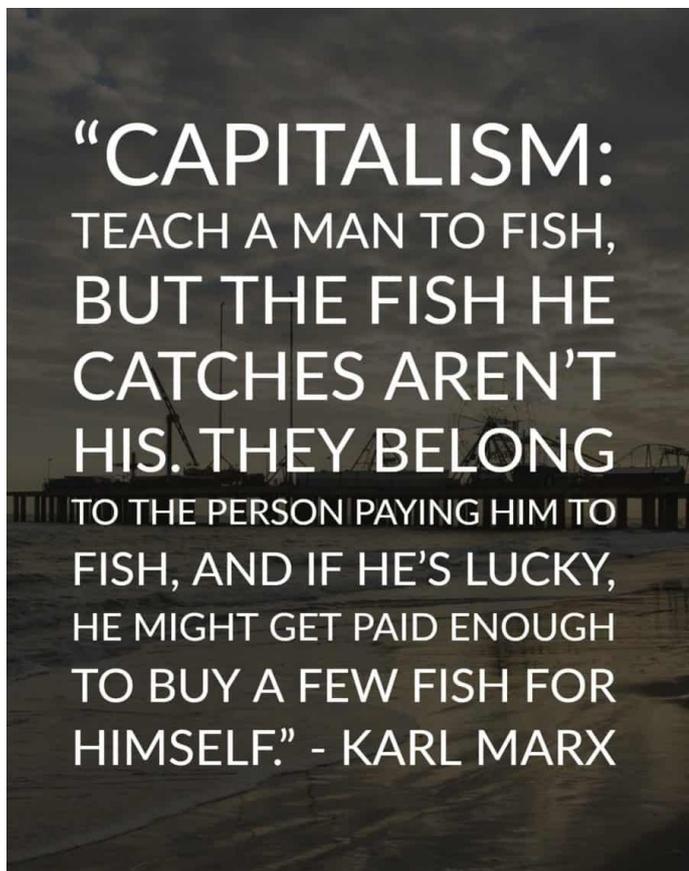
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That puts the past and the present of Kenya in its global context. The Two Paths — to socialism or capitalism — which were the choice at independence, are still the choice today. DTM chose socialism and faced the wrath of imperialism. A more intensive resistance movement, learning lessons from the past, is needed to meet today’s challenges.

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# Wairimu Gathimba :<sup>1</sup> The 59<sup>th</sup> African Liberation Day

Every year on May 25, the world commemorates African Liberation Day (ALD).

ALD was first established by Kwame Nkrumah in 1958 during the first Convention of Independent States in Accra, Ghana. It was declared that the 15th of April would be designated as 'African Freedom Day' to commemorate the liberation movement's success and to signify the African people's commitment to be free from Western hegemony and exploitation.

African Freedom Day was then celebrated for the following five years to commemorate the advancement of liberation movements on the African continent until the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. It was at the OAU Summit meeting on May 25, 1963 that the African Freedom Day was renamed African Liberation Day and moved to every May 25th.

Today, African Liberation Day serves as a day to reaffirm our commitment to Pan-Africanism, the ultimate emancipation and unification of Africa under Pan-African socialism. ALD is a reminder that Africa has not really achieved its independence. The working people of Africa improve their awareness of legitimate struggles through their participation in ALD, and assert their participation in the global socialist movement. In 2022, there were three different ALD celebrations in Kenya organised by the Communist Party of Kenya (CPK), the Socialist Leaning Groups<sup>2</sup> and the Pan-African Congress. The Socialist Leaning Group's celebrations, which took place at Ukumbi Mdogo, Kenya National Theatre, were live-streamed on Facebook. Some themes that stood out from the discussions were solidarity against Zionism and imperialism, the importance of people's education, and parliamentary elections in the age of neo-colonialism. Some issues raised at the event are summarised here.

## Solidarity against Zionism and Imperialism

It was pointed out that it was paramount for African socialists to realise that the struggle against Zionism is the struggle against imperialism, capitalism and exploitation. Imperialism may be defined as a dominance relation between collectivities, especially between nations that may be exercised through sovereignty, settlement or indirect mechanisms such as lawfully unrestricted contractual arrangements,

cultural influence and economic power.<sup>3</sup> Imperialism is tied to capitalism, in that the financial interests of the capitalist class typically drive imperialist expansion.. Zionism is a Jewish nationalist ideology originating in Europe, with the primary objective of colonising Palestine in order to establish a Jewish state.<sup>4</sup> It was described by *Matzpen*, a revolutionary socialist publication that was published in Palestine between the 1960s and 1970s as a unique case of a settler-colonialist society, a nationalist movement that collaborated with imperial powers to repress any resistance in the area.<sup>5</sup> Israel's political, economic, and social frameworks are comparable to other 19th-century European colonial settlement projects.

The experiences of Palestinians at the hands of Israeli settlers/Zionists and those of Africans with the 19th and 20th century imperialists are very similar. These include the segregation of the indigenous population and the use of violence against them as a method to subdue them. The Palestinian ambassador to Kenya at the 2022 SLG convention called for resilience in the struggle for independence and emphasised the importance of owning the moral ground in this struggle. As comrades in this struggle, we should always strive to be more educated and united and stay true to our values. In addition to solidarity with the people of Palestine, it is important that we support other oppressed people everywhere, including those on the African continent. Here in Kenya, we continue to experience the effects of settler colonialism and neoliberalism. Clearly, this is a common struggle for all of us against the forces of capitalism and imperialism.

## Elections in the Age of Neo-colonialism

The essence of neo-colonialism is that the state subjected to it is autonomous and independent with

1. Wairimu Gathimba is a member of Mathare Social Justice Centre and Organic Intellectuals Network.
2. Ukombozi Library, All Africa People Revolutionary Party, Revolutionary Socialist League, Kenyans for Palestine, Vita Books, Organic Intellectual Network, Women in Social Justice Centres, Dagoretti Social Justice Centre.
3. Kohn, M., & Reddy, K. (2022). *Colonialism*. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. P1.
4. Lavie, S. (2007). *Colonialism and Imperialism: Zionism*. *The Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*. p. 10.
5. Golan, 2001, p. 129)

all elements of a sovereign state but really, outside forces, usually “developed” countries control its economic system and therefore its political policy. The goal of neo-colonialism is to re-align independence forces in favour of imperialism, putting power in the hands of people willing to sacrifice national interests for personal benefit.<sup>6</sup> Neo-colonialism is akin to blackenisation,<sup>7</sup> a continuation of indirect rule post-colonisation by replacing white expatriates with ‘educated’ Africans while leaving the objectives and structures of the colonial forces intact. In contrast, Africanisation extends well beyond substitution of personnel and calls into question the basic essence of colonial systems and whom they serve. It aims to build and develop a system that is both effective and understandable to the people it is meant to accommodate and assist by identifying steps that should be taken to meet the defined objectives, taking into account the objective conditions of a society.

Accordingly, a meaningful Africanisation campaign must confront the bourgeois ideals that prevailed under colonialism and which were founded in European-colonial culture.<sup>8</sup> In a bourgeois democracy such as the one in Kenya, the state functions to preserve bourgeoisie order and all other operations of the state are secondary to this goal. Kenya, as a neo-colonial state, has elections that are not people-oriented but meant to maintain its bourgeois democracy. Regime change does not equate material change for a country like ours because whatever new regime usually continues to promote bourgeois values.

So what can we do to try and change the state of our democracy? This is where education of the masses comes in.

Political education in Kenya is essentially non-existent, except for those who intentionally seek it. As is the case with all neoliberal states, the education system in Kenya exists to transmit the values of the state, which are the values of the ruling class or the bourgeois. The specifics of the curriculum are frequently determined by state authorities and include the functional training of citizens. Bits of history are redacted from the curriculum in order to advance the state ideology of capitalism and, as a result, we often have adults with no clear awareness of the history of Kenya.

Many people also fail to realise the role of collective action and community organising in social change in Kenya’s past, and as a tool that could be used today.

A critical appraisal shows that history coursework in Kenyan secondary schools is centered on Eurocentric historical perspectives and conventional historiography’s sex blindness.<sup>9</sup>

The syllabus also displays an overly patriotic approach and is full of omission bias with regard to cultural histories, women, Africa and the world. Overall, the content fails to provide students with a clear understanding of historical events that shape the Kenyan state. This is why Ezra Otieno, one of the panelists and a member of the RSL, brought up the importance of having a strong propaganda tool. Education is the greatest tool for propaganda, as can be seen with most educational systems.

As revolutionary comrades, we may also use education as a tool for propaganda. Both RSL and community social justice centres such as MSJC offer political classes for those interested. The theory we learn from this education should be put into practice as we organise and continue pushing back against our oppressors. This theory should ground us, even as we use the tools of the bourgeoisie, so that we do not forget our values. At the SLG convention, Maryanne Kansina emphasised the importance of putting theory into practice and solidarity in our practice as comrades seeking to improve the material conditions of all working people of Kenya.

### **How do we Defeat Neo-colonialism? A Case for Pan-African Unity**

As Sobukwe Shukura, one of the panelists at the 2022 SLG convention explained, Pan-African unity and socialism are the only way to beat neo-colonialism. Political independence, while essential for African self-determination, has not delivered economic progress or unfettered self-political determination. Neo-colonialism merely replaced colonialism, and Africa is still not truly free. As Kwame Nkrumah (1963) remarked at the inaugural OAU summit in Addis Ababa, “We must unify in order to achieve the entire independence of our continent.” Nkrumah’s remarks remain true to date and as revolutionary comrades, we should strive to ensure the struggle for African Unity does not stop until victory is achieved.

6. Odinga, A. O. (1967). Not yet Uhuru: *The autobiography of Oginga Odinga*. London: Heinemann. p. 250

7. Blackenisation here is used as defined by Murapa in ‘Neocolonialism: The Kenya Case’, 1972. *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 2(4), 55-73.

8. Murapa, R. 1972. ‘Neocolonialism: The Kenya Case’, 1972. *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 2(4), 55-73.

9. Nasibi. 2014, p. 40)

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*Palestine ambassador to Kenya Hazem Shabat who spoke at the meeting*



*Panelists - Ezra Otieno, Maryanne Kasina, Sobukwe*

# Kimani Waweru: Is Women's Household Labour a Form of Exploitation?

Debates about paying for housewife labour at home have raged for many years. In most capitalist countries, housewives perform almost all housework (cooking, childcare, cleaning, etc). This debate is mostly steered by feminists who argue that the work at home deserves to be paid for. This is the position promoted by many feminist authors, among them Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James. The two feminists wrote a pamphlet<sup>1</sup> in the 1970s that advocated for the housewives' wage payment by insisting that women's domestic labour is usually appropriated or exploited by their husbands and fathers.

So, is women's household labour a form of exploitation? The answer to this question would require us to define labour. Labour is any activity aimed at meeting human material needs. Not all human needs can be met directly by nature. Therefore, human beings need to act on nature by changing objects of nature to satisfy their needs. They do this by using their bodies, i.e., brain, eyes, ears, hands, and legs in production activities. In simple terms, labour activity is the people's struggle to tame nature to produce material needs.

Human beings also participate in other socially important activities. These activities include teaching, caring for the sick, singing, fighting, or advocating for the rights of the oppressed class. This type of labour is also important to society. Presently, labour is largely associated with commodity production, i.e., production of goods for sale and exchange.

A commodity is the product of human labour but not every product of labour is a commodity, for example, cooking food for the family. A product of labour becomes a commodity only when it is exchanged with another product through sale. A commodity has a use value (the utility of a thing) and an exchange value (the amount of one commodity that one can get for another).

All commodities have one thing in common, and that is that they are products of human labour.

Karl Marx argued that the value of a commodity

reflects the labour that went into producing it. He stated that labour is measured by the time taken to produce the commodity.<sup>2</sup> This, however, does not mean that under capitalism, for example, the labour of 10 lazy people who spend six hours producing a commodity is the same as that of 10 active people working the same number of hours. This is because, as Marx argued, time is measured by socially necessary labour time, that is, the average degree of skill and intensity prevalent at the time. Therefore, in a capitalist system, there is an average time that has to be considered as far as the measurement of wages is concerned.

## Surplus Value (Profit)

When capitalists sell a commodity, they normally sell it at its value, that is the cost of raw materials and labour. However, they end up getting a greater value than the sum of the values of the commodities used to produce it. This greater value is what Marx termed as surplus value. But where does the surplus value come from? Marx answers this by stating that the capitalist gets control of the labour power of workers through the employment contract. Once the contract is signed, workers lose control and the product they produce goes to the capitalists.

When paying wages to workers the capitalist only pays the amount that can sustain them and their families (providing the daily necessities of life such as food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, education and entertainment.) and remains with the balance of what the commodity fetched when it was sold. To give an example, a worker employed for eight hours a day gets paid only for the four hours that are needed to produce the daily necessities, but the capitalist takes all that was produced in eight hours, thus robbing the workers of their four hours' wage.

This is where the profit that the capitalist brags about comes from. Capitalists audaciously argue that since workers agreed to sign the contract willingly, they – the capitalists -- have the right to all the products of labour. They conveniently ignore the fact that capitalism -- the system -- has dispossessed the workers of the means of production and left them with only their labour power. The workers are forced to

1. Costa, M.D and James, S. (1971) *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*. E-book library [online]. Available at: <https://files.libcom.org/files/Dalla%20Costa%20and%20James%20-%20Women%20and%20the%20Subversion%20of%20the%20Community.pdf> (Accessed: 7th June 2022).

2. Marx, K (1974). *Capital, Volume 1, A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*. 9th ed. Moscow: Progress Publishers Chapter 1, Section 1 pg. 46-47

sell their labour power as a commodity to capitalists in order to survive. In a nutshell, capitalism thrives on the exploitation of workers by taking their surplus value.

## Productive and Unproductive Labour under Capitalism

Marx defined productive labour as labour used to generate surplus value<sup>3</sup> For example, labour performed by a chef employed by a capitalist who owns a hotel is productive labour. Unproductive labour on the other hand is the one that does not generate surplus value,<sup>4</sup> for instance, the labour of a chef employed to cook for a rich family. This labour, though important, does not produce surplus value; it is meant to meet the needs of the rich family and not necessarily for exchange purposes.

As Marx said, the mere direct exchange of money for labour, therefore, does not transform money into capital or labour into productive labour. This may sound confusing, as in most instances, productive labour is associated with the production of useful things or services for the benefit of society. However, the capitalist system does not see it that way. The chef may sometimes get hungry and prepare food for himself. This type of labour is neither productive nor unproductive since it lies outside the capitalist economy.

The campaign for the payment of household labour has over the years gained currency and been embraced by many feminists. This issue has arisen in matrimonial matters handled by the judiciary in Kenya. For instance, in November 2021, High Court Judge Teresia Matheka, while presiding over the distribution of matrimonial property in a divorce, ruled that being a housewife is a full-time job, and should, therefore, attract some form of compensation.<sup>5</sup>

For us to be clear about whether or not housewives are exploited by their spouses and hence the need for them to be paid, we need to revisit the concept of the labour theory of value which was developed by classical economists Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and further by Karl Marx. As has been demonstrated, exploitation only occurs when surplus value is extracted from the producer (worker), and surplus value is the unpaid labour time while the wage can be termed as the amount paid to the worker to keep him productive so that he can meet his daily subsistence and that of his family.

This, therefore, means that the wife, when performing laborious housework, which is very useful but unproductive according to the labour theory of value, is being indirectly exploited by the capitalist who has employed her husband who provides her basic needs. For example, the wage of a construction worker who is employed by a construction company constitutes his maintenance expenses, which include that of his housewife who is left at home to cater to the family's needs.

It is therefore ridiculous, given the foregoing, to advocate for the housewife to earn wages for what some feminists term as unpaid household labour. Today, there are quite a number of women single parents who also combine career work with domestic work, bringing up their children single-handedly. If we were to use the same argument, who would be obliged to pay them for their domestic labour?

A housewife can only be exploited if she is contracted by the capitalist to produce surplus value, and this is happening in modern times. The introduction of machines in workplaces after the industrial revolution made it easier to bring women into social production. The number of women in social production has been growing year after year, and this has somehow uplifted them and benefited capitalists as they take advantage of lowering the wages of all workers. Lowering wages means less money is available to spend on basic needs. No wonder today, many couples are pushed into social production to create a surplus for the capitalists.

Currently, in the family setting, capitalists are no longer exploiting the husband solely but the wife as well owing to the patriarchy embedded in capitalism. Women continue to be oppressed and their work devalued even with the ever-great sacrifices they make. However, it is important to note that domestic labour is unproductive in a capitalist sense. But this does not mean that we close our eyes when injustices against women occur. Rather we should continue challenging especially those practices that degrade women.

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3. Marx, K (1974). *Capital, Volume 1, A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*. 9th ed. Moscow: Progress Publishers, Chapter 16, pg. 476-477

4. Marx, K (1969). *Theories of Surplus Value – Volume 4 of Capital, Part 1*. 2nd ed. Moscow: Progress Publishers, Chapter 4, pg. 152,157,158

5. Wakhis, K. 'Housewife: A full-time job worthy of compensation', *People Daily* [online]. Available at: <https://www.pd.co.ke/lifestyle/housewife-a-full-time-job-worthy-of-compensation-101841/> - (Accessed: 7th June 2022).

This situation demands that all of us deeply examine the root cause of women's oppression, which has enslaved them in domestic household labour. Failing to do so could produce reactionary solutions like demanding a wage for the housewife, which may lead to household conflicts. Some of these solutions not only result in antagonism but also reinforce the capitalist system that is the cause of women's subjugation and troubles. Understanding the root cause helps in finding the solutions to the predicament that befalls the working class: both women and men.

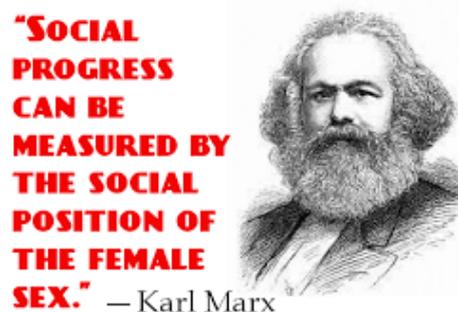
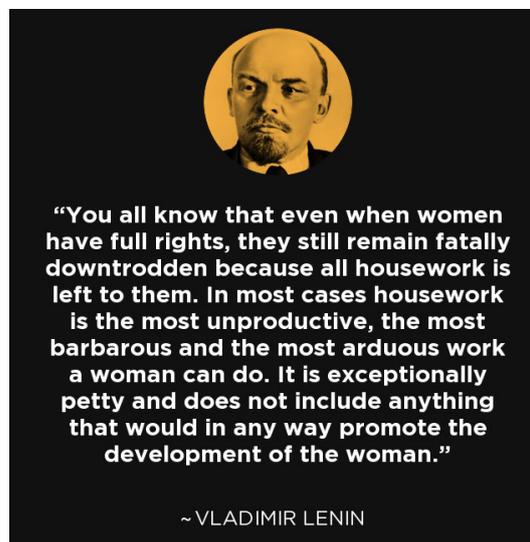
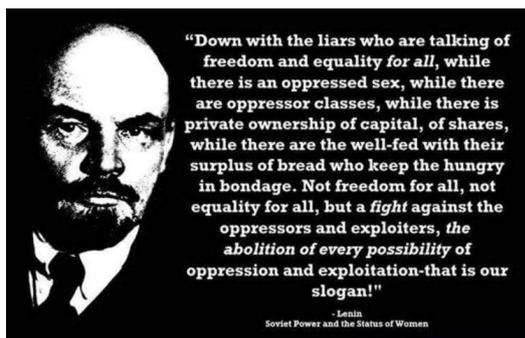
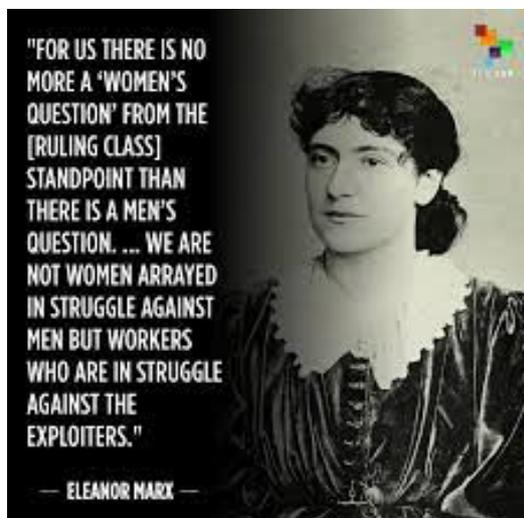
It is well known that the miseries faced by the working class, especially women, are connected to the capitalist system. The major task for all people is to unite and struggle for a better society where there will be neither inequality nor exploitation, and that society is socialist. The socialist state, as Iris Cremer said,<sup>6</sup> will establish the formal legal equality for women and men, and will go on to establish the material conditions for equality to become a reality, and for women to achieve economic independence.

The material conditions for equality can be established by involving women in social production. Women's participation in social production will raise the political consciousness that will help them to get rid

of backward prejudices and customs. The socialist state will also free women from domestic slavery and household drudgery through the establishment of social industry and the nationalisation or socialisation of the economy so that more women would directly become involved in public production. It would establish childcare centres, nurseries, and kindergartens for women in their workplaces and neighbourhoods. As Karthy Sharp<sup>7</sup> said in her speech in 1971, the socialist state will bring about a change from private childcare to the care and education of children being a public responsibility.

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6. Iris Cremer, (1943-2014) Speech was delivered during a meeting of the Union of Women for Liberation on September 5, 1971

7. Rule, E (eds.) (1974). *Marxism and the Emancipation of Women*. Britain: Progress Publishers

# Kinuthia Ndung'u & Nicholas Mwangi: Revolutionary Rhetoric and Populist Politics: Elections in the Age of Neo-colonialism.

As the country chokes in the stranglehold of structural unemployment, massive displacement for the downtrodden, extrajudicial killings, systemic corruption, failed healthcare and education systems, those vying for elective seats are vigorously seeking votes ahead of the 2022 polls.

At no other point in the history of our nation has the working class been pushed so much to the edge that even the dominant bourgeois parties have switched their narrative to welfarism and class war to deceptively woo Kenyan voters. Interestingly, there is no discussion of class-consciousness, nor is there an acknowledgment of class struggle. The rhetoric is an unprincipled path to power.

The rhetoric in these campaigns sounds both revolutionary and progressive, with a lot of populist vocabulary. Yet such narratives are dissociated from Kenya's reality. Prof Ngúgí wa Thiong'o says in *Decolonizing the Mind* that the prescription of the correct cure is dependent on rigorous analysis of reality.<sup>1</sup> Thus, we must scrutinise the populist progressive rhetoric embraced by the bourgeoisie in these coming elections.

Kenya's former prime minister, Raila Odinga, is vying for the presidency under the Azimio la Umoja banner. Back in 1967, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, President of Tanzania and its ruling party, TANU, wrote the Azimio la Arusha (Arusha Declaration). It put forth the policy of Ujamaa (familyhood) as a social and economic policy to recapture the principles of joint production, egalitarian distribution, and the universal obligation to work found within African communalism. The declaration called for socialism and self-reliance. Raila's Azimio Manifesto is promising social justice, universal healthcare, and free education through its 10-point agenda. The most ambitious social welfare agenda is Inua Jamii, Pesa Mfukoni, (Empower the family, money in the pocket) where his government plans to deliver Sh6000 per month to the most needy families.

We cannot dispute that Raila has a history of struggle, and is a repository of progressive politics over many years. His supporters are always quick to remind us that he has suffered years in detention, endured torture

and exile during the Moi regime. Members of the Kenya Left probably support his candidature because, among the mainstream politicians, he is the only one with whom they have a shared political history of protest and persecution. They graced his birthday at the Bomas of Kenya recently, and some later hosted him at Kibichiku where he had earlier met mothers of political prisoners.<sup>2</sup> His biography can inform us of his first ideological mentors:

My wide reading covered Fanon, Lenin, Marx, Nkrumah, Rodney, Mao, Dubois, and Garvey as well as Liberal Western thinkers like Galbraith and Adam Smith and it shaped my intellectual and political outlook. Imperialism was enemy number one and international solidarity of progressive forces was the answer to imperialistic expansion. We believed that collective ownership of means of production was the only way to ensure equitable distribution of wealth, poverty reduction, and faster socio-economic development.<sup>3</sup>

The relationship between the son of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga with the Kenyan masses is therefore very conditional. If he makes a mistake against the masses, it can only be analysed as a deliberate act, not one based on ignorance. Raila Odinga's support for the Morocco empire against western Sahara<sup>4</sup> or taking the French line in the recent Mali coup d'état would be opportunism. Further, in his biography, he signals his ideological shift, saying in his own words:

We must adjust to the realities of neoliberal globalization that became triumphant after the fall of the Berlin Wall in the late 1980s/early 1990s. In this regard, we support political and economic reforms that are in line with liberal democracy along with social justice. In other words, we concur with Francis Fukuyama when he states that, as mankind approached the end of the millennium, the twin crises of

1. See wa Thiong'o, Ngugi, 1987, *Decolonizing the Mind*, East African Educational Publishers, Nairobi, (preface)
2. *The Star*, 10th 2022- <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2022-01-10-you-remind-me-of-my-mum-raila-tells-mothers-of-political-prisoners/>
3. Badejo, Babafemi, Raila Odinga: *The Enigma of Kenyan Politics*, 2006, pp 367
4. <https://googleweblight.com/sp?u=https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2015-09-21-raila-drawn-into-fight-for-western-sahara/&grqid=Y7lGWs-X&hl=en-KE>

authoritarianism and socialist central planning left only one competitor standing in the ring of an ideology of potentially universal validity. This was Liberal Democracy, the doctrine of individual freedom and popular sovereignty. This is the ideology upon which our party, The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is founded’.

The ideological shift is what the Kenya Left does not want to acknowledge. The coming election is not a prize-giving event for previous contributions to the struggle; we must be guided by the positions a leader has taken when faced with our current conditions. Raila Odinga has chosen Martha Karua as his running mate on the Azimio ticket. Human rights organisations and non-governmental organisations have endorsed the team, citing their history in the human rights struggle. They perhaps see a chance to rejoin the government after many years in the cold, as the regime of the previous decade cannot be said to have been accommodating to them. This would be a moment similar to 2002 when many in the human rights sector like Mukhisa Kituyi and Kivutha Kibwana joined the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government as Cabinet ministers.

William Ruto, on the other hand, has historical and ideological limitations. Ruto does not have a history of being part of progressive political struggles. He also has a legion corruption cases pending in court.<sup>5</sup> He was part of the Youth for Kanu ‘92 (YK92) leadership that vehemently defended the dictatorship of then President Moi. He was also among those who vehemently opposed the Constitution of Kenya, 2010.<sup>6</sup> However, his Bottom-up economics rhetoric seems to resonate readily with the masses. His hustler-dynasty narrative is setting the poor against the rich.

Ruto might have belatedly discovered the great socio-economic divide between the *walala-hoi* (the oppressed) and the *walala-hai* (the oppressor) in Kenya. He talks of how he walked barefoot and how he hawked chicken in his rural home, offering the poor something to identify with. The retired Chief Justice and one-time political detainee, Dr Willy Mutunga, notes that the author of the hustler narrative identifies four dynastic families: Kenyatta, Odinga, Mudavadi, and Moi as being the cause of all societal problems in Kenya, but refuses to acknowledge he is the political orphan of the Moi dynasty and part of the comprador bourgeoisie that can be characterised as dynasty/monarchy.<sup>7</sup>

The coalition politics we are witnessing are led by a clique of right-wing stooges determined to cling to their privileges. They have degenerated the slogans of the revolutionary proletariat into their opportunistic power-seeking tactics. Unfortunately, the masses are falling for the gospel of these deceptive messiahs.

Liberal Western democracy’s entry into Kenya in the late 1970s under the tutelage of neoliberalist capitalism brought some individual rights that would affect the rule of President Moi. Taken at face value, liberal democracy looks very progressive but it is elusive for third-world countries like Kenya as it comes with strings attached such as open markets and privatisation of key sectors such as health and education, which greatly affects Kenya as inequality sharpens to unimaginable levels. It was an antithesis of the dictatorship system led by President Moi then. However, the liberal goal is to prioritise individual interests. The Liberal capitalist world outlook is characterised by the separation of self and society. It brought individual prosperity as opposed to collective prosperity, which cultivated opportunism, and unnecessary competition, thus putting Kenya at the mercy of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

From a Marxist outlook, the whole world is an organic whole: there is chaos when we go against that order. Social production must be accompanied by social appropriation. In our society, laws guiding the relationship between labour and products do not work. Those making the wealth are not the ones who appropriate it. Anywhere neoliberal market forces rule, money inevitably rules. It is impractical to talk of the common good in the family or business without talking of the common good of the political system.

It is imperative to diagnose the biggest obstacle standing before our masses and true independence.

There is the mistaken belief that black people achieved power with independence, e.g. Malaya, Jamaica, Kenya, but a black man ruling a dependent state within the imperialist system has no power. He is simply an agent of the whites in the metropolis, with an army and a

5. <https://googleweblight.com/sp?u=https://afrocave.com/ruto-scandals/&grqid=Xu3xgpc&hl=en-KE>

6. <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/business/business/article/200007984/ruto-why-i-will-vote-against-the-proposed-constitution>

7. <https://googleweblight.com/sp?u=https://africauncensoredonline/a-letter-to-kenyas-youth/&grqid=hqzeE8Xn&hl=en-KE>

police force designed to maintain the imperialist way of things in that particular colonial area.<sup>8</sup>

Our obstacle is still our neo-colonial state and its local comprador bourgeois class. Wananchi (the masses) must reject the comprador bourgeois cliques. People must organise to smash the existing neo-colonial state and set up a National Democratic State. There is a need to foster class consciousness more now than ever, to organise and mobilise; this will take a major shift in class, social and political relations in Kenya and bring to an end the brutality of neo-colonialism and capitalism that has caused misery for many. In 2022, the high cost of living has become unbearable for many, with inflation at an all-time high. Yet, with the state supporting Raila Odinga's candidacy for the presidency on August 9, 2022, the once considered pro-people leader is silent on the matter. His opponent, Ruto, has ingrained the issue within his populist rhetoric to confirm that his bottom-up economics model is the solution to Kenya's problems.

The coalitions we in process are designed to defend class interests and the capitalist system. They are advocates of a system that has dispossessed the Kenyan workers, turning them into commodities and forcing them to rent themselves to survive. We must exercise great caution now that these coalitions masquerade as progressive alliances, as the long-awaited messiahs who will turn things around. It is fundamental for the Left in Kenya to build an analysis of our history and current conditions and then engage in debates to decide what is to be done.

Without debates and discussions, the 2022 elections will only divide us while reversing the gains made within an already disintegrated Left. The main task is the struggle to abolish classes for economic and social equality; offer free and quality education, good roads, and other quality social amenities. The present Kenyan ruling class must be overthrown and the working class must come to power.

Our present conditions require a true opposition party that is ideologically different from the parties and coalitions presently dominating the national space. There is no ideological justification for members of the Left to entertain bourgeoisie ethnic barons. A refusal to acknowledge this is the equivalent of taking an opportunistic line. It is betraying and selling the interest of the masses and it protects the temporary privileges of a minority class while converting the Left into a mere supporting pillar of capitalism. In *Reform or Revolution*, Rosa Luxembourgn warns:

People who pronounce themselves in favor of the method of legislative reform in place of and in contradistinction to the conquest of political power and social revolution, do not really choose a more tranquil, calmer, and slower road to the same goal, but a different goal. Instead of taking a stand for the establishment of a new society, they take a stand for surface modifications of the old society. Our program becomes not the realization of Socialism, but the reform of capitalism; not the suppression of the system of wage labor, but the diminution of exploitation, that is, the suppression of the abuses of capitalism instead of the suppression of capitalism itself.

During the August 9 elections, Kenyans must think of freedom and liberation from ethnic barons of the comprador class in their struggles to capture political power and not be persuaded through empty slogans and populist politics. Students, activists, community, and political organisers must be based within organisations and social movements, and also embrace political education as a guide to dismantling the populist rhetoric. Only then can we have a revolutionary change in its true sense.

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8. Rodney, Walter. 1971. *The Groundings with My Brothers*, Verso, p11

# Filling the Ideological Gap: Welcome Marx Memorial Library & Workers' School

It is almost impossible for a country to become socialist if there is no clear understanding of socialism and Marxism among revolutionaries and activists. The writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao are the necessary tools for getting a deeper understanding of social forces.

Thus Marxist study groups had flourished in the United Socialist Soviet Republic (USSR) and China before their revolutions. This need for ideological clarity was understood by the December Twelve Movement (DTM), which saw study and practice as necessary requirements before one became a member. DTM also established a number of libraries to ensure that appropriate study material was available for members. Indeed, books from DTM's library have crossed the generational and historical boundaries and are now available in the Ukombozi Library. Both these aspects of Kenya's history — DTM and Ukombozi Library — are subjects of articles in this issue of *The Kenya Socialist*.

The need for ideological learning was also recognised by the socialist groups in an earlier period when Pio Gama Pinto and others set up the Lumumba Institute<sup>1</sup> to train members of the Kenya African National Union (KANU), civil servants and trade unionists in theoretical and practical aspects of socialism.

There are no formal ideological schools in Kenya now, given the deep penetration of capitalism and imperialism in the country. Under the Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi governments, the level of suppression was such that it was impossible to set up such training programmes openly. There has been an opening in democratic freedoms in recent years but the tight state control over education and training means that no such programmes exist. But, as in the past, there are many groups that have regular study groups on various subjects — socialism, Marxism, history, activism, community organisation, among others. Study sessions at various social justice centres and at Ukombozi Library are among the more important ones. A proposal has also been made to unite all such study groups under the umbrella of Ukombozi Library to form a national ideological school along the lines of the Lumumba Institute.

While such ideas are under discussion, Vita Books and Ukombozi Library have taken a different route to add to the various initiative already on the ground. Over the past few years, they have been sponsoring a small number of activists to participate in courses run by the Marx Memorial Library & Workers' School in London. Previous participants have included one each from Tanzania and Zambia in 2021. This year, there are 10 participants from Kenya and a few others who could not be offered sponsorship this time will be included in the next course.

The participants themselves elect which course they would like to take. The ones selected in the past have included the following:

- An Introduction to Marxism
- Trade Unions, Class and Power
- Women, Work & Trade Unions
- Introduction to Marxist Economics.

An additional feature of the course this year is a proposal from the Organising Tutor for the course, 'Trade Unions, Class and Power'. He has suggested a way to include the reality of Kenyan trade unions into the course. This is an important development as it tailors the course to Kenyan needs. One of the proposals suggested by the Tutor is for the Kenyan participants to "present a short paper on issues of labour organisation in Kenya that could go out to all students and be the subject of a special zoom meeting". He is, however, open to other ideas to make the course more relevant to Kenyan participants.

In this way, the course provides a theoretical understanding of trade union issues and, by including the Kenyan context, moves from theory to practice. It is instructive to note the content of the course.

1. Some details about the Lumumba Institute are available in Durrani, Shiraz (2018): *Pio Gama Pinto, Kenya's Unsung Martyr, 1927-1965*. Nairobi: Vita Books.

## **Online Course - Trade Unions, Class & Power commencing 6 June**

This eight-week course seeks to understand trade unions as operating today and does so within a historical perspective of the past century. It examines why people join trade unions, why they become active trade unionists and what determines the effectiveness of trade unions in representing the interests of their members.

The course seeks to answer these questions within the wider context of Britain as a class society and with an understanding of the process by which the exploitation of wage labour takes place.

Using historical examples, it examines those occasions when the trade union movement has been able to achieve major victories for working people – as well as the tactics of employers and governments in seeking to reverse these victories.

The course provides participants with online materials, asks for written on-line responses as the basis for weekly on-line discussion and is supplemented by four fortnightly zoom discussions led by the tutors.

The course is based on the principle of mutual learning from participants drawn from a range of occupations, age groups and levels of experience.

Participants can take part (apart from the supplementary zoom discussions) at times of their own choosing.

By the end of the course you should be able to demonstrate

- Greater knowledge of the origins of the trade union movement
- The relationship between trade union organisation and class organisation
- How trade unions have transformed the balance of power in capitalist societies
- How capitalist societies have sought to control and neutralise trade unions
- The new challenges facing trade unionists today

The four classes are:

1. What are trade unions for and how do Marxists understand their role?
2. How do trade unions exercise political and economic power in capitalist society and do they still have power in contemporary Britain?
3. Lessons from the past: how trade unions have previously transformed politics; how our ruling class has sought to challenge and reverse these political gains
4. How can trade unions rebuild their economic and political power today and roll back the dominance of big business ?

The participants from Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia have come together in a WhatsApp group, Learning and Teaching, (L&T) as the reason that Vita Books and Ukombozi Library started the programme was not only to benefit the participants but for them to take their learning to their community or to other groups they work with. The reasoning behind setting up the L&T was given at the time:

The proposal is that we form a Learning & Teaching Group, as studying theory is one side of learning, but putting this learning into practice is also an important aspect of learning. At the same time, as some of you have indicated, you are active in your own fields in politicising and supporting people around you. This then implies that the learning you acquire is on behalf of your communities and needs to be shared with them. But this needs to be done in an organised way in order to ensure success.

The experience from this time will inform participation in future courses.

**Kenya Trade Union Study Initiative**  
In Memory of Makhan Singh



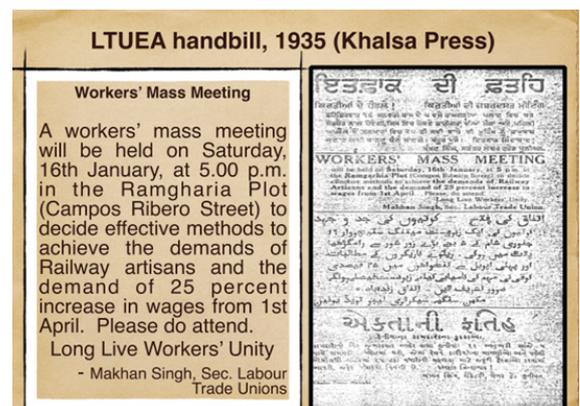
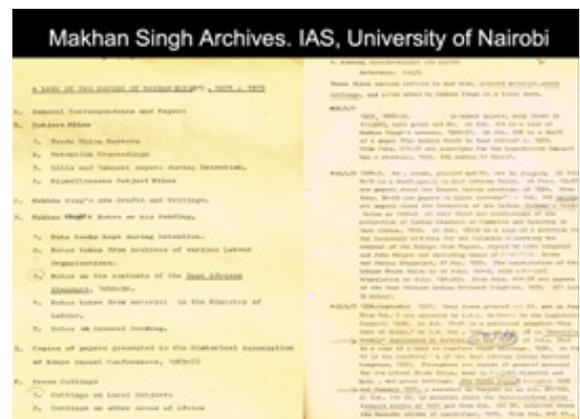
The Kenya Trade Union Study Initiative (KenTU) was set up by Vita Books (VB) and Ukombozi Library (UL) in 2022 following their sponsorship of Kenyan activists in the online course, Trade Unions, Class and Power run by the Marx Memorial Library Education Committee. KenTU has been set up in memory of Makhan Singh who led one of the strongest trade union movements in Africa. It aims to increase awareness of trade unionists and activists about the history of trade union movement and to support the struggles of working class in Kenya.

KenTU hopes to develop a partnership with Marx Memorial Library in developing and running on-lines courses on the theory and practice of trade unionism and class struggles, with particular reference to Kenya. VB and UL will support the Initiative by

sponsoring trade unionists and activists to participate in the course. They will also support the Initiative by publishing and disseminating relevant trade union literature and by developing a Trade Union Resource Centre at Ukombozi Library for use by course participants and trade unionists in Kenya.

A support group, consisting of participants in the courses run by the Marx Memorial Library, is being set up to advice on the content of the proposed courses and to establish links with trade unionists and activists. The Initiative is a pilot project to assess the need for, and the viability of, such a programme.

**Selected references on trade unionism in Kenya (being developed)**



# Kimani Waweru: The Ukombozi Library

Vita Books, Mau Mau Research Centre and Mwakenya founded the Ukombozi Library in August 2017 to provide progressive literature, especially on socialism.

The library has received valuable items from the progressive community in Kenya and overseas including the collection of material around the December Twelve Movement in the 1980s. Its approach is to take relevant information to people where they are. The library is an activist one and connects with community groups through its Community ReachOut project.

It holds weekly political study sessions where socialist books are read and discussed. The library strives to break with the colonial and imperialist mould of public libraries by focusing on the informational needs of students, working people, and peasants. National and tertiary libraries rarely meet these needs. The library was given the name Ukombozi (Liberation) to highlight the need to liberate people from capitalist and imperialist mindsets.

The library loudly proclaims on its aim on its logo: 'Information Equality, Africa'. That theme is never heard from national libraries. At the same time, it indicates that its perspective is a Pan-African. The Ukombozi Library focuses on material geared towards empowering the working class.

Its focus seeks to contribute to awakening people who can then participate in the struggle for a better Kenya — a Kenya where socially created wealth benefits everyone, as opposed to the present situation in which a minority gobbles up disproportionate amounts of the nation's wealth.

The library places emphasis on books covering history, resistance, and theoretical works on socialism and Marxism. These include works by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao. Additional materials include experiences from Vietnam, China, Cuba and Albania. African topics are represented mainly by the writings of Kwame Nkrumah and Patrice Lumumba.

Kenyan materials held in the library include studies on the Mau Mau as well as on earlier struggles against

colonialism. The material published underground by DTM and Mwakenya, as well as Umoja and the Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners in Kenya (CRPPK) in London, are also available. Other materials include videos, photos, and conference proceedings from various relevant events.

Again, such material is not common at most university libraries in Kenya. But the collection is only one part of Ukombozi Library's work. The library provides materials and space for student study sessions and meetings in working class areas, where it holds forums, film screenings, and related events aimed at increasing awareness and raising consciousness of political, economic, and social issues. It works closely with social justice activists in educating, politicising, and organising communities.

Presently, the library is working in partnership with the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung through the project, 'Empowering Citizens in Kenya through Socialist Knowledge and Perspectives', where it holds a series of study and discussion sessions for college and university students as well as social justice activists from both the older and younger generations.

The library works with diverse communities. For example, it has recently started the project, 'A Library Without Walls', in partnership with Vita Books and the Kenya Prisons Service. It seeks to create opportunities for people in prisons to participate in society and to promote their creativity, reading and life skills through developing innovative services responsive to their needs. The approach is: 'Bodies May Be Imprisoned, Minds Never'.

At one level, the library links up with community organisations and political and social activists. It works with several progressive organisations to hold political and social meetings. Yet another aspect of the library's work is its close partnership with Vita Books and Mau Mau Research Centre, which published progressive books.

Ukombozi Library is deeply rooted in the life of progressive, activist young people and their organisations, such as the team that produced the pioneering Sheng' podcast, 'Until Everyone is Free'.

The latest project the library is setting up in collaboration with Vita Books and the Marx Memorial Library is the Kenya Trade Union Study Initiative. It aims to increase awareness of trade unionists and activists about the history of the trade union movement and to support the struggles of the working class in Kenya. Vita Books and Ukombozi Library will publish and disseminate relevant trade union literature and develop a Trade Union Resource Centre at Ukombozi Library.

Ukombozi Library activities cover those of a traditional library in terms of its book work. It also undertakes research on social, environmental and political topics relevant to people marginalised by the effects of capitalism. Its collection is different from a traditional public library. Its uniqueness is in its deep roots in community organisations, mostly linked to working people and those marginalised by the mainstream society, particularly women.

Ukombozi Library focuses on the needs of those whose needs have not been met by public services, and supports their struggles for equality, justice and rights. Thus, Ukombozi Library is not neutral in the on-going class struggle. It has openly declared its commitment on the side of working people. It seeks to empower working people with a socialist world outlook, to liberate minds from the capitalist and imperialist stranglehold as the necessary requirement. Its strength lies in the strong support it receives from the communities it serves.

Ukombozi Library has been described as Kenya's first socialist library.<sup>1</sup> It is one of very few (and perhaps only) sources of Marxist and socialist literature in Kenya. It is a unique and deeply worthwhile endeavour, contributing to the revival of socialist thinking and action in Africa following decades of repression and neoliberal political hegemony.



1. Balhorn L. (2019) Kenya's First Socialist Library [online]. Available at: <https://www.rosalux.de/en/news/id/41361-kenyas-first-socialist-library> (Accessed: 17th August 2022).

# KISWAHILI SECTION

## Introducing Otsieno Godrick, our Translator



The following article on the history of Kenya has been translated by Otsieno Godrick. This issue carries the first article by Godrick. Future issues will carry more. Otsieno translated the first article, *Uhuru na Ukoloni Mamboleo: Tusiwai Nyamaza* in 2021 for use in his Study Group.

Otsieno Godrick, a young activist, symbolises today's youth in their struggle against capitalism and imperialism. The Editors are grateful to him for translating these articles out of his interest in studying, discussing and disseminating the working class history of Kenya.

### **Uhuru na Ukoloni Mamboleo: Tusiwai Nyamaza (2006)**

Imetafsiriwa na Otsieno Godrick

Dondoo. Never Be Silent, Publishing and Imperialism 1884-1963. By Shiraz Durrani. 2006. Nairobi: Vita Books. Chapter 7, pp. 233-238 (selection).

Mapambano ya kivita na kisiasa yaliondelezwa na MAU MAU mwishowe yalilazimisha mabadiliko

233  
NEVER BE SILENT

#### CHAPTER SEVEN

## INDEPENDENCE AND NEO-COLONIALISM

The active armed and political struggles waged by Mau Mau eventually forced a change in British colonial policy, not only in Kenya, but in other colonies as well. The very approach to colonial rule had to change in face of the increasing militancy and resistance of the colonised people. While it is true that Mau Mau forces were defeated in the military field, their achievement was nevertheless considerable. Facing an enemy with the resources of the whole Empire, the Mau Mau forces kept the colonial armed machine at bay for over five years.

It has not been recognised by many that Mau Mau won the political battle for independence. Towards the end of 1960s, it became clear that independence in Kenya was inevitable. This could not have been achieved without long years of struggle by Mau Mau combatants. Yet the battle for economic liberation was not won. The departing colonial power, now joined by the new imperialist power of USA, was not about to give up economic control in Kenya and other colonies as they achieved independence. The focus shifted from military battles to the economic and political fronts. It is to the credit of Mau Mau that they recognised this changing situation and started addressing this new threat. We take a brief look at this in this closing section.

katika sera za kikoloni za Uingereza, si Kenya pekee, bali katika nchi nyingine zilizokoloniwa pia. Kutokana na kuuongezeka kwa visa vya kivita, wakoloni walilazimika kutafuta mbinu mpya za kuendeleza ukoloni. Ingawaje ni kweli vikosi vya MAU MAU vilishindwa kivita, mafanikio yao yalidhihirika. Wakipambana na adui aliyekuwa na rasilimali za himaya, vikosi vya MAU MAU vilifaulu kudhibiti wakoloni kwa Zaidi ya miaka mitano. Wengi hawajafahamu kwamba MAU MAU walishinda vita vya kisiasa vya Uhuru.

Kuelekea mwisho wa 1960, ilikuwa dhahiri kwamba uhuru lazima ungepatikana. Hii haingejiri bila miaka mingi ya mapambano na wanavita wa MAU MAU. Lakini vita vya uchumi bado havijashindwa. Wakoloni waliokuwa wakiondoka walijiunga na wabeberu wa Amerika, na hawakuwa tayari kuachilia uendeshaji wa uchumi kwa Kenya ama nchi yoyote iliyokuwa chini ya utawala wa kikoloni zilivyoendelea kupata Uhuru. Mapambano yakawa sasa ya kiuchumi na kisiasa. Hongera inafaa ipewe kwa MAU MAU kwa kutambua hivi na kuanza kupambana na hali hii.

Kukielekea mwisho wa miaka ya 1960, sura mpya ya MAU MAU iliendelea na mapambano kwa kuchapisha na kugawa maandishi endelevu ili kuzuia fikra za kikoloni kucheza kwenye uga bila mpinzani.

Ili kupinga propaganda za kikoloni na kutilia mkazo umuhimu wa kuendelea na mapambano, wafuasi wa msimamo wa Kimaathi walitayarisha na kuchapisha mawazo, hisia na mtazamo wao kuhusu matukio ya historia, wakitumia maono ya wafanyikazi wa tabaka la chini. Hii ilikwa kwa njia ya nakala zilizosambazwa kwa upana hai kwa mkutano wa KANU uliofanyika Nairobi, Desemba, 1961. Mukstadha ulizua aina mbili ya mapambano yaliyokuwa yakitekelezwa ndani ya KANU- ya uhuru wa kweli, ardhi, uhuru wa bender ana dhidi ya ukoloni mambo-leo.

Nakala Inaanza na uchambuzi wa mapambano yanayoendelea.

Mapambano ya Maisha ya usoni ya Kenya yanaendelezwa leo katika maeneo matatu tofauti lakini ambayo yanaambatana; Kisiasa, Kirangi, na Kiuchumi. Inaonekana kwetu kwamba sisi waafrika tumeruhusiwa kushinda kwa mbili za kwanza, lakini tusishiriki katika mashindano kwa ya tatu, ambayo ni muhimu zaidi, mapambano ya Kiuchumi.

Tangu mwisho wa vita vya pili vya Dunia, Waingereza, wakifahamu kuwa hawangedhibiti mawimbi ya mapambano dhidi ya wazalendo wa kitaifa kote kwenye ulimwengu wa kikoloni, waliamua kuelekeza marengo ya kizalendo kwenye njia ambayo ingekuwa nzuri kuendeleza ukoloni wa Waingereza, pamoja na utawala wa mitaji ya kitaifa. Ukoloni wa kitambo uliohusisha utawala wa kisiasa wa kizungu unakufa haraka na mabadiliko ya haraka kuelekea aina mpya ya ukoloni, imeonekana ni lazima ili kuepuka mapinduzi ya kijamii ya kweli, ambayo yatafanikisha uhuru wa kiuchumi, Pamoja na kisiasa na kukomesha mtaji wa ziada wa Kenya kumiminika kwenye benki za wabepari wa kule magharibi.

Mpango mkuu wa Waingereza basi ni mwepesi kwa sera:

“Kwa umakinifu, peana uongozi wa kisiasa kwa watu waliotekwa kimawazo sawa sawa ‘aina nzuri’ ya mwafrika, yaani wale ambao hisia na masilahi yao ni sawa na yetu, ndio tubaki na uhibiti wa uchumi.’ Kwa kifupi, Waingereza walitaka kuondoka kwa njia kisiasa ili wafadhili wao wa kibepari wabaki wakimiliki uchumi.” Ukieka kama kauli mbiu, mpango huu ungekuwa: “ONDOKA ILI UBAKI.” Basi wacha sisi tupambane na utulivu ambao ni sawa na kurudi kinyumenyume, acha tupambane tukomboe hifadhi kubwa ya ubunifu ambayo sasa imebaki

ikilala miongoni mwa watu wetu; acha sisi kwa ufupi, tujenge jamii mpya ambayo inaruhusu kila mtu kuwa na haki ya kula, haki ya kuvuna matunda ya jasho lake, haki ya kuvaa nadhifu, nyumba, na masomo kwa Watoto wao, haki, kwa ufupi, ya kuishi kama binadamu wengine walio tulio sawa nao. Hii ni jamii ya kisoshilisti ambayo tunafaa kupambana kujenga, mfumo ambao kinyume na ubepari, unajihusisha na ustawi wa mwananchi wa kawaida na si faida na upendeleo kwa wachache.

Mbinu nyingine inayotumiwa ili wakoloni waondoke wakibaki inaitwa Utaifa. Hii ni itikadi ya kibadala ya ukoloni. Utaifa ni falsafa mbovu na haiwezi kuwa suluisho. Waingereza wamejaribu kutumia hii kauli mbiu mbovu ya kisiasa (wamemaarufisha wenyewe) ili kusimamisha au kuzima kuibuka kwa itikadi ya mapinduzi, ambayo waliogopa ingemaanisha mwisho wa utawala wao wa kikoloni.

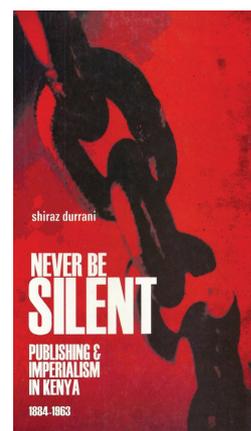
Yafaa basi tujenge itikadi ambayo italetu umoja kwa watu wengi, kupitia njia ya kuzungumzia mahitaji yao na kuendeleza mpango wa maendeleo ya kisosholista katika sekta ya kilimo ambayo inahidi kumaliza umaskini, magonjwa na kutojua kusoma na kuandika, mpango ambao utavuta talanta za ubunifu na nguvu za watu wetu, kuwapa hiyo heshima ya kibinadamu na majivuno ambayo huja kutokana na kujenga jamii na vitendo vya faida kwa jamii.

Yafaa, kwa kifupi, tupe watu wetu ala ya itikadi na ushirika ambayo itafanikisha mafanikio ya Uhuru wa kweli na maendeleo.

Acha sisi tusiwauze kwa bei mbovu, kwenye njia inayometameta ya ukoloni mamboleo na kusitisha maendeleo ya kijamii, kiuchumi na utamaduni.

Huu ndio ulikwa msimamo wa kiitikadi wa MAU MAU pindi kabla ya Uhuru.

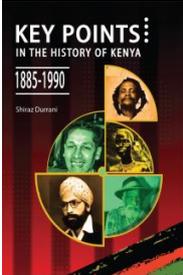
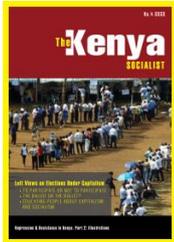
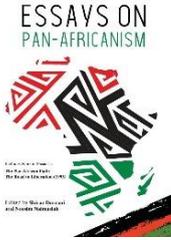
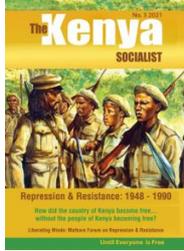
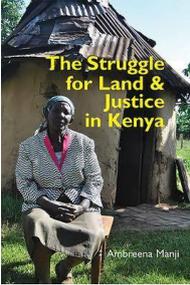
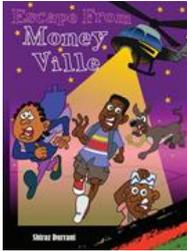
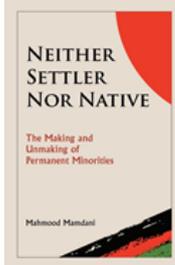
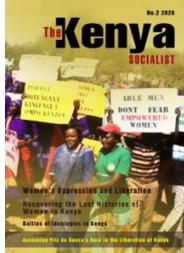
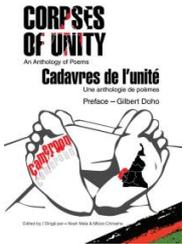
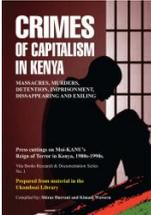
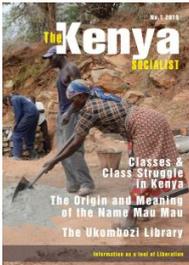
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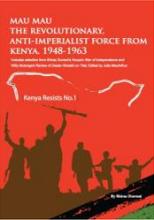
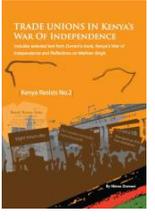
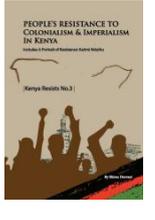
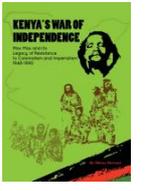
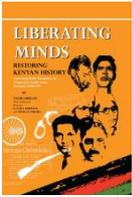
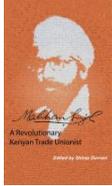
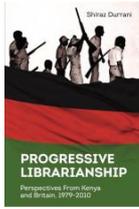
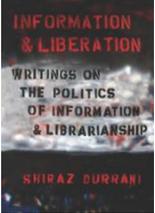
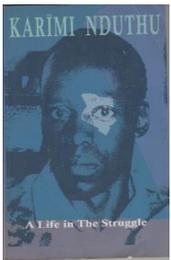


# VITA BOOKS

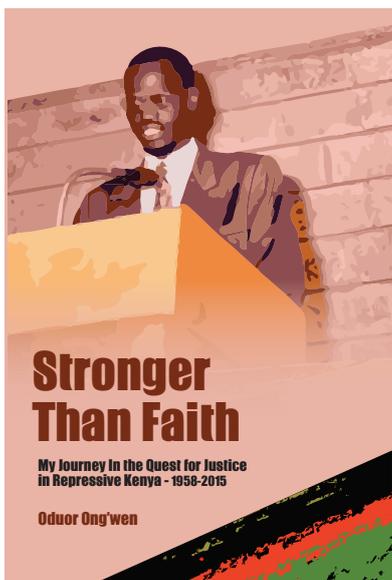


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## FORTHCOMING TITLES

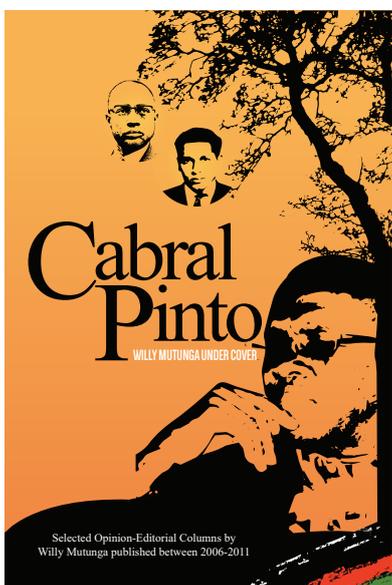


### **Stronger Than Faith: My Journey for Justice in Repressive Kenya**

Oduor Ong'wen

This book is a chronicle of the author's personal experiences in the struggle for social justice, democracy, good governance and equity in the repressive environment that prevailed in Kenya in the 1970s to 1990s. This struggle was at times overt, and when open dissent could not be tolerated by the regime it went covert. It is a documentation of personal pain, torture, rejection and long periods in political incarceration for speaking truth to power.

Kenya, under Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Moi, jailed so many men and women whose only crime was raising their voices against the excesses of their respective administrations. Their experiences are already recorded in memoirs and prison diaries already published before. This book is the author's modest contribution to the preservation of that era. It is the author's hope that it marks a victory in the contest between the pen and the gun.

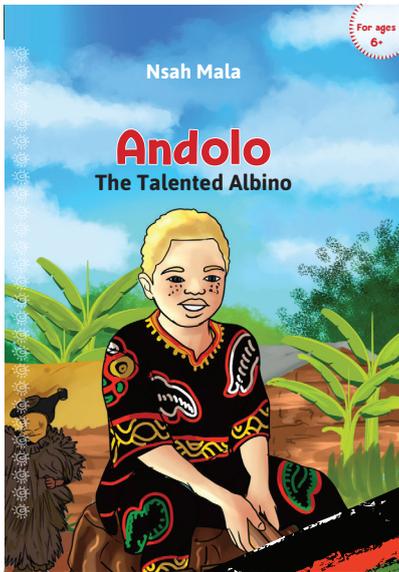


### **Cabral Pinto: Willy Mutunga Under Cover**

Selected opinion-editorial columns published between 2006 and 2011  
Willy Mutunga

Between 2006 and 2011, Mutunga wrote a weekly column in the *Saturday Nation*. It is from these contributions between October 2006 and June 2011, under the pen name Cabral Pinto – a combination of the surnames of the two African ideologues he greatly admired — that the 146 articles in this volume are selected. The clarity of Willy's moral voice is unmistakable on a broad variety of themes, ranging from exhortations for an alternative leadership that would deliver a human rights state, to an unapologetic call for mass action as a peaceful way to

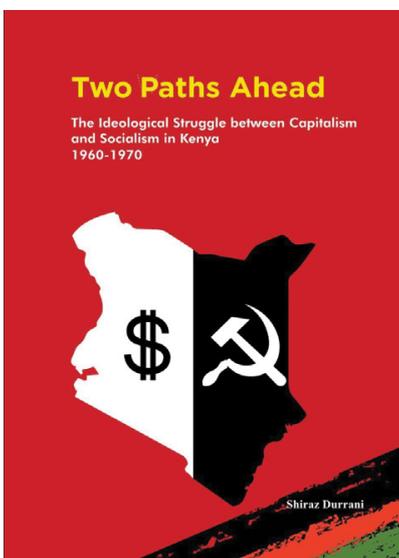
bring change. He spoke up volubly for the marginalised and the excluded — Kwamchetsi Makokha. Willy Mutunga was one of the youthful radical lights of the Kenyan pro-democracy movement of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. He paid a high price for it. As both the repression by President Daniel arap Moi's government ramped up, and the opposition to it snowballed, Mutunga was accused of being a member of an underground organisation known as the December Twelve Movement and involvement in the production of its publication, Pambana. He was subsequently detained without trial in June 1982. He was also dismissed from his job at the Law faculty of the University of Nairobi — Charles Onyango-Obbo.



## **Andolo, The Talented Albino**

Nsah Mala

In Mbesa, so many years ago, a special boy was born; and to their village he brought joy. With different gifts, many people visited the child. When they admired him, his parents both smiled. The boy had a unique colour – he was albino. Named Mbi, his mates later called him Andolo. Nsah Mala is a poet, children’s author, writer, journalist, translator and literary scholar from Mbesa in Cameroon, writing in English, French and Itangha-Mbessa. He has published five poetry collections and many picture books, including *Little Gabriel Starts to Read* and *What the Moon Cooks*.

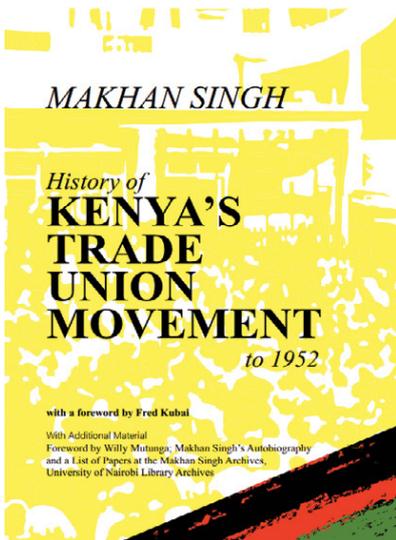


## **Two Paths Ahead: The Ideological Struggle Between Capitalism and Socialism in Kenya, 1960-1990**

Shiraz Durrani

The struggle between socialism and capitalism have been long bitter and violent. Capitalism won with the help of USA and UK governments at the time of independence in 1963. Yet the original (1960) Kenya Africa Union (KANU) party was in favour of socialism. It was President Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Arap Moi who used violence to suppress those advocating for socialism. They used their power to massacre, assassinate, exile, imprison and disappear people and created a state of terror to silence their opponents. Capitalism became the unstated state policy.

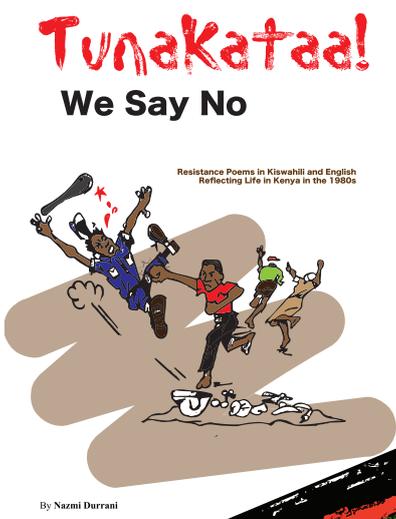
Thus Imperialism won and the aims of Mau Mau were brutally suppressed. However, the desire for socialism never died. Resistance movements and opposition parties made socialism their aim, reflecting people’s desire for justice, equality and empowerment. Many studies on Kenya focus on personalities or ‘tribes’ or race as the driver of events, ignoring the all important class and ideological positions of leaders and their parties. *Two Paths Ahead* reproduces and gives a brief commentary on the documents from the opposing sides in battles between capitalism and socialism - the original Kenya African National Union (KANU), its successor, KANU-B, and the Kenya People’s Union (KPU) on economy land, labour and social policy. It also touches upon the demands of the organisers of the 1982 attempted coup and traces the political stand of key leaders as proponents of Capitalism or Socialism. Also covered are some of the policies of the underground December Twelve Movement and Mwakenya. The final section reproduces some of the documents in this ideological struggle. The book exposes the hidden hand of imperialism in the country’s rush to capitalism. It fills a gap in understanding the real contradictions that divide Kenya to this day.



## History of Kenya's Trade Union Movement to 1952 (Reprint) Singh, Makhan:

From the start the trade union movement played a crucial part in political struggle for the freedom in Kenya. Makhan Singh, the author of this scholarly book, has for a long time been one of the most formidable figures in the growth of Kenya's trade unions. In this careful and readable study, authentically based on personal knowledge and a deep study of all available documentary sources, he has outlined the growth of labour protest from the forgotten heroes of this long struggle who are given their rightful place and the book adds important new perspectives to the history of the nationalist movement in Kenya

“Makhan Singh dedicated this book ‘To all those who struggled, suffered and sacrificed for the cause of Kenya’s national and trade union movements’. Yet it is these very people, including Makhan Singh himself, whose suffering and sacrifices have yet to be recognised by history. The injustices they suffered, and continue to suffer, need to be righted if there is to be peace in Kenya. It is for this reason that the life, work and writings of Makhan Singh have an enduring relevance today. Vita Books need to be congratulated for reprinting these important documents from Kenya’s past. They are essential readings for Kenya’s future” - Willy Mutunga, Chief Justice & President of the Supreme Court of Kenya, 2011-2016. (Foreword to the Reprint)



## Tunakataa: We say No! Poems of Resistance Nazmi, Durrani:

The poems depict peasant and worker resistance in Kenya in the 1980s to the oppressive Moi-KANU government. Here is the voice of the people saying ‘No’ to capitalism and imperialism. The poems, in Kiswahili and English, are as relevant today as they were in the 1980s. They are as relevant in Kenya as they are in the rest of Africa struggling against capitalism and imperialism



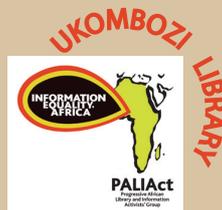
# KOITALEL SAMOEI

## 1860 – 1905

Koitalel led Nandi resistance against British imperialist rule for close to 10 years. Meinertzhagan, a British soldier, tricked him into signing an agreement only to shoot him while shaking hands with him in 1905.



*Never Be Silent Simama Imara*



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