



# Salute to spirit of struggle

**Title: Never Be Silent –  
Publishing and Imperialism  
in Kenya 1884-1963**  
**Author: Shiraz Durrani**  
**Publisher: Vita Books**

**Reviewed by MWANGI  
GITHAHU**

November 22 saw the launch in London of Kenyan exile Shiraz Durrani's book, *Never Be Silent – Publishing and Imperialism in Kenya 1884-1963*.

Launched in Kenya in July by Durrani, a former librarian at the University of Nairobi, now a senior lecturer of information management at the Department of Applied Social Sciences of London's Metropolitan University, the book is on sale in bookshops

around the country, retailing at Sh900.

In his introduction to the 270 page book, Durrani's former colleague at the UoN, Prof Ngugi wa Thiong'o, says: "This book is a wealth of resource data; it should be of interest to historians, political scientists, cultural workers and all those engaged in active struggle. It is drama. It is history. It is also a salute to the spirit of struggle."

The title of the book is taken from a chorus sung by Mau Mau activists: "We will never be silent until we get land to cultivate and freedom in this country of ours."

The book itself is the story of how the never silent struggle was reflected in the communications field. It examines how publishing in Kenya during the colonial era contributed to, or in some cases, took away from, the struggle.

It focuses on what the writer, a

left-winger of the old school, refers to as the "working classes" and their communications on the road to Kenya's independence.

This book takes a Kenyan view of Kenya's independence and provides a valuable insight into the past.

In a brief interview with the *Sunday Nation* during a visit to Nairobi earlier in the year, Shiraz Durrani explained that the idea of the book was born as far back as 1979 when he was in a group of "progressive" librarians at the University of Nairobi "searching for relevance in the information field in Kenya".

After a seminar on the topic at the university's Kabete campus, Durrani decided to look at the history of mass communication and publishing to see what lessons could be learnt from those experiences and wrote a paper on it.