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NEVER BE SILENT

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This book provides a comprehensive review of the press and publications in Kenya, from the beginning of the British colonial rule to independence in 1963. The book highlights the manipulation and misinformation practices that were in existence during this period that started from the Berlin conference of 1884 when the European nations carved out the continent of Africa for their imperialist objectives, to the Lancaster House conference in 1963 where independence for Kenya was discussed. The book starts with glowing introductions by Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Marika Sherwood. Following these, the first chapter provides an overview of the 'History of Publishing...History of Struggles'. This chapter presents a narrative on the history of publications and reports of events during the British colonial rule. As Durrani points out:

This book sees the history of Kenyan struggle for liberation from the victim's point of view. This is done from the very heart of the process where distortion of history happens - in the mass media where current events are turned into pages of history. The struggle is seen through contemporary

It is well known that the British government was silent for nearly ten years during the Mau Mau revolution. Most of the information that appeared during this period of the Mau Mau struggles was from the British (white) settlers in Kenya. The chapter provides an insight into the class-based history of publishing in Kenya. On the one side, there were the Kenyan workers, peasants and other working people and their allies, which included the African and South Asian intellectuals and professionals. On the other were the British colonial administration, the 'white' settlers and Christian missionaries who were supported by international finance as well as by the African and South Asian pettybourgeoisie. Such polarity meant that the colonial administration had the ultimate control in publishing and sought to provide 'its values, its world outlook, and its point of view on the colonised people as a way of ring effective control over Kenyan resources-both natural and human'. (p.18)

The second chapter, entitled the 'Consolidation of the Working Class (1922-1948)', captures the developments in publishing following the First World War to just after the Second World War. This period is important as it marks a change in the direction of events in Kenya. Until then the policy of the British government was to put European interests in Kenya on top of its agenda. However, in 1923 this changed and the interests of Africans were considered to be paramount at least on paper, if not in practice. In reality this change in policy was divisive, as this so-called 'African paramountcy' became the mechanism used by the then British government to divide the South Asians and Africans in Kenya.

The period from 1948-1963 was when the nationalist movements in Kenya mounted their strongest offensive. At the same time, this period saw the proliferation of the militant and antiimperialist press that was published in English as well as a variety of African languages. This 'hidden history' is 'brutal and shocking' and the documents concerning this period were unavailable in order to hide this brutality of the colonial regime. The bitterest struggles by the Mau Mau were those that concerned land ownership. In 1948, 3000 European settlers owned 43,000 square kilometres of the fertile land in Kenya, and just 6 per cent of this was cultivated. At the same time, 5.25 million Africans owned less than 135,000 square kilometres and most of this was unsuitable for agriculture.

Such facts on land ownership highlight one of the many injustices of the colonial regime.

In my view, in addition to the independence struggles in Kenya and the role of the press within that frame, the issues that Durrani's book sets out to explain are those that pertain to the contribution made by the South Asian publications as well as the links that the progressive South Asians living in Kenya during that period provided in the struggles against colonialism and injustices in the country. This narrative has been somewhat eclipsed in the postcolonial period in the East African countries. Contemporary issues on development and modernity, fail to take on board the earlier support provided by the South Asians and newly independent India, to the proindependence struggles in the East African countries. There were several South Asians who made significant contributions to the political and economic liberation of Kenya: Pio Gama Pinto, Makhan Singh and Ambubhai Patel, to name a few. Pinto was arrested and detained without trial for five years in 1954 for his involvement in the Kenya liberation movement. When released, he went to India on a fund-raising trip for the Pan-African Press. The then Prime Minister of India, supported this venture, through the first Indian High Commissioner to Kenya - Apa Pant, from 1948-1954. Pant (1987) encapsulates Pinto's contribution: Pio Pinto was deeply involved in the African freedom movement in Kenya and knew all the important underground leaders. But what diminutive, brilliant, highly affectionate Pio Pinto did for India and for the Indian community in Kenya during those critical days of Mau Mau rebellion can never be forgotten. The South Africans, the colonial powers and even Israel would have liked the anger, frustration and hatred of the Mau Mau to be diverted against India and the Indians. Serious and persistent attempts were indeed made to do so. Even the Church joined in a smear campaign, with sermons in Swahili and passion plays depicting Africans as criminally exploited by Indians . (cited in *Never Be Silent*, p.205)

Makhan Singh's contribution was to connect the two strands of Kenyan liberation-trade unions and politics. Singh was quite an active trade unionist in India during the preindependence period. Singh's experience of the trade union movements in India helped to mobilise the trade union movement in Kenya and its participation in the political struggle for independence. Singh was a member of the Indian Communist Party and as a trade union organiser and politician he documented the working class

history of Kenya. Makhan Singh's call for immediate independence in Kenya in 1950 was the first time that such a call had been made in public. Ambubhai Patel was a prominent publisher during the colonial period in Kenya. He drafted, printed and distributed many of the Mau Mau leaflets, in addition to translating several books published in Kenya into Gujarati. He also established the publishing house, New Kenya Publishers. Trained as a bookbinder both in India and the UK, Ambubhai wrote many articles for the underground press, as well as printing and distributing them. Patel had been imprisoned in India for his anti-colonial activities and in Kenya he was extremely active in giving support to the Mau Mau fighters at great personal risk.

There were many other South Asians who contributed to the independence movement in Kenya. This book is a valuable contribution towards the understanding of the South Asian publishing and its involvement in the independence movement in Kenya. Durrani has provided us with accessible information on this topic and the book also engages with the manipulation of information and communication during the colonial period in Kenya. It would be interesting to contrast this colonial period with the post-colonial phase in Kenya, where the turbulent periods have impacted upon the publishing activities in the country.

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