

## The End of Radicalism: “Throwing Oginga Odinga Under the Bus”

At the time of his trial in 1953, and for many years afterwards, Kenyatta had been portrayed as a “Soviet-trained Mau Mau terrorist.” In this capacity, he was reported to have organized “the dreaded Mau Mau secret society which aims to throw the white man out of Kenya.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, Kenyatta’s name was resolutely linked to the Mau Mau peasant revolt, which was portrayed in the influential Western papers as savage and frighteningly murderous. These reports took care to mention that Kenyatta had visited the Soviet Union “several times” in the 1930s and

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<sup>1</sup> *New York Times* (April 9, 1953), p. 1.

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In the USA, this phrase “has frequently been used to describe various politicians distancing themselves from unpopular or controversial figures.” Although the origin of this phrase is not clear, and thus remains a mystery, it has now found entry into “dictionary of English idioms and idiomatic expressions.” In the Urban Dictionary the phrase means, “to sacrifice some other person, usually one who is undeserving or at least vulnerable, to make personal gain.” The phrase captures the selfish action of sacrificing “another for personal gain,” and “getting someone into trouble or giving up information so they will get into trouble.” Also see, “Under the Bus,” by Tony Dokoupil, in *Newsweek* (March 19, 2008). Part of this chapter will describe and analyze the strategic and deliberate distancing of Kenyatta, members of his Cabinet, and the KANU from Odinga leading to his resignation from the party and the government.

“studied at Moscow University,” where he undoubtedly “became sympathetic to socialism.” The new image of Kenyatta in the West had to erase these old positions while erecting new ones in which the curtain opened and Kenyatta emerged as a wise anti-communist nationalist; a valued and even trusted friend of the West.

This remarkable and “outstanding turnabout” was best captured by Carl T. Rowan in his article on Kenyatta published in *Reader's Digest* in 1966.<sup>2</sup> Rowan correctly observed that prior to 1963, white settlers in Kenya had been “fearful of change, of losing the rich farmlands they had claimed as their own. They also feared revenge—and Kenyatta.”<sup>3</sup> After 1963, these settlers had been pleasantly surprised by Kenyatta’s metamorphosis from “leader to darkness and death” to the “acknowledged statesman he is today.” To their delight, Kenyatta’s “willingness to forgive” had “been so apparent” that “he wasted not one hour in expressions of bitterness toward the whiteman.”<sup>4</sup>

During this period of the re-introduction of Kenyatta to the West, most of the newspapers recounted his legendary political history and then drew attention to his unrivaled political stature in Kenya (and Africa). “His leonine head, his beard and his slow movements,” the *New York Times* observed,

create an impression of ancient times and ancient wisdom ... Because he is more a symbol, Mr. Kenyatta is less an individual; he has to be viewed at a distance. Before a meeting no one can touch him. The image speaks for the man and his voice rolls out over a crowd as if it came from the hills.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Carl T. Rowan, “The Metamorphosis of Jomo Kenyatta.” *Reader's Digest*. Vol. 88 (March 1966). Carl. T. Rowan was a veteran African American journalist in the USA who had also held very senior appointments in the federal government. “President Kennedy in 1961 appointed him Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, and later Ambassador to Finland. As Director of the US Information Agency from January 1964 to September 1965, he was the first Negro to sit on the National Security Council and to attend the President’s Cabinet meetings. Returning to journalism he now writes a syndicated column for the *Chicago Daily News* and score of newspapers in USA and abroad.” p. 119.

<sup>3</sup>Carl T. Rowan, “The Metamorphosis of Jomo Kenyatta,” p. 120.

<sup>4</sup>Carl T. Rowan, “The Metamorphosis of Jomo Kenyatta,” pp. 120–121.

<sup>5</sup>*New York Times* (May 29, 1963), p. 4.

Details about Kenyatta's life, including his multiple marriages, now added to Western fascination about him.

The man who now runs Kenya—Premier Jomo Kenyatta—clings to at least one of his Kikuyu tribal customs. He practices polygamy, but with a difference: one of his three wives is white. Mrs. Kenyatta No. 2, Edna May, flew from England to Kenya shortly before independence ceremonies. Kenyatta married her in London in 1943. She remained in England, raising their son, Peter, while Kenyatta returned to his native land to fight for its independence.<sup>6</sup>

The reporting always hinted at Kenyatta's extraordinary ability to navigate through the demands of multiple cultures, an ability that enabled him, for example, to remain married to three vastly different women: "The Premier's first wife, Grace is a tribeswoman. She is seldom seen in public. Wife No. 3 Ngina, is also a Kikuyu. Much younger than the other two others, she often serves as 'official' hostess."<sup>7</sup> It is Kenyatta, "once jailed by the British for his part in the bloody Mau Mau uprising," who was now credited with the salutary achievement of averting "another Congo" in Kenya which would have led to "the white population fleeing, and Kenya's 20 or so tribes fighting over the rich farmlands and modern cities left by the British."<sup>8</sup>

In August 1966, *Life* magazine<sup>9</sup> published a lengthy article on Kenyatta (and a select number of members of his Cabinet). The article, with glossy color pictures, focused on Kenyatta the man and his immediate family. There were pictures of Kenyatta in full ceremonial regalia, with Mama Ngina, then on his farm at Gatundu. Here was Kenyatta the calm, wise, dignified, relaxed, and affable leader. The article drew Western readers' attention to Kenyatta's magnanimity and almost infinite disposition to forgive those who had sought to do him harm in the past.

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<sup>6</sup> *US News and World Report* (December 23, 1963), p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> *US News and World Report* (December 23, 1963), p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> *US News and World Report* (December 23, 1963), p. 46.

<sup>9</sup> It is useful to mention here that *Life* was for a long time one of the most widely read and successful magazines in the West. Devoted to photo-journalism, *Life* reached millions of readers.

Jomo Kenyatta had reason to feel vengeful toward white men, who had kept him prisoner for almost a decade. He had cause to mistrust many countrymen, who had stirred tribal enmities in opposing him. He had a good excuse to avoid the burdens of leadership, for he was in the neighborhood of 70 when his African country won independence from Britain three years ago.

But he had refrained from any vengeful acts toward whites. Instead, as President, “the leonine old rebel has shown neither vengeance nor mistrust nor weariness. He encourages whites to help his nation, picks his government with disregard to tribal rivalries and displays the vigor of youth with wisdom of age.”<sup>10</sup>

According to *Life*, Kenyatta had, through his leadership and policies enacted by his government, bestowed to Kenya crucial political and social stability. As a result, “foreign investors, private and public” had eagerly sought to do business in Kenya and “tap a promising economy.” The political career of this man of “awesome physique, unflagging energy and indefinite age,” was, as *Life* saw it, a rare example of “the surprising emergence of a former ‘bad man.’”<sup>11</sup>

In February 1965, Duncan Sandys, now out office but still influential, continued to heap praise on Kenyatta. He was the “architect of Kenya unity.” This unity had been achieved, according to Sandys, by “the coming together of divided tribal groups in Kenya to form a single political party.” Such an outcome “was little short of a miracle.”<sup>12</sup> Sandys, like MacDonald, saw the rise of a one-party State in Kenya as a positive contributory factor towards national unity crafted by Kenyatta. “We might have all sorts of views as to whether a one-party State is a good idea. But it must be emphasized in the case of Kenya that the one-party State has been achieved not by suppressing the Opposition but by winning them over.”<sup>13</sup> Sandys concluded that Kenyatta had given Kenya “strong paternal leadership.”

On their visit to Kenya in July 1966, British Members of Parliament echoed Sandys’ views on democracy and opposition parties in Africa. These parliamentarians held the position that “Democracy in developing

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<sup>10</sup> *Life* (magazine), Vol. 61 (August 5, 1966), p. 36.

<sup>11</sup> *Life* (magazine), Vol. 61 (August 5, 1966), p. 45.

<sup>12</sup> *Daily Nation* (February 3, 1965), p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> *Daily Nation* (February 3, 1965), p. 1.

countries of Africa could not be expected necessarily to be based on the Westminster model ... The new states had their own varieties of democracy because of their different backgrounds."<sup>14</sup>

Once it was clear that Kenyatta had now arisen as the African leader most preferred by the West on the continent, several foreign organizations and governments sought audience with him. In February 1965, he "received a medal from the pope" and in March of the same year, South Korea bestowed on him the "Order of Merit for National Foundation—the highest South Korean award for Head of State," in recognition of his "selfless and sacrificial fight for the independence of Kenya." This sacrifice had not only led to the "glorious re-emergence" of Kenya as "independent free nation" but had also "set a shining example for many other nations aspiring to freedom all over the world."<sup>15</sup>

There was, to be sure, a minority of reports in the West during this period, which were not particularly complimentary toward Kenyatta. In June 1963, *Newsweek* published an article on Kenyatta in which it was hinted that imprisonment and then detention may have "sapped his spirit and energy." While Kenyatta could still deliver an impressive performance on "an election platform, he is inclined to drift into rambling incoherence in private conversation, especially when his interest is not fully engaged."<sup>16</sup> Then there were the occasions when Kenyatta was deliberately caricatured in the Western media, especially on television. This is what happened in November 1964 when a BBC program deliberately caricatured Kenyatta. Kenya's High Commission in London issued an immediate and forthright letter of protest to the BBC stating that "the BBC 'cannot indulge in offensive conduct with impunity.'" The BBC's response pointed to the "British tradition that even the most sober organs of public opinion may be expected to deal with serious issues in a humorous way." Therefore, the item that had caricatured Kenyatta had to be seen "against the continuous background of serious political comment on African affairs" which was included in many of the

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<sup>14</sup>*Daily Nation* (July 18, 1966), p. 3. These Members of Parliament presented the Speaker of the House of Representatives in Kenya with "a set of 120 books on Parliamentary affairs." They also hoped that they "would be given an opportunity of meeting President Kenyatta."

<sup>15</sup>*Daily Nation* (March 23, 1965), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup>*Newsweek* (June 10, 1963), p. 59.

BBC programs.<sup>17</sup> Besides, the BBC argued, the caricature of Kenyatta “was intended for the audience in Britain, where the convention of political humour is well understood.” The Kenya High Commission remained unconvinced, characterizing the BBC’s response as “a naïve attempt to evade responsibility for a shocking display of bad taste.”

A similar incident occurred in West Germany in July 1966 when the Kenya Ambassador lodged a strong protest with the West Germany Foreign Ministry regarding an Italian film called *Africa Addio*. This film, which was being shown in West Germany, had in its comments, depicted Kenyatta as “leader of Mau Mau” and also implied that Kenyatta’s government was “a Government of gangsters with the law of the jungle.”<sup>18</sup> Soon afterwards, the Kenya government “lodged a strong protest to the Italian Government” over this issue of Kenyatta’s depiction in the film. The Italian government agreed to “investigate and report the matter to Kenya.”<sup>19</sup>

These, and similar negative portrayals of Kenyatta, were, at this time, isolated and clearly outdistanced by the quickly expanding positive coverage of the man now seen in the West as a cherished and valued ally. The positive coverage, usually in influential newspapers and magazines, came back again and again to the view that Kenyatta had “provided strong leadership for this new nation and that substantial hope for stability and orderly development in East Africa now rests with him.”<sup>20</sup>

There can be little doubt that this change of opinion about Kenyatta in the West was largely the consequence of the MacDonald formula. The implementation of this political formula inevitably led Kenyatta to declare in the open his anti-communist, anti-radical positions. These found favor and support in the West.

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<sup>17</sup> *The Times* (London: November 18, 1964), p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> *Daily Nation* (July 2, 1966), p. 14.

<sup>19</sup> *Daily Nation* (July 8, 1966), p. 4. By this time, Italy had already pledged to undertake major industrial investments in Kenya. In June 1965, Mboya, as Minister for Economic Planning and Development, announced several investment projects by Italy, including: “A machine factory, the first in Africa to be built in Nairobi by Olivetti; A mechanized cashew nut factory to be built at the Coast; A rice milling factory at Mwea-Tebere; a pool service of agricultural equipment from tractors down to be sold to smaller farmers on long term terms.” See, *Daily Nation* (June 19, 1965), p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> *New York Times* (October 23, 1965), p. 30.

Within Kenya, the crucial indicator of Kenyatta's embrace and spirited advancement of conservative and anti-radical positions was the warm and sustained support that he came to receive from the white settlers after 1963. The majority of these settlers had chosen to stay on in Kenya. A few had left for South Africa and the then Rhodesia, but after a short stint in these countries, many of them had come back.

The explanation for this newly minted and apparently strong support for Kenyatta by the white settlers was based on economic and ideological grounds. Although some of them would later attribute this change of attitude to "a miracle" or to the "religious metamorphosis of Kenyatta," the underlying causes remained their economic and social self-interest. Kenyatta's Kenya "was one of the few places in the world," some of the settlers told Peter Knauss, "where the free enterprise system permits a good return on one's investments." Their point of reference for this change in attitude toward Kenyatta was his famous speech to their representatives in Nakuru in August 1963 in which he had assured them of the safety of their farms and property in independent Kenya. This act of magnanimity had clearly "exceeded their fondest hopes." Kenyatta not only forgave and absolved them of any responsibility for the past suffering of Africans, but he also pledged to shield them from any threat to their property from radical nationalists, eager to undertake comprehensive nationalization of property as the guide to post-*Uhuru* national economic policy. Kenyatta, they concluded, had "clearly moved closer to the European position on the land question."<sup>21</sup> Not surprisingly, many of the settlers now felt that "If ever there was a threat of a coup in Nairobi," they "would form a squadron and March down to protect the old man."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Peter Knauss, "From Devil to Father Figure: The Transformation of Jomo Kenyatta by Kenya Whites," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 9, no. 1 (May 1971), p. 134.

<sup>22</sup>Peter Knauss, "From Devil to Father Figure," p. 132. In a confidential memo to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the British High Commissioner in Nairobi in 1966, observed that Kenyatta, "who went to into seven year's detention as the supposedly evil genius of Mau Mau," had emerged "as the saviour of the British settlers ... His present policies may be guided by enlightened self-interest, but he would not fail to act unscrupulously should the interests of his country in his judgment require him to do so. So far from being an old man in a hurry, he is anxious to see his country develop into a modern State gradually and not by the revolutionary means advocated by his rival and former friend Mr. Oginga Odinga." See, MAC 71/8/60 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Kenya: First Impressions, p. 5.

This new fondness for Kenyatta by the settlers did not extend to Africans in general. Many of the white settlers retained the old colonial racist attitudes that had characterized their whole existence in Kenya. Kenyatta was seen as a “miracle” exception to the rule. “Attitude change ... was profoundly lacking towards Africans in general. Racial stereo-types recurred constantly” when Peter Knauss conducted his research interviews.

These revolved around three familiar themes: Africans have short memories; Africans are inscrutable; Africans are lazy and unreliable. Dissenting views were rare. The modal image of the African, explicitly colonial, was of a docile, happy-go-lucky creature, a salty man of the earth, dominated by physical desires, and subscribing to a comic view of the universe.

In such circumstances, the duty of the white man, as had been the case during the colonial period, “was to train the African out of his old habits into patterns of discipline and order: punctuality, cleanliness, and a greater appreciation for method in general and protection of property in particular.”<sup>23</sup> On some level, therefore, these white settlers saw themselves as continuing to carry-on the “white man’s burden,” even if this was now to be done less overtly in a changed political environment.

The ideological congruity between the white settlers and Kenyatta had a common objective: “the suppression of the threat from the African left.” As a result, the white settlers supported Kenyatta and his position in the post-*Uhuru* ideological struggles within the KANU (and the country). Kenyatta was now seen by many of these white settlers “as a kind and protective father figure.” In this capacity, he had “saved them from possible expropriation at the hands of radical African leaders.”<sup>24</sup>

To the white settlers, Britain, and later the USA, the arch radical, and therefore the man to be stopped and sidelined in Kenya, was Oginga Odinga. The British intelligence services had, since 1960, been very concerned about the political orientation and intentions of Odinga. Prior to 1960, he had been marked for special monitoring by the colonial security forces after he made the famous speech in the Legco in 1958 praising Kenyatta as the true leader of the Africans in Kenya in their struggle

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<sup>23</sup>Peter Knauss, “From Devil to Father Figure,” p. 132.

<sup>24</sup>Peter Knauss, “From Devil to Father Figure,” p. 135.



for *Uhuru*. This speech, the colonial government fervently believed, revived what it would later refer to as the "Kenyatta Cult." Odinga was held responsible for reviving the political career of Kenyatta who, until 1963, was largely unacceptable to the white settlers, the colonial government and the British governments as a possible leader of an independent Kenya. It is fair to say that Odinga was never forgiven for this daring act. "By this one act Odinga, an impulsive and highly emotional man, attracted on himself all the odium of the settlers and of much of British opinion in general. He became the arch radical."<sup>25</sup> Among African politicians, there were some who continued to hold a heavy grudge against Odinga for, in effect, resurrecting and adding luster to Kenyatta's political mythology. Many of them believed that Odinga's actions had denied them an opportunity to emerge as national leaders for now they had been forced to work under Kenyatta's shadow. Such politicians, even if they belonged to the KANU, still felt resentment toward Odinga.

It was, however, in 1960, that MI6 (the British foreign intelligence agency) started to focus on Odinga's alleged "communist leanings." During a recess at the Constitutional Conference in London in 1960, Odinga went to East Germany for a short visit. In subsequent periods, he visited other East European countries, in addition to the Soviet Union and The People's Republic of China. He received some funds from these countries for political activity in Kenya. According to Odinga, the money received from the Communist countries "funded vehicles ... for organizers of KANU branches in many parts of the country." Some of the funds were intended to establish "a national press." These visits also facilitated the enrollment of several "Kenya students to study in socialist countries."<sup>26</sup>

The British intelligence services noted, with increasing alarm, Odinga's access to funds from the Communist countries. Such funds, it was feared, would enable him and his radical allies to ascend to power in Kenya. In the period before 1963, the British intelligence services included Kenyatta among Odinga's allies. Further, these intelligence services noted that Odinga had given some of the funds received from the Communist

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<sup>25</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Annex A. The Extent of Soviet Influence in Kenya.

<sup>26</sup>Odinga Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru: The Autobiography of Oginga* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), p. 192.

countries to Kenyatta.<sup>27</sup> MacDonald confirmed this arguing that after his release from detention, Kenyatta

fell further under obligation to his Luo colleague because the latter was the only source from which he received substantial sums of money for financing his renewed political activities. Odinga had been receiving large quantities of cash from Russian and Chinese Communist sources; and Kenyatta probably knew that origin of his own share of the wealth.

In spite of this irrefutable fact of Kenyatta having received “Communist money” from Odinga, MacDonald found a plausible rationalization that effectively saw a clear distinction between Kenyatta’s laudible aims and Odinga’s nefarious intentions. “Having been pronounced by the British Governor of the day as a ‘leader to darkness and death,’” Kenyatta, MacDonald wrote, “had nowhere else to turn for sympathy and help; he needed money for his own genuinely Nationalist political purposes.”<sup>28</sup>

It was determined by the British intelligence services that Kenyatta had indeed received a substantial amount of “Communist money” “either via Odinga or via Kikuyu emissaries whom he sent abroad on begging missions.” The more “Communist money” Odinga received, the more he gave to Kenyatta. By 1964, according to the British intelligence services, Kenyatta “told the Chinese ... to pay him directly and their payments included one of £75,000 to Kenyatta and Odinga’s joint account in May 1964.”<sup>29</sup> Other sources of foreign funds for Kenyatta at this time included £37,000 received from the United Arab Republic.<sup>30</sup> Kenyatta’s receipt of “Communist money” seems to have ended “after the middle of 1964 since when internal sources such as ‘harambee’ donations to ‘personal charities’ such as Gatundu Self Help Hospital and Mama Ngina Children’s Home and business projects have provided the required amounts together with use of the KANU party funds under his

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<sup>27</sup>FCO 31/2314 (London: National Archives), p. 60. Confidential memo on Leading Personalities in Kenya, 1978.

<sup>28</sup>MAC 71/8/19 (London: National Archives; Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Kenya: Odinga, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Annex A. The Extent of Soviet Influence in Kenya.

<sup>30</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Annex A. The Extent of Soviet Influence in Kenya.

personal control."<sup>31</sup> Lastly, on this question of "Communist money" the British intelligence services concluded that after *Uhuru*, "Kenyatta was soon able to milk the state," thus dispensing with his earlier reliance on funds from Communist countries that Odinga had channeled to him. On the other hand, Odinga's reliance on these funds remained.<sup>32</sup>

The alarm expressed by the Western powers over what they saw as political mischief being caused by "Communist money" in Africa, sprang in part from the view that Africa belonged to them, to their "sphere of influence," and therefore had to be protected at all costs from any and all threatening intrusions from Communist countries. As a result, the West and its conservative African nationalist allies came to see any possibility of communism finding a foothold in Africa as an intolerable danger and intrusion. Thus, the decolonization process in Africa unfolded against the backdrop of the Cold War in which the West sought to undermine, harass, derail, and defeat radical African nationalists and all those suspected of harboring communist leanings.

In January, 1963, Robert McNamara, the USA Defense Secretary stated before the House Armed Services Committee that, "the large number of newly independent countries in Africa provided opportunities for Communist 'troublemaking.'" While the USA and its allies discounted the danger of actual "Communist military aggression against Africa," they nonetheless insisted that they lacked "the means to prevent Communist infiltration, subversion and other forms of hidden aggression."<sup>33</sup> This question of Communist infiltration quickly became the prism through which any and all economic, political, and social overtures from the Communist countries to Africa was viewed by the Western powers and their African allies. "Soviet infiltration into spheres of influence in Africa," Colin Gibson wrote with a sense of urgency at this time, "is growing ever stronger. Apart from the technical advisers, loans and cultural programmes there are the goodwill ambassadors of the many 'front' groups which represent Soviet influence in disguise. One of these 'fronts'

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<sup>31</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Annex A. The Extent of Soviet Influence in Kenya. The British intelligence services also pointed out that Kenyatta had, before *Uhuru* in 1963, "rejected a £30,000 offer from Somalia to cede north eastern Kenya, when according to secret sources, the Emperor of Ethiopia made a larger bid."

<sup>32</sup>FCO 31/2314 (London: National Archives), p. 60. Confidential Memo on Leading Personalities in Kenya, 1978.

<sup>33</sup>*East African Standard* (January 31, 1963), p. 1.

alone, the World Federation of Democratic Youth, has spread its tentacles far and wide.”<sup>34</sup>

The US State Department issued an equally alarmist report on this matter of Communist infiltration in newly independent African countries. It concluded that, “Communists are making headway in Africa and, through military aid, have secured entry to the security forces of at least five countries—Algeria, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, and Somalia.” The achievement of *Uhuru* by many African countries at this period afforded the Communist countries an opportunity to engage “in subversion in Africa.”<sup>35</sup> Such subversion was carried out under the cover of a variety of economic aid programs. Of particular importance to the State Department, was the education of Africans in Communist countries in multiple fields. “The increasing number of Africans being trained academically in Communist countries (about 5295 as at December 1963) presents perhaps the most dangerous long-term threat to the future of internal stability in Africa.”<sup>36</sup>

Any pronouncements from Moscow or Beijing affirming solidarity with the peoples of Africa was immediately seen as a declaration of intent to spread communism on the continent. To this end, the extended visit by Chou-En-lai, the Prime Minister of the People’s Republic of China, to several African and Asian countries in 1964, was carefully scrutinized in the West. His statement in Tanzania that “Africa was now ripe for revolution”<sup>37</sup> was widely publicized in the West as evidence of China’s overall political objectives in Africa. Chou En-lai’s report on this extensive trip to the National People’s Congress in Beijing also received attention in the West. “He said ... the welcome his delegation received in the African countries demonstrated the comradeship-in arms between the African and Chinese peoples.” He also pointed out that, “China supported the African and Arab peoples in their struggle to oppose imperialism and colonialism, new and old, and supported the pursuance of a policy of peace, neutrality and non-alignment by the African and Arab countries.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *East African Standard* (January 9, 1962), p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> *East African Standard* (April 1, 1964), p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> *East African Standard* (April 1, 1964), p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> William Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks: A Personal Adventure* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 249.

<sup>38</sup> *East African Standard* (April 27, 1964), p. 2.

The USA and the rest of the Western powers remained convinced that the main intent of China and the Soviet Union was to sponsor radical revolutions in Africa. In 1964, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the US State Department, produced what it claimed were genuine Chinese military documents. According to the Bureau, these documents, "obtained in an undisclosed manner showed that China was following a strategy of stalemate towards the United States while pursuing its aims of promoting revolutionary movements in underdeveloped nations, particularly in Africa."<sup>39</sup> It was feared in the West that the pursuit of this strategy by China, especially "when the opportunity is ripe," would result in "the wave of revolution," capable of rolling "up the continent of Africa like a map."<sup>40</sup>

By the early 1960s, Communist agents were reported to be almost ubiquitous in the newly independent African countries. Sir Alec Douglas-Home, the British Prime Minister (October 1963–October 1964), was sure that there were "trained communist agents, right through Africa." These agents were trained in "Communist techniques, in Moscow and in China, and there are plenty of them around the continent of Africa."<sup>41</sup>

In a bid to highlight and then reinforce the imminent danger that the West faced in Africa, Communist agents were portrayed as shrewd, sneaky, driven, earnest, and flexible. They worked through the few viable established Communist parties on the continent, even if these parties appeared "to be weak and often prone to the nationalist heresy." More crucially, the Communist agents worked through individual African politicians who occupied critical strategic positions that could enable them to advance the communist cause. Such politicians received "Communist money" to be used in the subversion and destabilization of the new independent governments. In the case of Kenya, it was repeatedly stated that, "large sums of money have been paid to individuals ... for disruptive

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<sup>39</sup> *East African Standard* (April 25, 1964), p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> *East African Standard* (April 25, 1964), p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> *East African Standard* (February 22, 1964), p. 3. Sir Alec Douglas-Home became the British Prime Minister in October 1963, following Harold Macmillan's sudden resignation due to health reasons (prostrate trouble), and also the political storm in his own party and the country over the Profumo Affair. Prior to becoming Prime Minister, he had held senior political positions in many British governments.

purposes. The spate of allegations and denials ... indicates one thing at least—there is no smoke without fire.”<sup>42</sup>

Throughout the colonial period, and then after *Uhuru*, the British intelligence services had in their possession, detailed information on the question of the possible spread of communism in Kenya. “During the Emergency the Colonial Government forbade all political activity, greatly enlarged the police force, particularly its Special Branch, and rigidly controlled entry into and departure from Kenya. Thus, the Communists were totally excluded.”<sup>43</sup>

In post-colonial Kenya, these British intelligence services concluded without any hesitation that, “The history of Communist penetration of Kenya is largely that of Mr. Odinga’s political activities.”<sup>44</sup> These activities, as already pointed out, were understood by the British intelligence services to have been wholly financed by “Communist money” from China, the Soviet Union, and other Communist countries. The finances had been disbursed to him directly since Kenya did not have a Communist party or even its equivalent in the period between 1960 and 1966.

But why did Odinga seek “Communist money?” The answer, according to the British intelligence services, had more to do with competition for power in nationalist politics than any commitment to communism.

From 1957 onwards Tom Mboya, the rival Luo leader was receiving considerable financial support from the United States through the trade union channels. Odinga to meet Mboya’s challenge asked the Americans to support him also but having consulted Mboya they refused. Odinga then turned to the Soviet bloc for funds. At the same time the British business support was being given to “moderates” such as Moi and Ngala. Odinga’s decision was therefore the result of his failing to obtain support from the West because of American backing for Mboya and British backing for those politicians who wished to keep Kenyatta out of politics for good.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *East African Standard* (January 9, 1962), p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Kenya: Communism, p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Kenya: Communism, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), The Extent of Soviet Influence in Kenya.

Odinga had therefore sought "Communist money" in order to counter "the meteoric rise of Mr. Mboya, subsidized on a lavish scale by the Americans."

The bulk of the evidence gathered by the British intelligence services on Odinga, nonetheless, came to the conclusion that he was not a Communist.

Odinga never has been, and is not now, a Communist. To this day he retains (and still further extends) his capitalist business interests; he agrees that the traditional system of individual land usage in most Kenyan tribes makes a Communist system of agriculture inappropriate in this country; and he is not a Marxist.<sup>46</sup>

Odinga, according to these intelligence services, "was in fact one of Kenya's first African capitalists." Why, then, was Odinga dangerous? What caused him to be identified by MacDonald, the West and Kenyatta as an ideological threat and a political menace to the very survival of the country?

Within Kenya, Odinga was a threat because the radical voices and groups in the KANU had, in a short period after 1963, coalesced around him thereby signifying a potential ideological and operational alternative to the Kenyatta government. These diverse groups included the former Mau Mau guerillas and detainees who seemed eager to adopt more radical positions on land ownership, and then the former squatters who pushed for nationalization of land. To this list must be added the poor, landless, unemployed and economically disadvantaged sections of the population across the country. There were also the radical members of Parliament whose opposition to the government's policies was becoming more persistent and unrelenting. Odinga had become "the spokesman" of these diverse groups that represented an increasing "popular discontent" against Kenyatta's government. These diverse multi-ethnic groups espoused not only radical nationalism but also radical solutions. Their nationalism was more defiant and assertive. It seemed to embrace cultural nationalism and semi-socialist economics. These positions, while not fully developed into a coherent ideological framework by 1965, posed a serious challenge to the conservative nationalism of the Kenyatta

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<sup>46</sup>MAC 71/8/19 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Kenya: Odinga, p. 1.

government. Odinga had to be removed in part because of his symbolism: he symbolized an unacceptable radical nationalism that tended toward radical solutions in post-colonial Kenya.

For MacDonald's bet on Kenyatta to be worthwhile as an investment, the new government had to be resolutely pro-West in its foreign and domestic policies. In order for this to happen, Kenyatta had to move the KANU and government closer to the policies and positions originally embraced by the KADU, thus renouncing radical politics, aspirations, policies, and inclinations. Kenyatta then had to "sell" these conservative positions and policies to an increasingly restive public by portraying them as authentically African in origin and inspiration and therefore most appropriate for the country. This most vital effort on behalf of conservative policies could not succeed if Odinga and the radicals were still prominently represented in the KANU and the government, and also if they still had an open access to the general public where "popular discontent" was markedly evident at this time. Odinga and the radicals had to be removed from the political stage so that Kenyatta's conservative policies and tactics could take root and flourish without contest.

In the period after 1964, MacDonald remained worried about Odinga's overall popularity in the country. Part of this popularity, MacDonald wrote to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, was the result of Odinga distributing "Communist money" to politicians, trade unionists, and several ordinary citizens targeted for their political value.

During the last two years he has spent brilliantly the large sums of money which his Communist pay-masters have given him, keeping little of the cash for his own personal purposes, and distributing it with discreet, well judged cunning in countless small or large amounts as bribes among key back-bench members of Parliament, local party officials, and others who could subvert the KANU political party and the trades union movement in his direction—and against Mboya and other competitors, including if necessary Jomo Kenyatta himself.<sup>47</sup>

Odinga's evident popularity, which remained worrisome to the West, could also be attributed to what MacDonald called "his thoroughly African character." Unlike many prominent national politicians and

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<sup>47</sup>MAC 71/8/19 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Odinga, p. 2.



even senior African civil servants, Odinga had "not become partially Westernised by any period of education in Britain or America." As a result, he was still "racy of the African soil; and he keeps in close touch with the ordinary, simple African people, such as peasants, workers and idlers—the voters. His democratic behaviour and popular, down-to-earth oratory appeal to them. They feel that he remains more one of themselves than does any other member of the present Government."<sup>48</sup> MacDonald also acknowledged that Odinga's identification with the "common under-privileged people," was genuine and he really wanted "to help them." Although he remained opposed to Odinga and his politics, MacDonald nonetheless pointed out that he was "a truly sincere African nationalist with (in spite of his own capitalist connections) a Socialistic sympathy for the poor 'under-dogs.'"<sup>49</sup> Odinga's radical nationalism and popularity had the terrifying potential of undermining the MacDonald formula now being implemented by Kenyatta's government.

In a nutshell, the appeal of Odinga's radicalism extended far beyond "his fellow-tribes-men, the Luos." MacDonald, alongside Kenyatta and the Western powers eager to support him at this time, all recognized this fact. The possibility of creating a multi-ethnic coalition of the "under-dogs" opposed to Kenyatta's conservative nationalism, posed the most potent threat yet to the MacDonald formula and the Kenyatta government that it had so carefully created. Odinga's "demagogic passionate powers as an agitator," MacDonald observed,

are capable of winning strong support from many humble people belonging to those other tribes who are unemployed, poverty stricken, and discontented. And his command of money for bribing them can do the rest—for such cash so used (even in small contributions of a few pounds) talks louder in Africa than it does on any other continent.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>MAC 71/8/20 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Odinga, pp. 2–3.

<sup>49</sup>MAC 71/8/20 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Odinga, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup>MAC 71/8/20 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Odinga, p. 3.

Within Central Province, the British intelligence services observed that the “Kikuyu establishment” perceived Odinga as “a political danger only in so far as he attracts the support of the discontents and the have-nots and enjoys the popular support of the Luo in Nyanza.” The list of “Kikuyu dissidents” and discontents that could have been attracted to Odinga’s radicalism thereby breaking “the solidity of Kikuyu tribal backing” for Kenyatta’s government, included:

the ex-Mau Mau freedom fighters whose hunger for the land they feel to be their due in independent Kenya they helped to create has not been appeased; the extremists whose sympathies lie with Odinga Odinga’s radical form of nationalism ... men like Bildad Kaggia; and of course trouble makers in any developing society, the jobless, those not favoured by “brotherisation” (the Kenya form of nepotism), the under-privileged whose means do not match their ambitions.<sup>51</sup>

The fear in the West, and especially in Britain, was that the political triumph of Odinga in Kenya “might provide the conditions favourable to the communist doctrine in Africa.”<sup>52</sup> As a popular radical nationalist, Odinga represented a veritable danger to Western political and economic interests in Africa. A related fear was that the triumph of a prominent radical nationalist with established links to Communist countries might serve as an unacceptable example to budding radicals in other newly independent African countries. MacDonald saw this as a clear danger to the West. It led him to increase his efforts toward the ousting of Odinga from the political stage. In MacDonald’s view, Odinga had in “self confident semi-innocence” mistakenly assumed “that he could use his Communist allies more for his political purposes than they could use him for theirs.”<sup>53</sup> It was MacDonald’s view that Odinga had arrived at this dangerous conclusion because “he is not blessed with conspicuous brains or understanding.”

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<sup>51</sup>MAC 71/8/85 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives: Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Tribalism in Kenya, p. 8.

<sup>52</sup>Michael Blundell, *So Rough A Wind: The Kenya Memoirs of Sir Michael Blundell* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964), p. 232.

<sup>53</sup>MAC 71/8/19 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Odinga, p. 2.

Having determined that Odinga was the arch-enemy of the West in Kenya, there followed a sustained effort aimed at undermining his personal and political credibility. The singular political purpose of this multi-faceted undertaking was to show Odinga as being unfit to rule the country. Unlike Kenyatta at this time, Odinga would be portrayed as lacking in wisdom and even simple patriotism. The policies advocated by him and his allies, would be discredited and even ridiculed by Kenyatta and his local and international allies, as alien to Kenya; foreign inspired and, therefore, unAfrican. Odinga would be portrayed, with vicious consistency, both in Kenya and in many Western countries, as a stooge of Communists eager to enable the spread of this most unAfrican doctrine in the country.

The starting point in the political and administrative campaign against Odinga was to systematically undermine his character. The key element in any consideration about Odinga, MacDonald informed London, was that he was "mentally unbalanced." How did he come to this knowledge? "I am told," he wrote, "that at one period of his life he was for a while an inmate of a mental home, possibly only for cautionary observation."<sup>54</sup> On top of this, he was a very emotional man. This was seen as a dangerous character trait to possess especially because he was "mentally unbalanced." There was hardly any mention or discussion of Odinga from this period until his detention in 1969 that did not draw attention to him being an emotional man easily aroused to anger.

His emotions are strong, and passion never lies far beneath the surface of his thoughts and actions. When it is aroused, he swiftly becomes over-excited. Then he talks fast, gesticulates somewhat wildly, and—as he gets really worked up—begins to froth at the mouth. At those moments the touch of mental unbalance in his make-up (if my analysis is correct) takes command of him. Nor do those moods last only briefly; they are apt to continue for hours. It is then useless to attempt to argue with him. One has to wait patiently until he slowly recovers his cool charm and sweet reasonableness.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>MAC 71/8/19 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Odinga, p. 19.

<sup>55</sup>MAC 71/8/20 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Odinga, p. 20. Also see, *New York Times* (April 16, 1965) coverage on Odinga as the "Leftist Voice in Kenya." The coverage drew attention to Odinga's volatility and his association with communism. "He is a volatile, restless man, likely to burst into song

To be sure, Odinga had “charming good humour, disarming candour (when he is in the mood), gentlemanly courtesy, considerable generosity and native friendliness.” Nonetheless, MacDonald still found him objectionable since “his intellect is mediocre, his judgment is erratic, and his wisdom is muddled. His heart usually rules his head; and the warmth of his heart can make him very hot headed.”<sup>56</sup> These misgivings on Odinga were further reinforced by the resistance of the white settlers toward his brand of nationalism and then his widely publicized linkages to Communism and “Communist money.”

Michael Blundell ably articulated the ideological and cultural basis of white settlers’ resistance to Odinga. Partly basing himself on Odinga’s performance during the 1962 Constitutional Conference in London, Blundell’s criticisms sought to highlight these supposed ideological and cultural deficiencies. In his contributions at the Conference, Odinga would start slowly and then

he was soon in full spate, not a pause occurring between sentences as he quickly replenished his lungs with a curious droning gulp through which the words were temporarily suspended. Flecks of foam appeared at the corners of his mouth and were wiped away with a crumpled handkerchief with sudden swift gestures in between the flailing arms. Kenyatta on other side was continually ducking and bobbing as an expansive arm would swing out in a wide gesture ... Mboya sat with a frozen look on his face as if a relative was committing a terrible social gaffe on some notable occasion.<sup>57</sup>

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and dance even at a public meeting. This aspect of his character often leads opponents to underestimate the political shrewdness of Jaramogi Ajuma Odinga, Vice President of Kenya. Since his youth Mr. Odinga had been an annoyance to British colonial officials. Since Kenya’s independence he has repeatedly been accused by his own countrymen of espousing the goals of the Soviet Union and Communist China ... Mr. Odinga’s several trips to Moscow and Peking have embroiled him in controversy both before and after Kenya’s independence” p. 6. This coverage noted in passing that “despite his frequent use of Communist rhetoric and phraseology, however, informed observers do not label Mr. Odinga as a Communist.” For additional discussion in the West on Odinga as an emotional man see, *The Reds and the Blacks* by William Attwood. Odinga is described as a “colorful and erratic leader of the wrong tribe ... His weaknesses were his emotionalism and a vast ignorance of the outside world,” pp. 238–240.

<sup>56</sup>MAC 71/8/20 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Odinga, p. 20.

<sup>57</sup>Michael Blundell, *So Rough A Wind*, p. 301.

This narration served the purpose of illustrating Odinga's supposed lack of self-control. It was used to reinforce his reputation, repeatedly cited at this time, as an angry out-of-control radical African nationalist.

But beyond this performance at the Constitutional Conference, there was also the matter of what Odinga represented: his vision for Kenya and Africa. Here, white settlers found themselves holding onto two contradictory positions. Odinga was a Communist, or at least a Communist sympathizer, but he was also "too African," by which it was meant essentially anti-modern progress. Both positions were employed interchangeably to condemn Odinga as unfit to lead Kenya. "Oginga Odinga," Michael Blundell wrote, "seems to me to represent that emotional slightly bewildered resentful section of the African people who have been precipitated protestingly into the twentieth century ... in his heart of hearts," Odinga is "drawn towards the past without the sergeant major-like presence of the white technician, industrialist or scientist."<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, Odinga's political opponents, such as Mboya, were forward looking, that is, modern. "Mboya is intent on creating a modern country in which citizens are demonstrably competent for the tasks which they have undertaken."<sup>59</sup> Still, Odinga had to be taken seriously as a political threat to the creation of a modern nation championed by moderate leaders. His views remained popular and appealing to what Michael Blundell called "the rather conservative, backward and simpler peoples of Central Nyanza." Also, his "bizarre, gaudy methods are attractive to the uninhibited, flamboyant streak which lies in many Africans."<sup>60</sup>

The composite picture of Odinga's character, painstakingly chiseled by his political opponents, was that he was simply too radical, erratic, emotional, and strange to ascend to power in the country. Also, perhaps, "too African." And there was always the matter of him being a "Communist stooge." Even his mode of dress became an issue of concern to his political opponents.<sup>61</sup> MacDonald's summary to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was that Odinga was an unusually strange man. "In all my experience of countless public personages in numerous countries around the world," MacDonald wrote about Odinga, "he is

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<sup>58</sup>Michael Blundell, *So Rough A Wind*, p. 232.

<sup>59</sup>Michael Blundell, *So Rough A Wind*, p. 232.

<sup>60</sup>Michael Blundell, *So Rough A Wind*, p. 232.

<sup>61</sup>William Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks*, p. 238.

individual to the point of uniqueness. I have known quite a selection of astonishing people in high places in Britain, Europe, America, Asia, Antipodes and Africa—but never one quite like the clever, charming, endearing and wickedly crazy Oginga Odinga.”<sup>62</sup> This was “a very muddled man who is part angel and part devil.”

On the local scene, Odinga’s political opponents succeeded in linking his political credibility (and even legitimacy) to the ideology of Communism. This was the result of a deliberate and steady political strategy aimed at gnawing at his popularity with “the common underprivileged people.” An assault on Communism was therefore, at this time, also a drive against Odinga and his national political influence. There followed what can only be described as a carefully choreographed political confrontation between Kenyatta and Odinga on the future of Kenya: its central and governing economic, political, and social policies. All the discussion in this duel between radical and conservative nationalism, revolved around communism and its relevance to Kenya.

The initial alarm against Communist infiltration and subversion within Kenya was sounded by the white settlers and the colonial government. This was especially true during and after the Mau Mau peasant revolt. After 1960, this ideological cause was taken up by the African political leaders of the KADU, some members of the former Home Guards and Western-oriented leaders in the KANU and then the New Kenya Party (NKP). In early 1962, Masinde Muliro, Vice President of the KADU and Minister of Commerce, “announced the formation of a Christian Democratic Movement to fight Communism in Kenya.” Muliro was prepared to work with any religious group, such as “Muslims and Moral Re-Armament,” to fight against Communism. As a Roman Catholic, he wanted Kenyans to arm themselves, “spiritually against Communism.” He believed that Christianity could be effectively deployed to save the country from Communism. “It will be difficult in independent Kenya,” Muliro declared, “if we find we have individuals in high positions who have sold themselves to Russia and China.”<sup>63</sup> In October 1962, Moral Re-Armament took out a multipage advertisement of its cause in the

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<sup>62</sup>MAC 71/8/19 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Odinga, p. 19.

<sup>63</sup>*East African Standard* (January 12, 1962), p. 11. For more details on “Communist Hostility to Religion,” see, *East African Standard* (January 19, 1962), p. 15.

*East African Standard*, in which, among other things, it announced that it was welcome in 17 African nations.<sup>64</sup>

The KADU, some of the KANU delegates, alongside the NKP and their supporters in the British government, made constant references to the looming danger of Communist infiltration in Kenya at the 1962 Constitutional Conference in London. In March 1962, the KADU delegates to this conference from Western Kenya—Muliro, Okondo, Khasakhala, Wabuge, and Amalemba—sent a message to their supporters in Kenya that warned them and the country "about Reds." They had been informed by "reliable sources" in London that "there is more and more Communist money being poured into Kenya for the purpose of confusing our people and to divide them into small groups so that the Communist agents in Kenya may take over power and leadership making it possible for Russia and China to enter when the British go."<sup>65</sup>

In the period after the dissolution of the KADU in 1964, Kenyatta's political allies in the KANU, who included many of the former leaders of the KADU, assumed the role of defenders of Kenya against foreign ideologies, that is, Communism and radical nationalism. It is significant to mention here that at no stage was there any elaborate and informative discussion on Communism as an ideology and why it was deemed to be so ill-suited for Africa. The reasons advanced against Communism by Kenyatta's political allies revolved around two main points: land ownership and religion.

At public rallies and also in the Parliament, allies of Kenyatta poured scorn on Communism and its supposed advocates in Kenya. J. Odero-Jowi, an Assistant Minister for Labour and Social Services doubted the sanity of Karl Marx. "I think Karl Marx was a psychological case," and his "premise that there existed a basic conflict in every society ... clearly did not apply to African society in Kenya."<sup>66</sup> In some instances Communism was equated with "wanting free things" and fomenting

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<sup>64</sup>*East African Standard* (October 19, 1962). In this advertisement, the Moral Re-Armament boasted about their work in the rehabilitation of the Mau Mau detainees. The organization was especially proud of its "all African film 'Freedom,'" used in the rehabilitation programs. Kenyatta had apparently seen this film and had been very impressed by its message. He wanted a Swahili version of the film shown to as many Africans as possible. He said, "It is what our people need."

<sup>65</sup>*East African Standard* (March 8, 1962), p. 1.

<sup>66</sup>*Daily Nation* (May 8, 1965), p. 6.

social discord and resistance against Kenyatta and his government.<sup>67</sup> The aim at these rallies was to make the audience afraid of Communism. Its implementation would lead to untold misery and hardship in their lives. To this end, “Mr. L.G. Sagini, Minister for Local Government, told a rally at Kenya Market in Kisii District that nationalization of all property in the country on the Communist pattern would lead to transferring people from their home areas by force.”<sup>68</sup> Predictably, the crowd responded, “To hell with that system!”

On religion, an issue of considerable importance in the lives of many Africans in Kenya, Communism was presented as an enemy. This was a repetition of the old argument of “Godless Reds” long employed in the West against Communism. J.M. Gachago, an Assistant Minister for Lands and Settlement, warned Kenya Muslims to “beware of Communism if they wished to preserve their religion,” because “Communism does not respect religion ... Communists do not believe in God.”<sup>69</sup>

The question of land ownership produced the most sustained opposition by Kenyatta’s allies toward Communism. This was not just against nationalization of land but also any mention of efforts to consider imposing limits on amount of land any one individual could own. Such consideration produced voluble vitriolic opposition. E.E. Khasakhala, formerly of the KADU and now Chairman of the Kenya Agricultural Marketing Board, “condemned those who spread false rumours among the farmers that Kenya land and farming problems could be solved by freely distributing land to every one, without regard to the consequences.”<sup>70</sup> Daniel arap Moi, now Minister for Home Affairs, condemned state ownership of land as misguided and “a concealed type of Communism which could not be accepted by the Kalenjin people.” He reiterated that he “had been opposed to Communism since the days of Kadu and now that he had joined Kanu he would continue to oppose it for it was not compatible with the non-alignment policy to which Kenya was committed.”<sup>71</sup> The key current and future objectives

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<sup>67</sup> *Daily Nation* (September 28, 1965), p. 38.

<sup>68</sup> *Daily Nation* (May 12, 1966), p. 10.

<sup>69</sup> *Daily Nation* (April 16, 1965), p. 5.

<sup>70</sup> *Daily Nation* (April 16, 1965), p. 14.

<sup>71</sup> *Daily Nation* (May 19, 1965), p. 13. Moi also “dispelled rumors that the Government would take over big farms and distribute them to those who had none. These reports were vicious lies which could only undermine the spirit of co-operation and disrupt the agricultural industry in Kenya.”



for his people was to "fight foreign ideologies" and to "demonstrate their loyalty to the Government and show confidence in Mzee Jomo Kenyatta."

Nationalization of land continued to be attacked at public rallies and political functions across the country by the conservative wing of the KANU. "The policy of State ownership of land," L.G. Sagini told a rally in Majoge-Basi, "was tantamount to Communism because it reduced landowners to mere employees of the State without any sense of ownership."<sup>72</sup> The conservative wing of the KANU had positioned themselves as defenders of individual ownership of property. J. Otiende, Minister for Health and Housing argued that, "Human beings have 'ownership instinct'—for owning perhaps a piece of land and a home." Therefore, he continued, "There is nothing wrong with wanting to own something." Otiende further asserted that, "Socialism had failed in some countries because there was no ownership of land. Work had become mechanical in those countries; pride had gone out of the job and production had gone down."<sup>73</sup>

But what were the prospects of Communism getting established in Kenya at this time? The view of the British intelligence services was that "previous Communist support for the removal of Colonial rule from Kenya, as from other Western Colonies, naturally inspired a feeling of gratitude in the minds of Kenya nationalist leaders." Also, "the difficulty of independent Kenya's birth, and the violence which preceded it, reinforced these sentiments of gratitude."<sup>74</sup> There was also the matter of race and class in Kenya's troubled colonial history. This history had over time produced "powerful racial emotions" directed at what now seemed like resilient white privileges. Therefore, "the presence within Kenya of many white and brown people linked by sentiment or nationality with Britain and the West, and the economic and political strains stemming from poverty, land hunger and racial and tribal jealousies, all offered fruitful

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<sup>72</sup>*Daily Nation* (May 19, 1966), p. 10. "The meeting was attended by leading personalities from Kisii District who included the Minister of State in the President's Office, Mr. James Nyamweya, Mr. Patroba Makone, MP, Kitutu West, Mr. Joseph Oseru, MP, North Mugirango and Mr. Winston Rayori, the Kanu district chairman."

<sup>73</sup>*Daily Nation* (June 28, 1965), p. 5.

<sup>74</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Kenya: Communism. p. 6.

opportunity for Communist mischief.”<sup>75</sup> Thus, even the British intelligence services acknowledged that these were potentially powerful ingredients for a Communist movement in Kenya, yet none had yet arisen. “Considering the apparent fertile field for cultivation, it may seem surprising that Communist impact in Kenya, significant as it is, is not even greater.”<sup>76</sup>

The lack of a viable Communist Party or movement in Kenya was of course linked to the country’s unique political history under colonialism. The British colonial authorities had been successful in steering the development of African nationalist politics along “tribal and local rather than national and ideological” lines. But now after *Uhuru*, there existed the potential for the growth of ideologically based radical nationalism. This was partly the result of the social and economic developments arising from the Emergency and then the impact of policies pursued by Kenyatta’s government.

The Emergency ... split the Africans into pro and anti-Government and created a class of “loyalists” or “collaborators” who had reason to fear reprisals should the ex-Mau Mau leaders gain power. These loyalists and those Kikuyu who were not subject to severe measures were sometimes able to profit from the situation so that at the end of the Emergency the beginnings of class divisions were apparent within the tribe together with the differences between the various districts, Kiambu, Murang’a, Nyeri, Kirinyaga and Nyandarua.<sup>77</sup>

These class and district divisions within the Kikuyu alongside the “political strains stemming from poverty, land hunger and racial and tribal jealousies,” had by 1964 enabled Odinga’s allies to make worrisome inroads of resistance among the Kikuyu and other tribes.<sup>78</sup> While clearly these inroads did not readily constitute the rise of a Communist Party or movement, the British intelligence services remained very concerned because of the immediate and long-term implications of Odinga’s “call for radical social reconstruction” of Kenyan society. This call evidently drew “substance from the uneven distribution of the national wealth,

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<sup>75</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Kenya: Communism. p. 6.

<sup>76</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Kenya: Communism. p. 6.

<sup>77</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), The Extent of Soviet Influence in Kenya.

<sup>78</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Kenya: Communism, p. 1.

aggravated by the conspicuous concentration of immigrant communities at the top of the economic ladder." These policies, "however ostensibly suitable to Kenya's circumstances," had to be stopped because they were "very evidently open to Communist exploitation."<sup>79</sup>

Also of concern to the British intelligence services, was the realization that Odinga's influence had continued to grow among "radical politicians within KANU, together with a number of Left-wing journalists, trade unionists and increasing number of students returning from behind the Iron Curtain." All owed "allegiance to Mr. Odinga and" were "all, to some extent, influenced and financed by the Communists."<sup>80</sup> It was therefore not surprising that Odinga came to be portrayed, with devastating results, "as the most notorious Communist sympathizer on this side of Africa."

In 1964, there were two momentous developments in Kenya and East Africa, whose total impact on the local political scene was to accelerate and intensify the coordinated and multi-pronged drive against Odinga and his radical allies. The first one was the revolution in Zanzibar on January 12, 1964. "The Arab dominated government was overthrown" in an "armed insurrection." This dramatic development "was so unexpected and was over so fast ... that outside observers were at a loss to understand what had happened."<sup>81</sup> Initial hurried reporting on the Zanzibar revolution painted a picture of an organized "Pro-Communist insurrection supported by Cuban and Chinese units."<sup>82</sup>

Political anxiety in East Africa and the West increased when it became apparent that radical Zanzibar nationalists, including Communists, had assumed very prominent positions in the new government. Of particular importance to the West and the governments of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika, was the rise to prominence of Abdul Rahman Mohammed Babu, described by William Attwood as "an astute, hard-boiled, Marxist-trained correspondent for Chinese Communist publications."<sup>83</sup> There was also a lot of initial mystery surrounding the life and circumstances of

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<sup>79</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Kenya: Communism, p. 3.

<sup>80</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Kenya: Communism, p. 3.

<sup>81</sup>Helen- Louise Hunter, *Zanzibar: The Hundred Days Revolution* (Santa Barbara, CA; Denver, CO; Oxford, UK: Praeger Security International, 2010), p. vii.

<sup>82</sup>*East Africa and Rhodesia* (January 16, 1964), p. 409. Also see, "Coup in Zanzibar" by Keith Kyle in *Africa Report*, Vol. 9. No. 2 (February 1964), p. 20.

<sup>83</sup>William Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks*, p. 156.

the apparent military leader of the revolution, John Okello. He was from Uganda and he made fantastic claims of having trained “his fighters for a fortnight before the revolution.”<sup>84</sup> Was this revolution in Zanzibar the opening salvo in a pre-planned Communist take-over in East Africa?

Available information on this revolution showed that although “in the four years before the revolution ... the growth in Communist influence and activity was remarkable” on the island, there was no evidence at all that Communists and/or Babu “played a significant part in the revolution ... he apparently had no advance knowledge of the coup that materialized on January 12.”<sup>85</sup> This revolution was the result of specific local circumstances related to the British endorsed constitution that bestowed power to “an Arab coalition government, a coalition of the Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP) and the Zanzibar and Pemba People’s Party (ZNPP), which had managed to win a majority of the seats in the legislative council, although it had not won a majority of the popular votes.”<sup>86</sup> This arrangement, unfair and unjust, fuelled popular resentment at the government, which seemed to be sitting, “on the edge of a volcano.”<sup>87</sup> The Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) led by Abeid Karume had been so outraged by this political arrangement that it had started to plan for a revolution. The ASP supporters, mainly Zanzibar Africans, “had been seething with discontent over the fact that a party with an overall majority (the ASP) could be sent into opposition because of what was obviously an unfair boundary delimitation system.”<sup>88</sup>

The revolution of January 12 was, however, not planned. “It was more of a spontaneous action. Basically, it was an African revolution to put Africans in control of a country that they felt was in the hands of a racial minority only because of an unfair constituency system.”<sup>89</sup> Neither the ASP nor Babu’s Umma Party played any direct role in the revolution’s conception or execution. Also, there was no Cuban involvement in the revolution at all. “It was done by Zanzibaris alone, without any outside help whatsoever.”

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<sup>84</sup> *East African Standard* (January 18, 1964), p. 1.

<sup>85</sup> Helen-Louise Hunter, *Zanzibar: The Hundred Days Revolution*, p. 7.

<sup>86</sup> Helen-Louise Hunter, *Zanzibar: The Hundred Days Revolution*, p. 4.

<sup>87</sup> Keith Kyle, “Coup in Zanzibar,” p. 18.

<sup>88</sup> Helen-Louise Hunter, *Zanzibar: The Hundred Days Revolution*, p. 4.

<sup>89</sup> Helen-Louise Hunter, *Zanzibar: The Hundred Days Revolution*, p. 9.

John Okello (later self-styled as Field Marshall John Okello) played a crucial role as a result of his bravery in "actual fighting with the police." He led attacks on armories. Although not "a central figure in the instigation of the revolt," he came to play a crucial role toward its success largely due to "his abilities as a street fighter ... Without his example of bravery, the ASP rebels might well have held back from actual combat with the government forces."<sup>90</sup>

The reaction in East Africa was initially very positive, yet guarded. Kenya, Uganda, and then Tanganyika, all recognized the new revolutionary government in Zanzibar. In Kenya, a lengthy joint statement was issued by J.K. Gatuguta, (Secretary of the KANU backbenchers), and J.P. Mathenge (Leader of Government Business in the Senate). "For a long time the majority of the people in Zanzibar and Pemba were denied their democratic right to choose the leaders they wanted to form the Government. The present revolution," the statement continued, "is an expression of the people's will and we wish to make it quite clear that African people all over the world are dedicated to freedom and as such it is quite natural for us to sympathise with the leaders of the present revolution." The statement then mentioned that the revolution in Zanzibar was in fact, "long over due and it is a pity that Mr. Karume was not the first to form the Government." On the question of violence and political change, the statement welcomed the success of the current revolution for after all Kenya had also "experienced some kind of bloodshed in our struggle against imperialism." After *Uhuru*, the statement concluded, "we do not believe in bloody revolution. But the facts of history are that when the will of the people cannot be expressed constitutionally because of totalitarianism, then the alternative is a revolution like the one in Zanzibar."<sup>91</sup>

The West was slow in granting recognition to the new revolutionary government. This delay, it would later be determined, clearly "alienated Karume and the other pro-Western Zanzibaris by portraying the revolution as Communist." The Communist countries on the other hand, were quick to recognize the new government and to pledge economic and other forms of assistance. The conclusion in the major Western capitals was that "while the Communist bloc had not engineered the coup, it,

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<sup>90</sup>Helen-Louise Hunter, *Zanzibar: The Hundred Days Revolution*, p. 8.

<sup>91</sup>*East African Standard* (January 14, 1964), p. 5.

[had] managed to derive considerable advantage from the revolution.”<sup>92</sup> This development in Zanzibar, together with Babu’s consolidation of “his position within the government,” was eagerly seized upon by the West and locally by conservative nationals as evidence of their long-standing fear that radical nationalism could, with determined guidance, easily morph into Communism.<sup>93</sup>

In Kenya, the focus was on Odinga. Was he connected to the events in Zanzibar? The most pernicious of these rumors linked Odinga to John Okello, initially suspected of being a Luo. Although later it would be confirmed that Okello was from Uganda and was not a Luo, this did not put to rest lingering suspicions among Odinga’s political opponents that the two knew each other and may be Okello’s next stop was Kenya. After all, didn’t they share some sort of vague cultural identity? Odinga was forced to issue a statement denying any knowledge of Okello and his political activities in Zanzibar. “I have never known this man John Okello and have never talked to him at any time.”<sup>94</sup> He denounced what he called “‘malicious insinuations’ made against him” and reiterated that he had nothing to do with the revolution in Zanzibar. He had, however, been in contact with Karume after the revolution to express Kenya’s disapproval “of the intended hanging of ex-Ministers.” Apparently, this appeal had been successful since “no hanging took place.”<sup>95</sup>

Before Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika had sufficiently absorbed the shock of having to adjust to a radical revolution in Zanzibar, there occurred what initially looked like a coordinated series of army mutinies by African soldiers in the three countries. Between January 20 and 24, 1964, African

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<sup>92</sup>Helen-Louise Hunter, *Zanzibar: The Hundred Days Revolution*, p. 10. William Attwood later alleged that “Communist China and East Germany are trying to turn Zanzibar into ‘a kind of non-African State to be used as a staging base for political manoeuvres’ on the mainland.” See, *East African Standard* (April 4, 1964), p. 3.

<sup>93</sup>It is useful to mention here that Babu’s influence on the course of the revolution in Zanzibar ended abruptly after only one hundred days when the new United Republic of Tanzania was formed in April 1964. At that time, “the internal struggle was resolved in Karume’s favor by the sudden transfer of Babu to Dar-es-Salaam.” It would appear that Nyerere “deliberately exaggerated his fears that Zanzibar was falling under Communist control as an argument that he could use most convincingly in the West to win support for his move to absorb Zanzibar into Tanganyika.” See, Helen-Louise Hunter, *Zanzibar: The Hundred Days Revolution*, pp. 11–12.

<sup>94</sup>*East African Standard* (February 1, 1964), p. 5.

<sup>95</sup>*East African Standard* (February 1, 1964), p. 5.

soldiers staged a series of mutinies in the three countries. African leaders in these newly independent countries were visibly shaken. They were not only worried about their hold onto power but also if there was any linkage between these mutinies and the events in Zanzibar. Was this the feared take-over of government in these countries by Communists or their allies? These events received wide ranging international coverage, especially when the governments of these countries urgently requested British help in subduing the mutinies. "British forces went into action in three newly independent East African countries," the *New York Times* reported, "to put down mutinies by African troops. Striking at the request of the three governments, the British troops disarmed mutinous soldiers in Tanganyika, seized a camp of mutineers in Uganda and broke a sitdown strike by soldiers in Kenya."<sup>96</sup> Preliminary inquiries into the underlying causes showed that these uprisings "were over demands for more pay and for the dismissal of British officers still commanding the African units."<sup>97</sup>

Pictures of white British soldiers seen standing guard over subdued and huddled African soldiers, very soon after the attainment of *Uhuru*, was obviously disturbing. It brought back old memories of white troops launching "punitive expeditions" against Africans. Conservative pro-settler publications like *East Africa and Rhodesia* seized on these humbling developments to re-state their thesis that these countries were not ready for *Uhuru*.

The requests of the African Governments of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika (in that order) for the urgent dispatch of United Kingdom troops to quell the mutinies in their own small armies and to maintain order was deservedly front page news, but it has not been brought home to the readers in general that the threatened collapse of administration was the inevitable consequence of Macmillanism; that such a result had been foretold (first in these columns more than four years ago and almost week by week since); that British Ministers, though themselves ignorant about Africa, had refused to listen to warnings from many other quarters; and that shamefully few Members of Parliament of any party had the sense to

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<sup>96</sup> *New York Times* (January 26, 1964), p. 1. Also see, "The Brushfire in East Africa," in *Africa Report*, 9, no. 2 (February 1964).

<sup>97</sup> *New York Times* (January 26, 1964), p. 1.

recognize and the courage to pronounce the truth that recklessly premature abandonment of Britain's obligations risked disaster for all Africa.<sup>98</sup>

In Kenya, *East Africa and Rhodesia* speculated that the mutinies were the result of "thousands of Mau Mau thugs" having been "set free to engage in whatever nefarious activities they like" by both Macleod and Kenyatta. British troops had saved East Africa from political chaos and exposed both the "incompetence and the inability of their Governments to discharge the elementary duty of maintaining law and order."<sup>99</sup>

Kenyatta was outraged but also shaken by this mutiny. He condemned what he called "acts of disloyalty and betrayal" by the soldiers. "During the colonial days," he stated, African soldiers "served the British Government loyally. Now that we have our own African Government, the world and our own people are justified in expecting even greater loyalty from the Kenya Army."<sup>100</sup> An armed uprising now entered Kenyatta's political consideration as a possible challenge to his power. And so, he proceeded to meet some of the immediate grievances of the soldiers by reviewing the pay scales not only of the army but also of the police and the prisons.<sup>101</sup> He retained Brigadier Hardy (British) as Commander of the Army plus a few British officers on administrative duties.<sup>102</sup> MacDonald thought that Hardy's "capable and popular tenure of command is a very steady influence."

African students returning back to Kenya after successfully undergoing military training in Communist countries were now perceived as a credible political and military threat. Kenyatta and his allies, especially the British, took it for granted that these returning students would be politically loyal to Odinga and, possibly, Communism. As MacDonald saw it, "Odinga probably expected that such students would be accepted into the Kenya armed forces, that they would constitute a fifth column for him there, and that they would be in a position to use the Communist

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<sup>98</sup> *East Africa and Rhodesia* (February 6, 1964), pp. 460–461.

<sup>99</sup> *East Africa and Rhodesia* (February 6, 1964), p. 461.

<sup>100</sup> *East African Standard* (January 22, 1964), p. 5.

<sup>101</sup> John Spencer, "Kenyatta's Kenya," *Africa Report*, Vol. 11. No. 5, p. 14.

<sup>102</sup> MAC 71/8/41 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Kenya: Can it Happen Here? The Possibilities of Coup d'état in Kenya.



arms in his cause."<sup>103</sup> Consequently, Kenyatta directed Njoroge Mungai, Minister of Defense, to deny the absorption of these returning students into the army at any level and for any position. This directive led to two immediate outcomes: it produced a discontented group of young people unable to get employment. Some of them were very critical of Odinga when he vigorously counseled them to desist from wishing to mount a coup.<sup>104</sup> Also, this action was meant to demonstrate Odinga's relative powerlessness vis-à-vis Kenyatta at this time. In this way students sponsored for studies in Communist countries would find it hard to be readily absorbed in employment upon their return to Kenya.

But how about the army itself, was it capable of launching a coup against Kenyatta's government at this time? This matter received close attention by the British intelligence services. In a confidential memo to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, MacDonald reassured the British government that a coup d'état "engineered by or through the armed forces is unlikely in the near future in Kenya." Why so? First, because the senior African officers in the army lacked "adequate education, conspicuous intelligence or notable initiative; and they are potentially jealous of one another as well as being envied by their juniors." The conclusion was that it was highly unlikely for the senior officers to initiate a coup. Second, the younger officers were more educated and energetic, but they "were immature and inexperienced in handling men." There was also the fact that many of the new officers were Kikuyu while the mass of the soldiers were Kamba.<sup>105</sup> The calculation here was that ethnic loyalty of the Kikuyu officers would prevent them from mounting a coup against Kenyatta and his Kikuyu dominated government. Third, the rank of ordinary soldiers was still dominated by the Kamba. A plan to modify this situation had been in place, especially since 1964,

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<sup>103</sup>MAC 71/8/13 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), The Political Situation in Kenya—II. The Present.

<sup>104</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), The Extent of Soviet Influence in Kenya. Other reasons advanced to justify the rejection of these students from being absorbed into the army were: "technical difficulty arising from different methods and content of instruction." These students returning from Communist countries were seen as politically indoctrinated thus making them "clearly unwelcome. Moreover, the majority of these Communist trainees are from the Luo or associated tribes, and their absorption would upset the carefully calculated tribal balance in the security forces." See, FCO/31/2330 (London: National Archives), Kenya: Communism, p. 4.

<sup>105</sup>Jonathan Spencer, "Kenyatta's Kenya," p. 14.

aimed at producing what MacDonald called “a safer tribal balance in the army, which in practice means chiefly the insertion of a considerable scale of Kikuyus.” The expected result of this deliberate strategy was that it would increase “the points of possible inter-tribal friction within the force,” and lessen “the likelihood of concerted action by any considerable, united part of it in support of anti-Government political move.”<sup>106</sup> MacDonald dismissed the possibility of Njoroge Mungai using his position as Minister of Defense, to instigate a coup. This was on two grounds. First, he was “a shallow and rather unreliable man for whom the armed forces have little respect.” Second, he was “at least a loyal Kikuyu,”<sup>107</sup> and Kenyatta’s close relative and personal physician.

Kenyatta’s personal security did not cause much worry to the British at this time. They had good reason. They were responsible for setting it up. “His redoubtable bodyguard should be a match for anything that Mr. Odinga, not to mention Mr. Ngei, could concoct against him.” Kenyatta’s feared and fierce bodyguard was trained by the British Special Air Services (SAS) force. This arrangement lasted for a long time. It was part of the secret security agreement between Britain and Kenya.<sup>108</sup> It is useful to mention here that the SAS is as an integral part of Britain’s “Military intelligence personnel.” It is the British Army’s “paramilitary and counter insurgency force, although their chain of command lies outside the formal army structure.”<sup>109</sup> Regarding its mission overseas, it is

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<sup>106</sup>MAC 71/8/41 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Kenya: Can it Happen Here? MacDonald also knew that the army had been kept quite busy and thus did not have much idle time to plan a coup. Besides, access to weapons for such an undertaking was difficult since, “Reserve stocks of weapons are kept at Nairobi and in Gilgil (near Lanet), components being stored separately—for example, rifles apart from their bolts, and explosives away from their detonators.”

<sup>107</sup>MAC 71/8/41 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Kenya: Can it Happen Here?

<sup>108</sup>PREM 15/110 (London: National Archives), 1970, Kenya. Also see, Jonathan Bloch and Patrick Fitzgerald, *British Intelligence and Covert Action: Africa, Middle East, and Europe since 1945* (Dingle, Co. Kerry: Brandon, 1983), pp. 47–48.

<sup>109</sup>Jonathan Bloch and Patrick Fitzgerald, *British Intelligence and Covert Action*, p. 31. “Other restless ex-SAS men join one of a plethora security firms which provide bodyguards, training units and mercenaries. The mercenary business is often misinterpreted as a purely commercial exercise, albeit rather seedy. In fact it is subject to relatively tight political scrutiny and operations which run counter to official foreign policy are blocked. Some initiatives are discreetly promoted by Whitehall because, in the event of some mishap, they are completely deniable. Mercenaries are preferred if the British government wishes to support

worth pointing out that the presence of a training team like the SAS in a country, "constitutes a form of covert action, because it represents an attempt to enhance the stability of the favoured regime in the same way as covert funding to a political party is designed to increase its electoral chances (if undiscovered). As a valuable by-product, it also provides useful cover for intelligence-gathering."<sup>110</sup>

The founder of the SAS Col. David Stirling later worked as president of the Capricorn Africa Society. After 1960, he formed Watchguard, an officially sanctioned private security company. It was responsible for "training Kenya's special forces, including the paramilitary General Service Unit (GSU). He got this job because of his friendship with Bruce McKenzie, a leading white politician in post-independence Kenya and an old friend of Stirling's from Capricorn days."<sup>111</sup> Col. Stirling's company was also responsible for the training of the personal security for Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, "whom he had met in the course of his work for Capricorn." Through the SAS or Stirling's company, the aim of the British government remained the same: "They wanted bodyguards trained for rulers they wanted to see survive."<sup>112</sup>

Although his own personal security was assured through the presence of the SAS, Kenyatta, as Odinga correctly observed, "seemed not to recover from the shock of the army mutiny and he seemed to be plagued by a fear that the government was not safe from internal revolution."<sup>113</sup>

As early as December 1964, correspondents of the British *Sunday Telegraph* based in Nairobi reported that, "Kenya was in a real danger of falling directly under Communist influence."<sup>114</sup> These reports alleged widespread dissent within Kenyatta's government, and then alluded to an impending take over of the government by Communists. Both Odinga's allies and his political opponents strongly condemned these reports in the British press. Achieng Oneko, Minister for Information,

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an insurgency, for it is sensitive to allegations of subversion and careful to preserve its international reputation," p. 46.

<sup>110</sup>Jonathan Bloch and Patrick Fitzgerald, *British Intelligence and Covert Action*, p. 46.

<sup>111</sup>Jonathan Bloch and Patrick Fitzgerald, *British Intelligence and Covert Action*, p. 47.

<sup>112</sup>David Sterling cited in Jonathan Bloch and Patrick Fitzgerald, *British Intelligence and Covert Action*, p. 48.

<sup>113</sup>Oginga Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru*, p. 281.

<sup>114</sup>*East African Standard* (December 1, 1964), p. 1.

Broadcasting and Tourism and a strong ally of Odinga, called for the offending journalists to be punished. And they were. On December 3, 1964, the two British journalists, Richard Beeston and Douglas Brown, were “declared prohibited immigrants under orders signed by the Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Odinga.”<sup>115</sup> Mboya, certainly not allied with Odinga at all, was severely critical of the “absurdity of the allegations ... about disunity in the Kenya Government” which had appeared in reports in the *Sunday Telegraph*. “This paper,” Mboya stated, “could not have chosen a worse time in its notorious manoeuvres and efforts to sow the seeds of dissension and suspicion among our people. I am glad,” he continued, “that our people have reacted fittingly to this irresponsible and stupid journalism. I am glad that it has been treated with the contempt that it deserves.”<sup>116</sup>

Still, rumours continued to spread throughout the country regarding an impending take over of the government by force of arms. At the beginning of April 1965, Kenyatta and his closest advisers felt it necessary to secretly ask MacDonald “through Mr. Njonjo whether British troops could be standing by to come to help the Government to maintain law and order in case of such trouble.”<sup>117</sup> As expected, the British government denied any such movement of its troops to Kenya to help in the suppression of a suspected Communist revolution.<sup>118</sup> What had led to this seemingly all enveloping fear of a possible use of force to overthrow Kenyatta’s government?

Rumours linking Odinga to Communist violent take over of the government and therefore the country, gained momentum in the aftermath of the revolution in Zanzibar and then the army mutinies. More specifically, rumors circulated at first hinting, and then later loudly proclaiming, that in fact Odinga was illegally importing weapons from Communist countries with the sole intent of overthrowing Kenyatta’s government. No institution, even the Parliament, could shrug off the social force of these rumors at this time. On April 2, 1965, the Parliament held a rather raucous session on a motion tabled by T. Malinda, which asked the government to investigate reports of an alleged plot to take over the

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<sup>115</sup> *East African Standard* (December 3, 1964), p. 1.

<sup>116</sup> *East African Standard* (December 9, 1964), p. 7.

<sup>117</sup> MAC 71/8/13 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), The Political Situation in Kenya—II. The Present.

<sup>118</sup> *Daily Nation* (May 14, 1965), p. 1.

government by force. According to Malinda, there was evidence "that arms and ammunition are continuously being smuggled from Communist and other foreign countries into or through Kenya for the purpose of overthrowing our beloved Government."<sup>119</sup> The motion also alleged that the other intent of the conspirators was to involve Kenya in an external conflict, possibly with neighboring countries. In the stormy debate, Ngala stated that he, together with "the majority of Members were aware of the matter," which involved foreign embassies smuggling arms into the country to facilitate the armed Communist revolution.<sup>120</sup>

This debate in the Parliament also touched on the mysterious document that appeared in Kenya at this time promising Communist revolution in East Africa. With no known author or accreditation, the document was assumed to be "from the East." Citing from it, Ngala said that Kenya was in danger of Communist invasion. He cited from page 27 of the document, which stated that, "The revolution will spread to Kenya and Uganda and nationalists and reactionaries such as Nyerere and Kenyatta and Obote who try to talk with both sides of their mouths at the same time will suffer the same fate as the former Sultan of Zanzibar."<sup>121</sup>

In his response, Njoroge Mungai, Minister for Internal Security and Defense, assured an over-anxious nation that "the government intelligence services had no information to show big arms smuggling operations in the Republic." The Criminal Investigation Department (CID), the Special Branch (SB) and other intelligence agencies had no information linking any one, let alone Odinga, to any arms smuggling into Kenya with the aim of launching an armed revolt. "I want to assure the nation," Mungai stated, "that the Kenya Army is ready to handle anyone

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<sup>119</sup> *Daily Nation* (April 2, 1965), p. 1. Also see, *Time* (April 23, 1965). In this article, *Time* magazine linked Odinga directly to the illegal importation of arms from Communist countries. The article further alleged that, "Vice President Oginga Odinga, wealthy 53-year old leader of the Luo tribe, which forms an important part of Kenyatta's KANU party coalition, has been openly attempting to turn the new nation toward Communism," p. 39.

<sup>120</sup> *Daily Nation* (April 3, 1965), p. 2.

<sup>121</sup> *Daily Nation* (April 3, 1965), p. 2. For his part, William Attwood was certain that the mysterious document, entitled *Revolution in Africa*, was "a Chinese pamphlet printed in Albania and circulated in East Africa." See, William Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks*, p. 246.

who tries to smuggle arms or bring about a revolution to upset our popularly elected Government.”<sup>122</sup>

There was also at this time, a widely publicized report that alleged that in fact Odinga had not only clandestinely imported weapons from Communist countries, but had stored them in the basement of his office. On April 8, 1965 “a consignment of small arms was removed from the basement of Odinga’s Ministry to the armoury.”<sup>123</sup> To Odinga’s political opponents, local and foreign, the removal of these weapons was visible “evidence” of his advanced plans to seize power by force. What was the story behind these arms in the basement? According to Odinga, both Kenyatta and Murumbi knew of the existence of these small arms for after all the three of them had ordered for them “before Britain handed over control of the police force to Kenya’s independent government.” Why? So that the Prime Minister could, “if necessary,” be able “to equip the police independently of Britain.” The arms had been “consigned to the Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta.” An agreement among Odinga, Kenyatta, and Murumbi directed that part of the arms should be stored in the basement of Odinga’s Ministry. Kenyatta retained the rest of the arms “for safe keeping.”<sup>124</sup>

In the heat of the moment, Odinga’s version of events surrounding these arms was dismissed and ridiculed. Duncan Ndegwa, Kenya’s first African Chief Secretary and Head of the Civil Service, thought that “Odinga’s explanation fell short of conviction and logic because procedure demanded that such arms be handled by scheduled police officers and be deposited with the official armourer. Odinga could not explain why that had not been done and why he had handled the arsenal as if it was his personal cache.”<sup>125</sup> What Ndegwa and Odinga’s other critics were not able to explain was this: how was it possible for Odinga, at this time, to import and then store several trucks of personal weapons from Communist countries in a government office building without being detected by the Kenya Special Branch and British intelligence services, who were all trained on him? At the time, Njoroge Mungai

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<sup>122</sup> *Daily Nation* (April 3, 1965), p. 1.

<sup>123</sup> FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Annex A. The Extent of Soviet Influence in Kenya.

<sup>124</sup> Odinga Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru*, p. 278.

<sup>125</sup> Duncan Ndegwa, *Walking in Kenyatta’s Struggles: My Story* (Nairobi: Kenya Leadership Institute, 2006), p. 384.

downplayed the threat to national security implicit in this transfer of arms from Odinga's office stating, "We do transfer equipment from one Government building to another all the time. This is no cause for rumours."<sup>126</sup> Of related importance was the conclusion of the British intelligence services that "in fact these arms had been stored," in the basement of Odinga's Ministry, "on Kenyatta's orders."<sup>127</sup>

Soon after this incident, a new row broke out over the seizure, by Kenyan authorities, of eleven trucks of Chinese made weapons in Kisii area in Nyanza province. Odinga was immediately suspected of being linked to these weapons, for after all the trucks were carrying Chinese made weapons and they were travelling in Nyanza province, his home province. Further, at the time when these arms were seized in Kisii, Odinga was in neighboring South Nyanza district.<sup>128</sup> The implication, fashioned by rumors, was that Odinga was in Nyanza to receive and store these weapons. As Ndegwa states, "The suspicion that they were Odinga's sprung up because in April of the same year, some imported arms had been found in the basement of his office."<sup>129</sup>

Preliminary investigation soon established that in fact these seized weapons belonged to the Uganda government and that the drivers had taken a detour through Kenya due to difficult road conditions.<sup>130</sup> Kenyatta was nonetheless outraged and ordered the weapons seized and the drivers arrested. He called this unauthorized transit of weapons through Kenya, "an act of criminal folly and a serious violation of Kenya's territorial integrity." The weapons underwent thorough inspection by representatives from Kenyatta's Cabinet and also from the

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<sup>126</sup>*Daily Nation* (April, 15, 1965), p. 24. Even Attwood who clearly did not favor Odinga, observed that, "Of course there was not much Odinga could do inside Kenya without Kenyatta knowing about it. Catling and Hinga were directly responsible to the Prime Minister's Office. Their orders were to keep an eye on Double-), and they did." See, Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks*, p. 241.

<sup>127</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Annex A. The Extent of Soviet Influence in Kenya.

<sup>128</sup>Odinga Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru*, p. 292.

<sup>129</sup>Duncan Ndegwa, *Walking in Kenyatta Struggles: My Story*, p. 384. Also see, *New York Times* (May 19, 1965), p. 7, for further information on Kenyatta's reaction to the arms shipment through Kenya.

<sup>130</sup>See a statement by Felix Onama, Uganda's Minister for Internal Affairs, in *Daily Nation* (May 18, 1965), p. 1.

(GSU), the para-military force.<sup>131</sup> The ensuing tense diplomatic rift between Uganda and Kenya was only resolved after Obote flew to Kenya for discussions with Kenyatta and apologized for the infraction.<sup>132</sup>

The last and most serious incident involving the importation of arms from Communist countries was the arrival of “Soviet ship Fizik Lebedyev at Mombasa on 24 April 1965 with a cargo of arms including tanks, guns and vehicles.”<sup>133</sup> In his initial statement to the Parliament, Njoroge Mungai stated that this Soviet ship was delivering arms given as a gift to the Kenya government. This was the result of “an agreement between the two governments made ‘since independence.’” As to their projected use and value, Njoroge Mungai stated that, “they would be used in fields where ‘we don’t have this type of equipment, weapons and ammunition.’” He also revealed that as part of this gift of arms, “a few Russian technicians would be coming to show Kenya Army men how to assemble the arms ... ‘but the Russians are not going to train our army.’”<sup>134</sup>

In spite of Njoroge Mungai’s clarification, rumors continued to swirl around these Soviet arms. The consistent rumor, which spread rapidly across the country, was that “Odinga had negotiated for the arms with the Russians.” The acceptance of these arms by the Kenya government, Ndegwa has written, “would have been a seal of approval for Odinga’s alliances with the East. The acceptance of the arms would have meant that the Russians would be sending technicians and instructors to follow.”<sup>135</sup> An erroneous impression was thus created which suggested that, “the Soviet ship had arrived uninvited and that Odinga was responsible.” Even MacDonald in his initial hasty report on the matter forwarded to London concluded, erroneously, that the “Russian gift—which was too large for clandestine delivery” was meant to come under Odinga’s influence. But was this accurate? Subsequent analysis of the events and details

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<sup>131</sup> *Daily Nation* (May 19, 1965), p. 1.

<sup>132</sup> See, *Daily Nation* (May 26, 1965), p. 1, and (May 27, 1965), p. 1. As a result of the agreement, “the whole arms convoy seized by Kenya Police on May 15 and all 47 Uganda soldiers and civilians arrested with the consignment,” were released. Also see, *New York Times* (May 27, 1965), p. 6.

<sup>133</sup> FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Annex A. The Extent of Soviet Influence in Kenya.

<sup>134</sup> *Daily Nation* (April 15, 1965), p. 24.

<sup>135</sup> Duncan Ndegwa, *Walking in Kenyatta Struggles: My Story*, pp. 384–385.



surrounding this matter of Soviet arms by the British intelligence services reached a conclusion that differed from MacDonald's initial report.

According to the British intelligence services,

the decision to ask for the Soviet Union to supply arms had been made by Kenyatta in Cabinet following the army mutiny at Lanet barracks in January 1964. This mutiny had greatly worried Kenyatta and some of his Ministers who believed that discontent with obsolescent British equipment was one of the causes of the mutiny.<sup>136</sup>

In March 1964, Odinga, Njonjo, and Murumbi were authorized by Kenyatta to start discussions with the Soviet Ambassador to Kenya about the possibility of getting arms from the Soviet Union. As a result of these discussions, in May 1964, "Odinga and Murumbi (then Minister of State for Defense) were sent to Moscow by Kenyatta with a personal letter from him to Khrushchev and formally requesting arms."<sup>137</sup> Once an agreement was reached on the supply of the arms, the problem facing Kenyatta's Cabinet was how to "conceal these supplies from the British who were still in command of the armed forces." No course of action was taken on this matter at the time, leaving it open to improvised strategy when the arms arrived at Mombasa port in April 1965.

The Soviet officers strenuously objected to these arms "coming under British control." They wanted to "hand over their cargo to Kenyan officers," and later sought audience with Kenyatta to discuss this matter. In the meeting, Kenyatta complained that "the equipment seemed to be very old and ... that Kenyan Ministers and Army officers would wish to inspect it to see if it were of any use." To facilitate this process, the "British Commander of the Kenya Army was specially made a Kenyan Citizen by Njonjo so that he could inspect the consignment without accusations of bias."<sup>138</sup> Mungai, McKenzie, and Murumbi were

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<sup>136</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Annex A. The Extent of Soviet Influence in Kenya.

<sup>137</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Annex A. The Extent of Soviet Influence in Kenya.

<sup>138</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Annex A. The Extent of the Soviet Influence in Kenya. There is evidence suggesting that several days before the Soviet ship docked in Mombasa, "McKenzie had advance warning of this and had alerted Kenyatta, outlining his plan of action." See, Jonathan Bloch and Patrick Fitzgeald, *British Intelligence and Covert Action*, p. 155.

the Cabinet Ministers who accompanied the British Commander to Mombasa to inspect the arms.

The British Commander's report, which clearly was supposed to carry a lot of weight, indicated that "only some heavy mortars and troop carriers were worth having, the remainder either requiring special training or was not required." This report was, however, forwarded to Kenyatta by Njonjo in a modified form. "In his reports to Kenyatta, Njonjo managed to convey that the equipment was old, useless or second hand."<sup>139</sup> This fact, together with the Soviet insistence on having their own training team to accompany the arms, led to Kenyatta's dramatic decision of April 28, 1965 rejecting the whole shipment. With a flourish, Kenyatta announced that he had rejected the Soviet arms because "all the arms are old, second hand, and would be of no use to the modern army of Kenya."<sup>140</sup> There is no doubt that Kenyatta's disposition toward the Soviet arms had undergone a significant shift since the signing of the agreement with the Soviet Union. By May 1965, it had become politically imperative for him to maintain public distance between himself and Soviet products. The presence of Soviet technicians and instructors operating in the army was now perceived as a security threat to Kenyatta's hold onto power. These Soviet instructors and technicians, it was now believed, would have allegiance to Odinga thereby increasing the magnitude of his political threat. Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the British High Commission in Nairobi was kept "closely informed ... as usual" by Njonjo and McKenzie on this matter.<sup>141</sup>

All of these rumors of an impending violent Communist coup, illegal arms import, plus the political fall-out from army mutinies, and then the revolution in Zanzibar, created fear and nervousness among the majority of the population in the country. Rumors were asserted as fact, which in turn was used effectively to shape subsequent discussion on related

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<sup>139</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Annex A. The Extent of Soviet Influence in Kenya. The Ambassador of the Soviet Union to Kenya, "issued a statement saying that the arms were 'modern types, and were just as good as any foreign arms of the same category' and besides 'full agreement was reached on the type of arms to be supplied by the Soviet Union.'" See, Jonathan Bloch and Patrick Fitzgerald, *British Intelligence and Covert Action*, p. 155.

<sup>140</sup>*Daily Nation* (April 29, 1965), p. 1.

<sup>141</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Annex A. The Extent of Soviet Influence in Kenya.

issues. This was the practical power of what has come to be called *factoids* in propaganda, and defined as,

an assertion of fact that is not backed up by evidence, usually because the fact is false or because the evidence in support of the assertion cannot be obtained. Factoids are presented in such a manner that they become widely treated as true. In our work places and neighborhoods, they are known as rumors, gossip and urban legends.<sup>142</sup>

Thus, the absence of evidence may not necessarily invalidate the power of the rumor to shape public political opinion. Indeed, it is clear that factoids "can influence not only political and judicial but also consumer decision making." In Kenya, this was evidently true in the 1964 and 1965 period, when rumors and innuendos effectively rivaled factual information in the political discourse between the rulers and the ruled.

This condition of fear, anxiety, and nervousness among the majority of the population was further exacerbated by hunger and starvation in several parts of the country at this time. A report by the Ministry of Agriculture issued in September 1965 showed that the country's maize crop was "50% below the annual average." Conditions were quite dire in some parts of Kambaland, especially those areas beyond the towns and urban centres.<sup>143</sup> Several other areas of the country were also affected including: "Baringo, Turkana, Kitui, Laikipia, Marakwet, South Nyanza, Moyale, Marsabit and parts of Kakamega," and then sections of the Coast Province. In September 1965, a National Famine Relief Committee was formed with Moi as its Chairman. In that capacity,

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<sup>142</sup>Anthony Pratkanis and Elliot Aronson, *The Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion* (New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, 2000), p. 104. Also see a speech by Wasonga Sijeyo (MP) on this matter of political rumors and fear in the country in *Daily Nation* (December 17, 1965), p. 4. Wasonga Sijeyo "stated that the citizens of Kenya were in a state of fear and uneasiness as a result of a strong rumour now being spread throughout the Republic by Cabinet Ministers. The rumour was that 'there exists a group planning to overthrow the popularly elected Government.'" Sijeyo urged the "Government to reveal the names of members of this group and their intentions 'to ease the feeling of the electorate'... the Government had either to announce the names of the plotters, if this was true, or ensure that these rumours were not spread. He accused Ministers of paying members of the public to spread panic in an attempt to campaign for the Presidency and Ministries."

<sup>143</sup>*Daily Nation* (September 14, 1965), p. 7.

Moi toured some of the “drought stricken areas of Machakos ... to see for himself the plight of the district’s starving families who are suffering because of the severe famine there.”<sup>144</sup> As this crisis intensified several Western voluntary and aid agencies descended on Kenya to provide relief, for example, USAID and Oxfam.

It was however the USA, through USAID, that supplied most of the desperately needed maize under two schemes: “supplies free of charge for famine relief to be rationed to people who cannot buy it and have no food”; and “maize supplies to assist the financing of the Development Plan.”<sup>145</sup> In October 1965, E.A. Andere, General Manager of the Kenya Maize Marketing Board, announced that he had negotiated for more maize to be delivered from the USA. The first shipment, which arrived at the end of October, included 3000 tons was to be “rushed to famine areas.” This was “a special gift from the US Agency for International Development.”<sup>146</sup>

The USA, through its aggressive and ubiquitous ambassador, William Attwood, was able to exploit this food aid to further extend its influence on Kenyatta’s government. This was still true despite Kenyatta’s disappointment at the “landings at Stanleyville (now Kisangani) of Belgian paratroops carried in American aircraft.” Kenyatta was the Chairman of the “ad hoc Commission on the Congo established by the Organization of African Unity.” And in that capacity, he had, with Attwood’s participation, endeavored to secure the release of Western hostages in Congo. Unfortunately, his efforts were brushed aside by the USA and Belgium who chose a military intervention. “Such military adventurism,” Kenyatta would later write, “which in fact failed to prevent the murder of many hostages, completely disrupted the pattern of reconciliation which had been taking shape.”<sup>147</sup>

After this military incident, Attwood knew that Kenyatta felt “let down and humiliated.” Some Members of his Cabinet were very angry with Attwood whom they accused of “double-dealing,” and for not having dealt with Kenyatta in good faith. Attwood worried that a condemnatory strident statement issued by Kenyatta asserting this fact would

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<sup>144</sup> *Daily Nation* (September 11, 1965), p. 1.

<sup>145</sup> *Daily Nation* (September 24, 1965), p. 3.

<sup>146</sup> *Daily Nation* (October 6, 1965), p. 3.

<sup>147</sup> Jomo Kenyatta, *Suffering Without Bitterness* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968), p. vii.

cause "irreparable damage" to USA–Kenyan relations. To help avert this crisis, Attwood sought MacDonald's help. He "filled him in on what had been going on, and told him of my concern that Kenyatta might say something he'd later regret." Attwood knew that the best way to get some positive movement on this question was to seek MacDonald's help, for it was evident to all that "Kenyatta trusted him."<sup>148</sup>

And indeed, no strident statement was issued from Kenya about the incident. Attwood was in fact reassured that the campaign to get him expelled from the country was dead.<sup>149</sup> Also, the USA, a major target of angry demonstrations over the Congo had come "out of it all, relatively unscathed." This anger over the Congo crisis, which Attwood felt had been orchestrated by Odinga and his allies was no longer a factor in determining the course of the USA–Kenya relations. Instead, "Kenyatta's inner circle of advisers was more concerned about whether" the USA's and Attwood's "emotions had been stirred up to the point that," the USA "had lost interest in helping Kenya's development."<sup>150</sup> The attention of Kenyatta's inner circle was now focused on "Odinga, the Luo chief."

Attwood was very conscious of the fact that food aid to Kenya at this critical time had a very beneficial affect on the USA's image in the country (especially after the Congo crisis). Provision of maize for "drought stricken areas," was part of an expanding US aid program to Kenya that now included:

C-47 ordered for the Police Air Wing; more than one hundred Peace Corps volunteers were now working in schools, cooperatives and settlement schemes; the National Youth Service was recruiting unemployed young men at the rate of four hundred a month and putting them to work with American trucks and shovels. And the government appreciated the leads we were able to furnish them on certain strangers in town.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>148</sup>William Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks*, p. 217.

<sup>149</sup>William Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks*, p. 226.

<sup>150</sup>William Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks*, p. 226.

<sup>151</sup>William Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks*, pp. 249–250.

Attwood's linkage to Kenyatta would become critical in the CIA's involvement in the campaign to oust Odinga and his radical allies from the political stage.<sup>152</sup>

For Odinga's political opponents, fear and anxiety, which were fanned by rumors and innuendos, provided the most appropriate political environment in which to launch the final offensive against him and his radical allies. "Fear," as is now well known, "can be a powerful motivating psychological force, channeling all our thoughts and energies toward removing the threat so that we don't think about much else."<sup>153</sup> An added factor here is that governments have routinely used fear to secure an otherwise elusive support from the ruled. This is especially true if the object of the fear is perceived to be an external enemy. Under such circumstances, a government can rally the support of the country to confront an external threat in order to secure the security of the nation and the individual.

In Kenya, at this period, Kenyatta and his allies had succeeded in identifying Communism as the paramount external threat to the country's security and *Uhuru*. Consequently, all those politicians linked to Communism, or Communist countries, were now portrayed as threats to national security and could therefore not be entrusted with political office. As rumors and innuendos and hunger continued to spread fear and anxiety across the country, Kenyatta was portrayed as the indispensable source and immovable center of national stability.

Rumors, innuendos, and fear could not be let to get out of hand for then Kenyatta and his allies would be seen as weak and unable to provide security. This may, in part, explain Njoroge Mungai's constant assurances of security to the nation at this period. There had to be just enough fear and anxiety to enable Kenyatta and his allies to emerge as steady and redoubtable patriots pitted against selfish and erratic politicians who had no qualms about "selling their country" to foreigners peddling Communism. Not surprisingly, fear provided a pretext for accelerated attacks on political dissent in the country at this time.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup>Ellen Ray, William Schaap, Karl Van Meter and Louis Wolf, *Dirty Work* 2. p. 61.

<sup>153</sup>Anthony Pratkanis and Elliot Aronson, *The Age of Propaganda*, p. 210.

<sup>154</sup>For an informative discussion on the general use of fear by governments to shape and direct national policy, especially in recent USA history, see, Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, *Weapons of Mass Deception: The Uses of Propaganda in Bush's War on Iraq* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2003). "It seems to be a law of history that times of war

MacDonald believed that the success of the propaganda offensive against Odinga, especially in the 1964–1965 period, was due to the “revelation that [he is] associated with Communist China and Russia in their subversive activities in East Africa, and that he is therefore neither a loyal adherent to Kenya’s policy of non-alignment in international affairs, nor even perhaps a reliable Kenyan patriot.”<sup>155</sup> Yet, as MacDonald knew, this “revelation” alone, was not enough to remove Odinga from the political center stage.

A matter of crucial concern to the Kenyan, British, and US security agencies was to determine how Odinga managed to translate the financial resources from the Communist countries into an expanding, vibrant, and increasingly multi-ethnic “movement” of the have-nots. Attwood was convinced that one of Odinga’s key “political assets” was Pio Gama Pinto, “a brilliant tactician.” Pinto, an Asian (Goan) Member of the Kenya Parliament, was, according to Attwood, “Odinga’s principal liaison man with Communist embassies as well as his chief political adviser.”<sup>156</sup> MacDonald’s view was that Pinto was

a cunning Goan Member of Parliament, who (unlike Mr. Odinga and most of his other associates) was a dedicated Communist, and the principal brain behind the whole secret organisation of Odinga’s movement. He was responsible, for example, for the recruitment of a growing number of his fellow back-benchers against Mr. Kenyatta and the moderates in the government ... Odinga and his fellow conspirators depended on him almost vitally.<sup>157</sup>

Pinto’s success in the advancement of radicalism had reached a point where it caused grave worry to Kenyatta and his allies. Odinga’s access to “Communist money,” his popularity, plus

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and national fear are accompanied by rollbacks of civil liberties and attacks on dissent,” p. 145.

<sup>155</sup>MAC 71/8/42 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Kenya: The Political Situation.

<sup>156</sup>William Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks*, p. 245.

<sup>157</sup>MAC 71/8/12 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), The Political Situation in Kenya—II. The Present.

Pinto's organizing genius, working in zealous partnership together, seemed well on the way to enticing a majority of the back-bench Members of Parliament to defeat President Kenyatta's Government on some convenient issue. And in the country side they were gradually gaining necessary support among the disgruntled sections of the all important Kikuyu tribe led by the professional rebel Bildad Kaggia.<sup>158</sup>

Thus, Pinto was identified as Odinga's indispensable lieutenant whose "organizational genius" seriously threatened the parliamentary and national survival of Kenyatta's government, not to mention the MacDonald formula on which it was based.

On February 24, 1965, Pinto was gunned down and killed "in full view of his year old youngest child, Tresca, whom he was letting out of the car in the drive of their bungalow home."<sup>159</sup> Most Cabinet Ministers and fellow Members of Parliament immediately condemned this brutal murder. Kenyatta issued a statement condemning "this shocking crime." By Pinto's death, Kenyatta stated, "our country has lost one of the conscientious workers for freedom who suffered many years in detention for his uncompromising stand in politics."<sup>160</sup> It was clear however, that this had been a political murder. "Although two men were later arrested and jailed for the murder," Attwood would later write, "it was never satisfactorily explained."<sup>161</sup> A later assessment by the British intelligence services on this question concluded that, "Odinga's Goan adviser and fellow MP, Pio Pinto Gama, was murdered in a plot probably arranged by the President's bodyguard (who probably organized Kariuki's murder a decade later)."<sup>162</sup>

MacDonald looked at Pinto's death as a turning point in Kenyatta's struggle against Odinga and his radical allies. It denied Odinga access to crucial tactical and organizational assistance and guidance at a time when he desperately needed it. "Odinga's political forces," MacDonald wrote with some satisfaction, "received a crippling blow," resulting in

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<sup>158</sup>MAC 71/8/20 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers) Kenya: Odinga.

<sup>159</sup>*Daily Nation* (February 25, 1965), p. 1.

<sup>160</sup>*Daily Nation* (February 25, 1965), p. 1.

<sup>161</sup>William Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks*, p. 245.

<sup>162</sup>FCO 31/2330 (London: National Archives), Annex A. The Extent of Soviet Influence in Kenya.



his movement's' political forces being "thrown into considerable disarray."<sup>163</sup> Kenyatta and his allies were now emboldened to undertake decisive maneuvers to finally oust Odinga and his allies from the government and the KANU. "Soon afterwards," MacDonald recorded, "President Kenyatta—backed by a large majority of his cabinet colleagues—decided that the time had come to assert his grand qualities of authority, strength and wisdom."<sup>164</sup>

Prior to February 1965, Kenyatta had discussed "these matters confidentially," with MacDonald. This enabled MacDonald to write to London confidently that he knew how Kenyatta's "mind moved." Initially Kenyatta trusted Odinga completely. This changed when "he ceased to be dependent on Odinga for financial support." At about the same time, according to MacDonald, Kenyatta started to receive "intelligence reports of," Odinga's "subversive activities." Kenyatta was however not inclined to immediately oust Odinga from the government. The reasons were a mixture of loyalty to past friendship and also tactical.

His reason was that if the personable, persuasive, and powerful Luo leader ceased to be a member of the Government (and especially if he were forced out of it against his will), he would become an unqualified rebel. In anger, he would use his skill at popular agitation to stir up opposition to the Administration; and he would probably succeed in carrying an overwhelmingly majority of his fellow Luos with him.<sup>165</sup>

This was especially true when Kenyatta and his allies were still wary of the power of Odinga's tactical and organizational skills under the astute direction of Pia Gama Pinto.

Odinga was left in the government for a while, in order "not to disappear from" Kenyatta's sight. As a Cabinet Member, he would have to support the official government doctrine. What Kenyatta and his allies wanted was for Odinga to voluntarily resign from the government. He "would then be held to blame for the unfortunate consequences which

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<sup>163</sup>MAC 71/8/13 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), The Political Situation in Kenya—II. The Present.

<sup>164</sup>MAC 71/8/20 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Kenya: Odinga.

<sup>165</sup>MAC 71/8/21 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Kenya: Odinga.

would follow for the nation.” In 1965, MacDonald believed that “things might develop that way; Odinga might become increasingly dissatisfied with his rather frustrating position in the Government, and, since he was not always wise, he might then begin to make foolish mistakes.” There was a firm belief within the Kenyatta camp that if Odinga “were given enough rope, he might hang himself.”<sup>166</sup> It was important for Odinga to carry the blame for resigning from the government and the party. What could be done to get Odinga to voluntarily resign?

From 1964 to 1966, Odinga was deliberately subjected to the sort of treatment meant to either publicly embarrass or humiliate him in his capacity as deputy leader of the KANU and the country’s Vice President. Attwood, no fan, recorded that by this time, “Odinga was also being provoked into losing his temper by deliberate slights,” for example,

when President Kaunda arrived on a state visit, Odinga was not even asked to accompany Kenyatta to the plane; on UN Day, Mungai, who represented Kenyatta at the official ceremonies, did not bother to address the Vice President, who sat with him on the rostrum; after Odinga attended a party at the home of an East German correspondent, his host was summarily expelled from Kenya.<sup>167</sup>

Several other slights would follow. One of the most prominent was the announcement in June 1965 that Murumbi, Minister for External Affairs, would lead “the Kenya delegation to the meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London.” Vice President Odinga had initially been “scheduled to lead the team.”<sup>168</sup>

A direct call for Odinga to resign from government came after his speech in Kisumu at the end of May 1965, in which he was reported to have openly criticized the roles that the British and American Ambassadors were playing at the time in Kenya politics. In the speech, widely reported in the daily newspapers, Odinga specifically mentioned Ngala and Mboya as the politicians the British were “working through,” in their attempt to spoil Kenya.<sup>169</sup> What particularly infuriated the

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<sup>166</sup>MAC 71/8/21 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Kenya: Odinga.

<sup>167</sup>William Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks*, p. 260.

<sup>168</sup>*Daily Nation* (June 4, 1965), p. 1.

<sup>169</sup>*Daily Nation* (June 1, 1965), p. 1.

conservative wing of the KANU and the government was Odinga's mention that "the British and American envoys frequently tried to influence President Kenyatta." It is the implication of this charge that Kenyatta's allies found most troubling. If it remained unchallenged, it would deal a severe blow to Kenyatta's prestige as a wise, independent, and strong patriotic leader. Kiano, Minister for Commerce and Industry, wanted Odinga to "either apologise to the President or resign from the Cabinet." Mboya thought that Odinga's remarks constituted "cheap politics" and were certainly in "bad taste." Further, Mboya thought that Odinga's remarks attacked "the status of the President 'by insinuating that he takes orders from the British High Commissioner and the American Ambassador.'"<sup>170</sup>

Condemnation of Odinga's remarks gathered momentum, as did calls for him to resign. Ngala and J.K. Gatuguta, another Member of Parliament, "called for the replacement of Mr. Odinga as head of the Kenya delegation," to the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference in London, since he "had shown himself to be too prejudiced." Unlike Odinga, Ngala stated, he had refrained from "attacking any Kanu politician" since disbanding the KADU. What was needed was for Odinga to "preach the Cabinet approved doctrine of African Socialism 'instead of wasting his time defending Communism.'"<sup>171</sup> This defense of Communism had made Odinga a mere "puppet of the East in a non-aligned country." He was the one now responsible for the disunity in the country.

Not surprisingly, when Odinga later issued a more conciliatory clarification of his remarks that suggested that all that he had done was to condemn all those against national unity and called for national solidarity against disunity,<sup>172</sup> this was summarily dismissed by Kenyatta's allies. Mboya angrily dismissed this clarification as "a poor attempt at white-washing the truth and deceiving the public." Further, since the "entire

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<sup>170</sup>*Daily Nation* (June 1, 1965), p. 1. A similar call for Odinga to resign had been issued following his speech in which he reportedly stated that, "'there is nothing wrong in Communism' and that 'Communism is just like food.'" See, *Daily Nation* (May 4, 1965) p. 1. While widely discussed in both local and international press, this speech did not lead to an expanding call for Odinga's resignation from the government compared to the speech that he delivered in Kisumu toward the end of May 1965.

<sup>171</sup>*Daily Nation* (June 1, 1965), p. 20.

<sup>172</sup>See, *Daily Nation* (June 1, 1965), p. 20.

proceedings were recorded,” Mboya had “access to the tapes and also met persons who attended the meeting.”<sup>173</sup> Hinting at the need for Odinga to resign, Mboya thought that these statements had failed to “enhance the status and prestige” of the Office of Vice President. “It is the person who fills the office who must carry it with dignity and ensure for it the respect it deserves.”<sup>174</sup>

Kenyatta’s allies saw in this story what they were desperately looking for: a significant misstep by Odinga that they could capitalize on in their drive against him and his radical allies. Odinga would henceforth be portrayed as disloyal and disrespectful to Kenyatta. If well packaged, this is a story that could gain traction across the country. For this strategy to work, there would need to be a concerted effort to diminish, or at least cast doubt, on the extent and value of Odinga’s contributions to the nationalist struggle.

In his several statements on this story, Mboya said that “it would be a sad day for Kenya if Mr. Odinga were to think that he was the only true nationalist in the Kenya Cabinet or Parliament. ‘In any case, such claim would be blatantly false and vain.’” As to the value of past glory, Mboya curiously thought that, “no country or leader could afford to live all the time on past glories.” How about the role that Odinga had played in the demand for Kenyatta’s release from detention? Here, Mboya thought that Odinga had over played this card. “It is not necessary for the Vice President always to refer to his part in demanding Mr. Kenyatta’s release. It is in fact untrue,” Mboya asserted, “to suggest that he is the only one who demanded or fought for Mr. Kenyatta’s release.” Before Odinga’s famous statement in the Legco, which Mboya now termed as the “monotonously referred to ... statement, many people had spoken in Kenya. Many more people suffered and sacrificed for Kenya’s Uhuru. But,” unlike Odinga, “they do not sing about it at every public meeting. This alone,” Mboya concluded, “is not a passport to future leadership.”<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> *Daily Nation* (June 3, 1965), p. 1.

<sup>174</sup> *Daily Nation* (June 3, 1965), p. 16.

<sup>175</sup> *Daily Nation* (June 1, 1965), p. 20. Also see the joint statement on this matter issued by J.M. Gachago, W.M.K. Gatuguta, J.G. Kiano, and J.H. Okwanyo. The statement, read to the press by Gatuguta, declared that Odinga’s speech, “was the most improper and most unbecoming of the Vice President of the Republic. There were insinuations in the speech ‘that our great President, who has been the torch-bearer of Pan Africanism and non-alignment is not so non-aligned after all ...’ Mr. Odinga tries to paint himself as the top

Moi, "speaking on behalf of tribes in the Rift Valley Province," heavily criticized Odinga and urged him to resign "if he truly believed the President was a stooge of the Americans and the British."<sup>176</sup> The sole purpose of Odinga's remarks and statements, Moi asserted, was to "further the cause of Communism," and destroy Kenya's *Uhuru*. He poured scorn on this "self-appointed 'saviour' and 'champion' of *Uhuru* and for the release of our President from prison," who all along had after all been "bent on destroying what Mzee has built in the last 40 years—namely, the freedom and the independence of the sons and daughters of Kenya."<sup>177</sup> The sum total of Odinga's political activities, Moi concluded, had "been directed towards undermining our beloved leader."

As this controversy gained traction, few prominent politicians mounted a vigorous and open counter-offensive on Odinga's behalf in the press or at public rallies across the country. It would have been difficult to do so at this time. Could one defend Odinga without being branded as disloyal to Kenyatta and a possible Communist sympathizer? One of the few who came to Odinga's defence was Luke Obok, a Member of Parliament. He issued a statement in which he accused Kiano of being "guilty of 'mischief'" for "demanding that Mr. Odinga should apologise to President Kenyatta." Obok reminded Kiano and his allies that, "it had obviously escaped attention that the Vice President was, in his own right, entitled to respect. Just as no one would tolerate any one giving orders to the President," Obok observed, "how could any one tolerate 'abominable suggestions' that the Vice President should challenge the Government by first resigning from the Government?"<sup>178</sup> The obvious reality pointed to in Obok's statement was that Kenyatta's allies in the KANU and the government were by 1965 onwards, now at liberty to launch political attacks on Odinga without fear of official reproach or consequences. These attacks came to routinely cast doubt on Odinga's loyalty to Kenyatta and also question his patriotism. Radical nationalism was not only equated with Communism, but it was also seen as evidence

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nationalist in the country, next to Mzee Kenyatta. This is mere exaggeration completely out of proportion to the actual work done by Mr. Odinga individually, because the struggle for Kenya's independence was not a one-man job." *Daily Nation* (June 1, 1965), p. 20.

<sup>176</sup> *Daily Nation* (June 4, 1965), p. 3.

<sup>177</sup> *Daily Nation* (June 4, 1965), p. 3.

<sup>178</sup> *Daily Nation* (June 3, 1965), p. 16.

of disloyalty to Kenyatta and Kenya. The margin of error in this increasingly ferocious debate was very narrow.

For his part, Kenyatta initially issued general warnings against foreign interference in Kenya's internal affairs without pointing to Odinga by name as the key national threat. This was left to his allies in the KANU and the government. As MacDonald saw it, Kenyatta's initial strategy was to remain "patient, watchful and shrewd. He took calculated risks. He was tolerant of Odinga's irresponsible conduct when that was expedient, and firm in action when circumstances made that prudent. He made no mistakes himself, allowing the Home Minister/Vice President to enjoy a monopoly of that pastime."<sup>179</sup> Tactically, Kenyatta did not want to undertake any action that might create sympathy for Odinga. This would "play into Odinga's hands by making KANU supporters generally feel that he (Kenyatta) was to blame for their rift, so swinging sympathy to the other's side." It was therefore critical for Kenyatta to "wait for an issue on which most sensible men would see that Odinga, not he, was in the wrong ... So Kenyatta bided his time, awaiting the right moment for whatever action might be required."<sup>180</sup> The consistent aim was to show that Odinga was disloyal and working in concert with Communist powers. Kenyatta's strategy and tactics received high praise from Attwood and, as expected, from MacDonald. By 1965 MacDonald reported that distrust of Odinga had substantially increased and "spread especially among the Kikuyu, the Kalenjin, the Masai and other non-Luo tribes."

In April 1965, Kenyatta undertook his first major frontal assault at the radicals. At a public rally in Murang'a, he angrily dismissed rumors of an impending revolution in Kenya, as "rubbish because," Kenya had "strong forces to deal with any uprising."<sup>181</sup> The bulk of his vigorously angry address was however directed at Bildad Kaggia, who was present at this rally. "Pointing to Mr. Kaggia all the time with his ebony stick," Kenyatta admonished him for advocating for free things. He also told Kaggia that he had failed to take advantage of opportunities open to him as a former fellow political prisoner/detainee. "Kaggia you are advocating for free things, but we were together with Paul Ngei in jail. If you

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<sup>179</sup> MAC 71/8/21 (Durham, UK: Durham University Archives/Malcolm MacDonald Papers), Kenya: Odinga.

<sup>180</sup> Malcolm MacDonald, *Titans and Others* (London: William Collins, 1972), pp. 272–273.

<sup>181</sup> *Daily Nation* (April 12, 1965), p. 9.

go to Ngei's home, he has planted a lot of coffee and other crops—what have you done for yourself?"<sup>182</sup> The same was true for Kubai who now had a "big house and a nice shamba," and Kungu Karumba who was "now running his own buses." To Kenyatta and his allies, Kaggia's basic fault was his stubborn and politically embarrassing refusal to capitalize on his status and position and enrich himself. He had not taken advantage of his position in government to amass wealth. This refusal was largely the cause for his dismissal from his position as an Assistant Minister for Education, very soon after *Uhuru*. "I gave Kaggia a good job in the Government," Kenyatta told the rally, "but he did not want to work. He did nothing and stayed idle saying that the Government was bad, so I sacked him."<sup>183</sup>

At this rally, Kenyatta touched on Communism and "free things" by drawing on his legendary past as one of the very few Pan Africanists who had studied and lived in the Soviet Union. Not even Nkrumah could make this claim. It is a status that Kenyatta employed, whenever politically necessary, to demolish his opponents. Neither Odinga nor Kaggia had lived and studied in the Soviet Union. Kenyatta could therefore claim that he knew more about Communism than his political opponents. He had been there. "He had studied in Moscow University before joining the London School of Economics. While in Moscow he learnt a lot about Russian life and there were no free things for every body."<sup>184</sup> Kenyatta thus sought to portray Kaggia, Odinga, and other proponents of radical nationalism as ill-informed individuals who had been duped into propagating ideological falsehood by Communist agents. Kenyans "who visited Russia and other Communist countries for a few days brought back false stories about free things. Such people," Kenyatta warned, "should not be listened to as he had been to these countries longer than those who told such stories."<sup>185</sup> As for landlessness among the Kikuyu, Kenyatta informed his audience that even before colonialism, "not everybody in Central Province owned land. There were people with no land who were known as tenants (*ahoi*)."

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<sup>182</sup> *Daily Nation* (April 12, 1965), p. 9.

<sup>183</sup> *Daily Nation* (April 12, 1965), p. 9.

<sup>184</sup> *Daily Nation* (April 12, 1965), p. 9.

<sup>185</sup> *Daily Nation* (April 12, 1965), p. 9.

Denunciation of Communism was part of Kenyatta's official address to the nation on June 1, 1965, during the *Madaraka Day* celebration. He told the nation that, "In a world of power politics, the East has as much designs upon us as the West and would like us to serve their own interests. That is why," he proclaimed, "we reject Communism ... To us Communism is as bad as imperialism."<sup>186</sup> What the country wanted was Kenyan nationalism, African socialism, and a policy of non-alignment. It was therefore naïve to overlook the "danger of imperialism from the East." Equally, it was "a sad mistake to think that you can get more food, more hospitals or schools by crying 'Communism.'"<sup>187</sup>

This denunciation received wide approval and coverage in the Western press. *Time* magazine sympathized with Kenyatta's difficulty in trying to steer "a middle course between East and West" while his radical Vice President was "travelling through the countryside heaping Red-tinged scorn on Kenyatta's ties with the West."<sup>188</sup> The speech was appealing in the West because it equated Communism with imperialism, the old style European colonialism in Africa. It thus added African weight, of considerable stature, to the Western ideological and propaganda position that saw Communism as the enemy of freedom, and the countries under Communist rule as not free.

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<sup>186</sup> *Daily Nation* (June 2, 1965), p. 6.

<sup>187</sup> *Daily Nation* (June 2, 1965), p. 6.

<sup>188</sup> *Time* (June 11, 1965), p. 40.



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