

SPEECH AT DEDAN KIMATHI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

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First, I wish to thank the Vice Chancellor Pro. Ndirangu Kioni and the University in its entirety for inviting me to be among other distinguished guests to contribute on the subject of the intended ***African Liberation*** focusing on ***Mau Mau*** struggle. I would also like to commend the University for coming up with the idea of establishing a center on ***African Liberation***. This is a commendable effort considering the role ***Mau Mau*** movement played and other liberation movements across the African Continent.

WHY THE DETERMINATION TO FIGHT FOR FREEDOM DESPITE PATHETIC CONDITIONS THE AFRICANS FOUND THEMSELVES IN?

This is a very important history which needs research as young people have no idea of what their parents and grandparents went through during the Colonial Rule. Indeed it is puzzling how the African peasant with all the hardship could present a formidable challenge to the colonialist's rule. How, for instance did the poor Africans with no education, torn clothes and no money. From the foregoing, it is apparent that sheer determination which fueled the Africans passion for freedom. Against all odds, the African peasant endured all the hardship caused by the Colonialism.

One bitter condition was the colour discrimination; Segregation based on Colour was unbelievable. it was practiced everywhere; in Schools, Hospitals, places of employment and even at Bus Stages .Furthermore, Africans were offered very poor accommodation in poor localities and one humiliating factor was that no matter how old you were, a young junior Colonialist Officer would be referring to you as a boy eg outside

the general post office bus stage commonly referred as to as GPO is an excellent example of how discrimination was practiced there was a stage for whites only with a seat and a cover, For Asians, the stage had a cover but no seats, and for the Africans, there were no seat and no cover, you just stand whether in sunshine or in rain

The worst and well known segregation was in land ownership; as Africans, nobody was allowed to own land at what was known as the white highlands Africans were even prohibited from growing cash crops. Unfortunately, many who participated in the struggle to free Kenya from Colonial yoke are no longer there and even those who are still alive may not be able to explain what happened.

Discrimination was practiced even in churches. There was segregation in churches; churches such as St Andrews in Nairobi, All Saints Cathedral and the holy family basilica were for Europeans only.

Land discrimination is illustrated by the story of the Senior Chief Koinange wa Mbiyu from Kiambu; he was very angry that some white people took a big chunk of land next to his land and planted coffee but when he also attempted to plant coffee, he was refused and his coffee was uprooted. He decided to travel by sea to Britain to complain to the king of England. This is how Africans came to be allowed to plant coffee.

Colour discrimination and segregation was also practiced in schools. In the City like Nairobi, the schools were divided into three categories; schools for Africans, where pupils were taught in Kiswahili or other native languages and the Europeans were taught in English. The Asian schools had teaching conducted in Asian languages. And for the Europeans English was used in teaching. The schools segregation was first fought by Dr Karmali, an Asian who was married to a European lady. Their children who did not speak Asian languages or Kiswahili were denied admission in European Schools This made Dr

Karmali to be very angry and complained through the media and he was actually the pioneer of integrated schools. in Kenya. He complained about segregation in schools and eventually, started by employing a teacher to be teaching his children at home and this made even some Europeans to complain to the authorities that schools should not have any Colour Discrimination. This made people to establish schools where children of any colour could be admitted. The first school to be of mixed colour was the Hospital Hill School which was established at Milimani on the then Hospital road because there was a big hospital there which is now the State House Girl's School.

One of the most frustrating and harassment experienced by families in Mount Kenya region was that at one time there were no grown up men available in areas such as Kiambu, Muranga, Nyeri, Meru and Embu. Mature men were locked in detention Camps, others imprisoned and many young men decided to join their brothers in forest at Mount Kenya and Nyandarua and the only grown up men were the home guards working for the Colonialists. Harassing and beating those lonely miserable women left in the villages and the young children some of who did not know what happened to their sons and husbands wondering whether they were killed or alive.

Women of the Central Kenya and around Mount Kenya Region were subjected to Forced Communal Labour where women would work from early morning to about 5pm. These are women without running water, children hungry without their father and in a place with Curfew in that they could not get out of their houses after 6pm. How these women managed to keep their people is a serious issue needing a serious study.

Later, the Colonial Rules brought another Law which was to remove people from all the areas affected by Mau Mau from their rural homes where they had gardens to grow their foods. The order came that ALL THE VILLAGERS MUST be ordered to move and stay together in big Villages, where the villagers were ordered to go, they were surrounded by

a deep trench, very deep and very wide in that nobody could jump to run away inside the trench, there were spikes in that if you fall down you would be injured by the spikes and of course you would be shot dead. The villagers were also surrounded by the fence and only had one guarded entrance. The villagers abandoned their previous established homes and gardens to live in these communal. Villages.

There was also the evacuation of Africans from the settlers farms Africans were not informed that they would be evacuated; women would leave their huts to go to work in the farms and all over sudden they would be packed onto Lorries and be dumped at a camp opposite Wilson Airport on Langata Road. Children of Labourers in settler farms could only be allowed up to 15 years. Once you attained a certain age, you were not allowed work in the farms. There was a camp where evacuees would be locked. Army lorries carrying thousands of squatters were emptied there. These squatters would be picked from white settler farms all over the country to be damped on an open field at Langata Road, here they would be interrogated and be questions were geared towards establishing their place of origin. The interviewers would disguise themselves by wearing on a sack on their heads with holes for seeing. These interviewers were the homeguards. After interrogation; the guards would determine where one originally came from. Those who decline to reveal their origin would undergo some form of torture to make them talk. After determining where the squatters originally came from, they would be ferried there by lorries. After distributing them to empty fields in Kiambu, which they thought were their homes their original places of origin, they would again be packed into Lorries and be dumped in places like Kirigiti in Kiambu, Ihura at Muranga and Ruringu in Nyeri.

When fighting against the Colonialist was at its peak, the Africans became very ruthless to white farmers. Hence, the white farmers (Settlers) started to see the governor

demanding to be given the permission to fight Africans. They said they must revenge and they didn't want Mau Mau tribes around their farms.

Also, there were areas in which those who came from Mt. Kenya Region involved with Mau Mau were not allowed to visit. They were barred from these areas. This includes places like Kaloleni and Ziwani etc. Kikuyu's could be allocated houses in Kariakor and Bahati and some areas such as Makongeni. To visit a friend from these places, you had to get permission from the chief. Even to own a **Bicycle** or a **Motorbike**, you had to have a permit and you would be monitored where you go.

At the height of the Mau Mau war, Africans would sabotage the colonialist and White Farmers as this was a war time.

WERE ALL THE WHITE PEOPLE BAD?

Not all white people were inhuman and inconsiderate as has been commonly believed. There were some Colonial Administrators who were caring and kind. In fact, some of them contributed a lot to the improvement of the lot of Africans. Two of the most notable are Mr. John Nottingham, a former District Administrator in the Colonial Administration and Mr. Cyrile Hooper who was a Missionary Educator at Kahuhia Muranga District. Mr. Nottingham rescued and freed many Africans from being detained unnecessarily; at present he is adviser to former Mau Mau people who go to claim their payment from British Government. A missionary like Mr. Hopper would hide villagers within the sanctuary of the church lest they be killed by Colonial Government soldiers. There is also a Lawyer like Dennis Pritt who is notable for his contribution in the defense of freedom fighters. Also there were a number of white people who were sympathetic to the African cause. It is also worth noting that all white people in the country during the Colonial times were anti Africans can be not true by the fact that some fellow Africans

who worked as Home Guards for the Colonial Government were more brutal to their fellow brothers and sisters than any Colonialist would be. This, the home guards did to impress their masters but their people.

WHAT ROLE DID THE MISSIONARIES PLAY IN KENYA AND IN THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE?

Some missionaries played a pivotal role in Kenya's liberation struggle and developed It is the missionaries who educated many African people. Indeed, to date, there are many missionary churches and Schools in Kenya For example, many of the best schools in Kenya were established by Missionaries some of the missionary schools include Kahuhia in Muranga, Chogoria in Meru, Alliance in Kikuyu, Maseno, Tumutumu in Nyeri St Mary's Yala in Nyanza, Mangu in Central just to name a few. Infact, there were very few Government schools in Kenya until mid 1950s. Where missionaries were established, so were schools and hospitals and that is why the elite and the educated in Kenya were only found where there. Not all missionaries were Anti-Liberation Examples some of many **Mau Mau** families received treatment at hospitals like Kijabe Mission Kikuyu, Tumutumu Chogoria etc. It is important to note that quality education for Africans was only offered by the Christian missionaries such as Anglicans, PCEA and Catholics.

PERSONALLY

Personally I was instrumental in sabotaging the Colonial Strategy of recruiting the Maasai Morans to fight alongside the Colonialist who were fighting Africans during the straggle for independence.

I participated, though unknown to many, as a letter smuggler for the detained

Mau Mau fighters. There were two big detention camps in Kajiado, one at Isinya and another in Athi River. My husband Dr Likimani a Maasai was allowed to enter into detention camps that he was a Maasai and furthermore, he was not political. As his wife, I used to accompany him when he used to go and check the detainee's health. Though I was not allowed inside the camps, but unknown, to the authorities and even to my husband, I would carry some notepad and when my husband was busy inside the camp, I would pass the notepad over to the detainees through the fence. The detainees would then write letters and pass it back to me upon which I would go and post the letters to their families and friends

Resisting Colonial Dictatorship, started long time ago. These include people such Koitalel Arap Samoei who is famed for the Nandi resistance, a fierce struggle that took the Colonial Government almost a decade to quell. The Nandi resistance under the leadership of Koitalel Arap Samoei took place much earlier before the **Mau Mau** rebellion. Koitalel is hailed as a liberation hero because of the way he organized Nandi warriors and challenged British Soldiers

When at one time the Colonialist had taken over the coast around the Kilifi, Malindi areas, they were very daring and arrogant. They would go to the villages and forcefully take away village boys and nobody knew where they took these boys and nobody dared ask. Mekatilili wa Menza, the fierce Giriama woman dressed in handa skins and perhaps bear top dared to fight the whites with their guns to resist them from taking their sons. This tough Giriama woman taught other giriama women how to fight and resist the colonialists and saving their sons from being taken away to an unknown place. When Mekatilili was imprisoned in kisii, she broke the prison and walked back going through wild animals and for many days sleeping on trees and she came back home to malindi. Such were the bitterness which made Kenyans take arms to fight the colonialists.

Later on Mekatilili was arrested again by the colonial government; she was deported away from home. Mekatilili is one of the greatest symbols of women struggle against oppression in Kenya.

Although there were also women freedom fighters within the Mau Mau, women who were left in villages played an important role in smuggling provisions to the fighters in the forest. One of the most notable women in the liberation struggle is Nyanjiru during Harry Thuku. She almost singlehandedly challenged Colonial policemen and fiercely fought them in front of what is now central police station. She chided African men of being cowardly and when riots broke out she was shot dead by the colonial police.

One day, Dr Tameno encountered a lot of Maasai morans excitedly chanting war songs and dancing of going to fight the **Mau Mau** guerillas in the forests. During this time, the Colonial Government had created a new province to be known as Southern Province. It had included Kitui and Machakos from the Central Province. Also Kajiado and Narok districts thus making the four districts to be the new Southern Province. The New Provincial Commissioner for the Southern Province headquartered at Ngong and is the one who had gathered all the moran warriors from Kajiado and Narok districts which covers Loitokitok to Kilgoris, now the Transmara district. They were all gathered from wherever they were in the bush eating meat and were brought in army lorries, near to Ngong PC headquarters, they were given a lot of cows and goats and they were feasting dancing and practicing how young moran warriors should know, how to take care of their herds and how to protect their cattle from thieves who came from across the borders.

Dr Tameno, who is a Maasai, drove closer and asked them what was going on and they said they are going to fight the Mau Mau. Alarmed Dr Tameno drove to Kajiado District and decided to share with other Maasai on what is going on. Personally When I learnt this, I invited some senior officers who were Maasai to our house and discussed ways of

preventing the morans from going to fight fellow Kenyans alongside the Colonialists. During the meeting I prepared meet for them, it was noted that none of us, had experience of the real Maasai sensibilities and therefore could not persuade the morans to back off. Hence, there was need to send for somebody who was well rooted in the culture to approach the Moran's. Later they chose Mr. Stanley Oloitiptip, who was working as a Clinical Officer in Mashuru dispensary he was familiar with the intricacies of Maasai culture, it was decided that he was the right person to persuade the morans to pull out. Mr. Oloitiptip was driven in Government Land Rover registered OHMS at night through the bush When he approached the morans; he was dressed in Maasai ringener exited he approached the Morans. Who have stolen our cows? No not our cows, whose cows then they said the Mzungu's Kikuyus are fighting the Mzungus the whites. Then Oloitiptip asked them, and where are Mzungu's sons Mr. Oleteptep asked the morans. This prompted the morans to think Tell the Mzungu' to send their sons to fight whoever stole their cows He spoke to them in the manner to suggest that they were on a futile mission since their cattle were safe and there was no need of them fighting other people's battles at the expense of their own welfare and life. Then all the morans exited left, they went back to their Manyattas very angry, thus effectively sabotaging the Colonial Government's plan to take the morans to fight the mau mau warriors. Such morans are usually around their nearby manyattas and never before had the moran warrior from all over Maasai land and from different clans gather together like those coming from as far as beyond Mount Kilimanjaro to cross the Kilgoris (Now Transmara) border with Kisii County. But how did these colonialists know where the morans who were camping in the bush were? They had sent an army of Lorries to ferry them to this new southern province headquarters.at Ngong Hills.

There were also many other people who felt that the colonial government's treatment of Africans was inhuman. A lawyer like Dennis Pritt is notable for his contribution in the

defense of freedom fighters. Missionaries were also very instrumental in condemning atrocities committed against Africans. Even in British parliament, there were leaders such as Barbra Castle who vehemently criticized the excesses of the colonial government in Kenya. Freedom struggle in other parts of the African continent became a great source of encouragement to the Kenyan freedom fighters; Ghana's attainment of independence in 1952 encouraged the freedom movement in Kenya. Outside the continent, India had achieved her independence earlier on in 1947 and since she was a British colony, her Independence boosted the spirits of those who were fighting for emancipation from Colonialism here in Kenya. Earlier times was Harry Thuku and one of Nairobi's streets is named after him.

The Kapenguria Six who would be detained for several years were not all **Mau Mau** warriors and they included people like Achieng Oneko Paul Ngei etc. All over the country, there was strong Colonial resistance though not to the scale mounted by the mau mau fighters. Initially, there were key people who took up the struggle to fight against freedom. The streets of Nairobi are named after key figure of Kenya's freedom; Mr Mbotela and Mr. Ofafa These two were killed almost at the same time and they were very instrumental in the affairs of KAU, the first organized African political party in Kenya. We also have Pio Gama Pinto; one of the pioneer Indian freedom fighters, also the Asian ranks was Makhan Sigh, a veteran trade unionist. The Kapenguria Six; Bildad Kaggia, Kungu Karumba, Fred Kubai Achieng Oneko Paul Ngei and Jomo Kenyatta were detained and tried for fighting with the **Mau Mau** Veterans. Their trial caught international attention and augmented the pace of freedom struggle, eventually leading to independence they represented the political arm of the liberation struggle and they were the first crop of highly educated Africans who could grasp the political philosophy together with the freedom struggle. It is this crop of Africans who would firstly represent the Africans in the legislative council. It is also important to note that the first president of

the Republic of Kenya, his Excellency Jomo Kenyatta was one of the Kapenguria Six. Other notable figures in the struggle for independence from other parts of the country other than central province were Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, who dared to demand the release of their leader Jomo Kenyatta. A leading member of KAU Joseph Murumbi fled to exile in Britain and continued to agitate for an end of Colonial rule from there. Mr. Murumbu was working with Embassy of Morocco in London and was very much involved in complaining internationally for Kenya freedom and even organizing forums with members of British Parliament such as Barbra Castle and others. There is no doubt that the excesses of the Colonial Government against Africans prompted the breakout of the mau mau insurgency. The degrading nature of the actions of the colonial officers is beyond description. Old people supplicating to colonial officers young enough to be their sons and being forced to call the white young men bwana mkubwa are some of the absurdities that Africans had to endure. Irrespective of the African custom's strong view on gender roles, African men were being humiliated before the white women in homes where they worked as servants. They were being referred to as boys irrespective of age difference, just because they were farmhands.

With such discrimination, meager payments and poor living conditions, Kenyans decided to take up arms. They said enough is enough but the most important thing to note was the freedom fighters. What I would say about the freedom struggle is that it was a well organized movement staged by ordinary people with no substantial education, poor with no money or sophisticated weapons. But it is their sense of **determination** and **unity** that **strengthened** their resolve. People without arms dared to fight the mighty powers, people who have guns, people who make bombs, people with money, people with knowledge but the daring attackers were fought by those who were bare-footed, badly fed, thin, poor, referred to as boys living in that one small hut, in that crowded

squatter area given to him by bwana mkubwa, the big man you are supposed to stand attention to, when he passes, take your hat off and salute as they pass by.

But the most exciting thing in our life was the day we witnessed the colonialist's **FLAG**, the **Union Jack** being pulled down and the Kenya flag being hoisted high. What a joy? What a great joy to sing our national anthem I was there, I witnessed the Union Jack go down

My prayer to the young generation is to be patriotic and to be defenders of your country and know that freedom was achieved by fighting; blood was shed and many people suffered. So be defenders of your NATION, be proud of our beautiful Country. Protect our land; resist preachers of Tribalism and Corruption and love of money which can ruin our Country.

Those who fought are no more; Kenya is our Country **SO PROTECT IT**