

Jomo Kenyatta: An Epitome of Indigenous Pan-Africanism, Nationalism and Intellectual Production in Kenya

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Abstract

This paper discusses the late Jomo Kenyatta, founding President and Head of State of the Republic of Kenya. The paper focuses on Kenyatta as a pioneer and giant African Pan-Africanist, nationalist and intellectual. As a pan-Africanist, the late Kenyatta together with other founding presidents Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Patrice Lumumba of the Republic of Congo, Leopold Senghor of Senegal among others joined hands in spreading the message and values of pan-Africanism which emphasized a form of intellectualism, and political and economic co-operation that would lead to the political unity of Africa. The pan-Africanist spirit, advocated that riches of Africa be used for the benefit, upliftment, development and enjoyment of African people. It is the outstanding African scholars, political scientists, historians and philosophers living in Africa and the Diaspora who developed pan-Africanism that was conceived in the womb of Africa and a product made in Africa by Africans. The paper will focus on Kenyatta's role in fostering pan-African ideologies for the continent of Africa. Having been influenced by nationalism, Kenyatta sought to address the inter-related issues of power, identity politics, self-assertion and autonomy for Kenya, himself and the African continent. His activities in his struggle for independence and democratic governance in Kenya evidence this. His role in initiating the spirit of Harambee (development through collective pooling of resources) among the diverse ethnic groups of Kenya is particularly well recognized, appreciated and approved by Kenyans. This paper will also seek to give a critical examination of the challenges faced

and caused by Kenyatta as a statesman in his leadership styles especially the way he dealt with emerging opposition in his cabinet. Finally, the paper seeks to discuss Kenyatta the intellectual. As a trained anthropologist and author, Kenyatta contributed immensely to knowledge production in Kenya and Africa as a continent. This is evidenced in his book, Facing Mount Kenya, which talks about his ethnic group, the Gikuyu, and their traditional way of life.

Introduction

There are many who celebrate Africa on the move, while remaining paralysed with pessimism – they prefer simply pontificating on the future. The year 2003 has been momentous in many ways and NEPAD debate and African renaissance offer genuine political opportunities for African unity and cooperation. Appropriately, Kenya has been at the forefront of supporting the idea of African unity and the search for new forms of economic relations. Jomo Kenyatta, as one of the leaders of Kenya, distinguished himself in his vision and resolute action for the liberation of the continent.

First, this paper seeks to examine Kenyatta's background within the African context. It is not my intention to detail here, a biography of this great African statesman, for this will be a labour of sanctimonious indulgence, indeed an exercise of futility since many African and Africanist scholars have done so more extensively. However, allow me to briefly state that Kenyatta was born at Ng'enda in the Gatundu Division of Kiambu in the year 1889 to Muigai and Wambui. He was later baptized and given a Christian name John Peter, which he changed to Johnstone and later to Jomo in 1938. He lived among Maasai relatives in Narok during World War I. While staying in Narok, Kenyatta worked as a clerk to an Asian trader and after the war, he served as a storekeeper to a European firm. During this time, he began wearing his beaded belt (Ochieng and Ogot 1996).

Kenyatta married his first wife Grace Wahu in 1920. Between 1921–26, he worked in the Nairobi City Council water department. Though he owned land and a house at Dagoretti, he preferred to live closer to town at Kilimani in a hut and cycled home during weekends. By 1925, he was one of the leaders of the Kikuyu

Central Association (KCA), a party, which chose him to represent the Kikuyu land problems before the Hilton Young Commission in Nairobi, thus starting his career in politics. In 1928, he published his newspaper, *Muigwithania*, which dealt with Kikuyu culture and new farming methods. The Kikuyu Central association (KCA) sent him to England in 1929 to influence British opinion on tribal land.

In 1931, Kenyatta again went to England to present a written petition to Parliament where he met Mahatma Gandhi of India in November 1932. After giving evidence before the Morris Carter Commission, he proceeded to Moscow to learn Economics but was forced to return to Britain by 1933. During the gold rush, land in Kakamega reserve was being distributed to settlers. This made Kenyatta very angry and he spoke about Britain's unjust activities. For this reason he was dubbed a communist by the British. Kenyatta taught Gikuyu at the University College, London and also wrote a book on the Kikuyu language in 1937. Under Professor Malinowski, he studied Anthropology at the London School of Economics. In 1938, his book, *Facing Mount Kenya* that talked about Kikuyu customs saw the light of day.

During World War II, Kenyatta served on a farm in the United Kingdom, while owning his own farm there; he married Edna Clarke, his second wife 1942. Along with other African leaders, including Nkrumah of Ghana, he took part in the Fifth Pan-African Congress of 1945 in Manchester. When he returned to Kenya in 1946, he married his third wife Wanjiku. But Kenyatta was perhaps not as whimsical as it he might appear with respect to marriage. It is believed that he used polygamy to win political support especially among the Kikuyu tribe. During his travels in the countryside at Kiambu, Murang'a and Nyeri, he took the opportunity to contact the local people and to speak to them. His fourth and last wife was Mama Ngina. In 1947, he took over the leadership of Kenya African Union (KAU) from James Gichuru (Ochieng and Ogot 1996).

In 1952, October 20, Sir Evelyn Baring, newly appointed Governor of Kenya of two weeks, declared a state of emergency in the country. Jomo Kenyatta and other prominent leaders were arrested. His trial at Kapenguria on April 8, 1953, for managing Mau Mau was a mockery of justice (Muoria 1994). He was sentenced to 7 years in prison with hard labor and to indefinite restrictions thereafter. On

April 14, 1959, Jomo Kenyatta completed his sentence at Lokitaung but remained in restriction at Lodwar. He was later moved to Maralal, where he remained until August 1961. On August 14, 1961, he was allowed to return to his Gatundu home and on 21 August, 1961, nine years after his arrest, Kenyatta was freed from all restrictions (Muoria 1994).

On October 28, 1961, Kenyatta became the President of the Kenya African National Union and a month later, he headed a KANU delegation to London for talks to prepare the way for the Lancaster House Conference. On June 1, 1963, Mzee Kenyatta became the first Prime Minister of self-governing Kenya. At midnight on December 12, 1963, at Uhuru Stadium, amid world leaders and multitudes of people, the Kenya flag was unfurled and a new nation was born. A year later on December 12, 1964, Kenya became a Republic within the Commonwealth, with Kenyatta as the President.

Kenyatta died on 22 August 1978 in Mombasa at the age of 89 years. President Kenyatta is acknowledged as one of the greatest men of the twentieth century (Ochieng and Ogot 1996). His reign will go down in history as a golden era in Kenya's positive development. Indeed, he was a beacon, a rallying point for suffering Kenyans to fight for their rights, justice and freedom. His brilliance gave strength and aspiration to people beyond the boundaries of Kenya, indeed beyond the shores of Africa. Just as one light shines in total darkness and provides a rallying point, so did Kenyatta become the focus of the freedom fight for Kenya over half a century to dispel the darkness and injustice of colonialism. Before matter can become light, it has to suffer the rigors of heat, so did Kenyatta suffer the rigorous of imprisonment to bring independence to Kenya? As the founding father of Kenya, and its undisputed leader, he came to be known as *Mzee*, Swahili word for a respected elder.

Kenyatta is seen as the leader who united all races and tribes for the freedom struggle, the orator who held his listeners entranced, the journalist who launched the first indigenous paper to voice his people's demands, the scholar who wrote the first serious study about his people, the teacher who initiated love for Kenya culture and heritage, the farmer who loved his land and urged his people to return to it, the biographer who documented his 'suffering without bitterness, the conservationist who protected Kenya's priceless fauna

and flora, the father figure who showered love and affection on all, the democrat who upheld the democratic principle of one-man one-vote, the elder statesman who counseled other Heads of State, and finally Kenyatta the visionary who had a glorious image of Kenya's future and toiled to realize it.

Since ideas are more enduring than human bodies and sacrifices last longer than sermons, the light that is Kenyatta burns on to illuminate the path of Kenya. According to Lonsdale, this is one quality that makes him difficult to understand,

Kenyatta is conventionally seen as a consummate political fixer, a 'prince' rather than an ideological 'prophet' like his neighbour Nyerere of Tanzania. I wish to propose a more ideological Kenyatta. I do so by paying more attention to intellectual biography, and indeed to African theology and political thought, than is normal in African historiography (Lonsdale 2000).

Pan Africanism, Kenya and Kenyatta

According to Motsoko Pheko, Pan-Africanism advocates that the riches of Africa be used for the benefit, upliftment, development and enjoyment of African people. Pan-Africanism is a system of equitably sharing food, clothing, homes, education, health care, wealth, land, work, security of life and happiness. Pan-Africanism is the privilege of African people to love themselves and to give themselves and their way of life respect and preference. Pan-Africanism was developed by outstanding African scholars, political scientists, historians and philosophers living in Africa and the diaspora. It was conceived in the womb of Africa and a product made in Africa by Africans

The first pan-Kenyan nationalist movement in Kenya was led by Harry Thuku to protest against white-settler dominance. His party, the East African Association, traced its roots to the early Kikuyu political groups. Thuku was arrested by the colonial authorities in 1922 and exiled for seven years. He was released only after agreeing to cooperate with the colonial government, a decision that would undermine his leadership of the Kikuyus. This incident united Kenya's diverse African communities firmly together in their demands for freedom from British colonial rule (Wepman 1985).

In 1929, Kenyatta sailed to England to present the Association's case for freedom directly to the Colonial office, the British parliament and the British people. The Carter Land Commission was convened in 1931 to adjudicate land interests and Kenyatta once again presented evidence supporting the Association's cause. The findings of the Commission proved detrimental for the Africans however, it marked out permanent barriers between the white-owned farms and the African Land Units or "reserves." These boundaries were made into law five years later. As a result, the number of groups demanding greater African political power increased dramatically. The colonial government quickly reacted by banning all African political associations in 1940.

World War II only increased African discontent as many Africans fought side by side with their colonial overlords. Much like their American counterparts, during the five-year conflict, Africans were exposed to many new influences and developed an awareness that Europeans were far from invincible. Empowered by this new outlook, African veterans returned home to their respective countries only to face discrimination. Many rebelled against such unfair treatment. As discontent grew, the anti-colonial fervor swept across Africa (Throup and Hornsby 1998).

Jomo Kenyatta returned to Kenya in 1946 after 15 years of study and political activity in England in order to assume the leadership of the Kenya African Union (KAU). He became the next great Kenyan leader after Thuku. He quickly became the first propaganda secretary of the East African Association, and later the secretary-general of the Kikuyu Central Association.

As the fight for freedom grew, the Kikuyu formed secret societies united in desire to break British rule. These societies encouraged oath-taking ceremonies, which bound the participants to wage war against Europeans and any Africans who were thought to be collaborators. From this movement, the Kikuyu dominated the Mau Mau organization that had been formed. On October 20, 1952 the Mau Mau protested the midnight arrest of Jomo Kenyatta and five colleagues. Ninety-seven Africans considered to be collaborators were killed in what is today known as the Lari Massacre. Some Mau Mau however denied involvement in the affair, calling it a government plot. The British accused Kenyatta of organizing the Mau Mau rebellion and subjected

him to a rigged trial. It is during these events that Kenyatta and the others were found guilty and sentenced to seven years of hard labor at a remote camp near Lake Turkana.

The Mau Mau rebellion continued until 1956. During the three years of civil war, over 30,000 African men, women, and children were imprisoned in British concentration camps, many losing their homes and land as a result. Though only 100 Europeans were killed, the British massacred over 13,000 Africans during the course of the war. But the war was costly to the British, a scenario that made the colonial government finally concede some political power to the Africans with limited representation in the Legislative Council. Angry white settlers, not satisfied with anything short of a complete partition of the country, began to leave. Kenyatta was sentenced to two more years of prison, but was elected president 'in absentia' of the Kenya African National Union, or KANU (Muoria 1994).

While the Kenya African National Union (KANU) under the leadership of Kenyatta advocated for a strong central government, the newly formed Kenya African Democratic Union, or (KADU), favored a decentralized federal form of government. Leaders of both parties (KANU and KADU) attended talks at Lancaster House in England due to Kenyatta's continuing imprisonment. General elections were held for the first time in February 1961. KANU received more votes, but refused to participate in government until Kenyatta was released. The Asian Kenya Freedom Party and numerous independent candidates joined in the protest and, as political pressure built up, Kenyatta was finally released in August 1961.

KANU and KADU continued to debate on the eventual form of government most suited to a free Kenya. In the meantime, Kenyatta agreed to a coalition government until independence. The first universal elections in the country took place in May 1963, with an overwhelming victory for Kenyatta and the KANU party. On June 1, 1963, Jomo Kenyatta became the first Prime Minister of Kenya. In his inaugural address, he promoted a concept that would eventually become an official motto now incorporated in the country's coat of arms: *Harambee*, or *let us work together*, in building a free nation. Independence became a reality for Kenya on December 12, 1963. Nationalism in Africa has displayed a remarkable enduring resonance. In the more recent years, it has taken the enormous

integrity and courage of a Nelson Mandela to remind us what African nationalism was all about. However, during the two decades after independence, so many dictators had worn the mantle of nationalism that it is difficult to imagine it ever had popular support.

Kenyatta and his vision for African leadership

Forty years after Kenyan independence, the difference between liberation and social emancipation is becoming more apparent. Collective leadership and responsibility have by and large been missing from the top decision making processes in Africa in the past forty years. Instead, patriarchal forms of governance along with vanguardism were the political forms through which programmes of action were dictated to the producers. At an early moment in the independence of Kenya, there was a recognition of the centrality of these elements in the political process and the term *wananchi* (*citizens*) became part of the popular vocabulary (Wepman 1985). Now, ideas of individualism and private accumulation have replaced the commitment to emancipating Africa and her peoples from the destruction caused by four hundred years of contact with Europe.

According to Lonsdale (2000), Kenyatta saw the Modern World as a threat to moral and social order. At its worst, it caused the ‘detrribalisation’ that deprived people of the will, and sense of purpose, that were needed to struggle for self-determination. Kenyatta worked out this view in the course of his own intellectual and moral journey. In the early years of his public life, in the 1920s, he had enthusiastically linked Christianity to the cultural reform of his people. By the 1930s, he had arrived at a more conservative God, partly because of what his fellow Christians seemed to be abandoning in Kikuyu culture, partly because of his Malinowskian anthropology, learned in London. This conservative political ideology came to dominate his political judgment.

There were three profound implications for Kenyatta’s (and Kenya’s) political practice, both in his leadership of anti-colonial nationalism, and as his country’s first President:

Kenya’s critical nationalities, the moral crucibles for self-mastery, were the ethnicities that (in general) had acquired their own vernacular

Bibles, Kenya's only common political primer.

Each nationality owed it to its own sense of self-mastery to fight its own political battles. A pan-ethnic nationalism carried the risk of denying others the responsibility that they owed to themselves. And there were clear limits to a cultural project to destroy ethnicity as a moral community.

If authority lay in virtuous labour that sustained one's own prosperity, rather than that of another (an employer), then a class politics in which the poor had the right of struggle was scarcely thinkable. (Lonsdale 1999).

The two points, on African unity and confidence in the youth will distinguish the African continent in the 21st century and the question for this conference and for serious thinkers in Africa will be how to develop the intellectual and political leadership to chart an economic and social course which breaks the forms of economic relations which have characterized the continent since the period of colonialism (Lonsdale 1999). Forty years of formal sovereignty have made it more possible to grasp the strength and weaknesses of an independence, which meant the Africanization of the structures of the colonial state. At the end of the twentieth century, one can also critique the cultural and gender bias which was built into concepts of African unity.

The transcendence of colonialism and racial degradation as goals of the African nationalist leadership inspired deals of continental unity but African feminists have exposed how the same nationalists have sanctioned the institutionalisation of gender differences. Nationalists have always been ambivalent on issues of African languages, cultures, and religion and have been as culpable as colonial overlords in ensuring that men and women, especially women who are producers, did not have the same rights and access to resources. In this sense, the goals of unity and liberation in this century have been a much masculinised concept. One sees this reproduced in the present period with the amount of ink flowing on the new leadership in Africa (Wepman 1985).

The issue of the content of African leadership has been the subject of numerous books, commentaries and meetings. Once the mass resistance to oppression exploded in the face of the colonisers,

there was an outpouring of projects to develop the correct 'Political Leadership in Africa' (Mazrui 1972). The obscene military dictatorships once experienced in Nigeria and other parts of Africa forced a retreat by those who celebrated the military as bearers of modernity in an earlier period. The democratic discussions, which take place at conferences and meetings, require some historical context to grasp who and what are the forces capable of maintaining democratic relations in Africa. Eusi Kwayana reminds us that once the popular rebellions began in the period of the second global war, the colonial offices of France and Britain wanted to find good leaders. The stress on individual leaders meant that the colonial office was always looking for the kind of leader with whom they could negotiate. Kwayana remarked that, 'The Colonial office in London also fostered the conception of leaderism by maintaining that without the leaders to stir up the people, they could contain the colonial uprisings' (Berman 1990).

Let me now briefly examine the questions of leadership and the intellectual traditions which have shaped African leaders in this century. One cannot speak of leadership without critiquing leaderism and those forms of party organization, which inhibit creativity. The organizational culture of centralised party structures has stifled the participation of the producers. Frantz Fanon was far ahead of his time when he spoke at length on the pitfalls of national consciousness. Kenyatta recognized the pitfalls of crude nationalism and at all times supported a Pan African agenda, which rose above petty nationalism. This presentation celebrates those aspects of this Pan African vision, which can enrich this vision for the liberation of Africa and the emancipation of humanity.

Kenyatta: Leadership and Intellectual tradition

Like Kenyatta, many political leaders of Africa's nations have displayed various patterns and styles of leadership. These styles according to Mazrui and Michael Tidy, often appear to be revolutionary or at least radical, because they are different from those bequeathed by the politicians of their former colonial powers. Westminster-style democratic leadership, based on open debate and

an open electoral process, which was inherited from the colonial masters at the time of decolonization, has disappeared almost everywhere in Africa and given way to different and often less democratic patterns of leadership. Yet these different patterns are not necessarily new in Africa. In some ways they follow the patterns established by Africa's great leaders of the past. Three styles of leadership which form elements of continuity between Africa's pre-colonial past and post-colonial present are: the Elder Tradition, the Sage Tradition, and the Warrior Tradition.

Intellectuals have defined intellectualism differently. Mazrui defines intellectualism as an engagement in the realm of ideas, rational discourse and independent inquiry. For its Head of state, Kenya had the nation's first black social anthropologist, Jomo Kenyatta- author of *Facing Mt. Kenya*. The period after most African countries attained their independencies has been called the golden age of high Pan-African ambitions and towering intellectuals in Africa. Both Pan-African and African intellectuals were flying high. Pan-Africanism was indeed still alive, but the progress of slippage had begun as Africans became less idealistic and more pragmatic as cautious post-coloniality replaced the vigour of anti-colonialism.

Within the African countries, forces were unfolding which were lethal to both the spirit of Pan-African and the ideals of intellectualism. Mazrui argues that over the last 40 years, East Africa in particular has experienced the rise and decline of African intellectuals. This has been attributed among other reasons, the inability of some heads of states to accommodate divergent views from intellectuals. The thrust of this paper will be to accentuate and celebrate the Kenyatta leadership and his intellectual production for Africa. While Kenyatta is seen by many as one among few first founding presidents who promoted intellectualism, his rising authoritarianism led to the declining academic freedom on campuses. In the mid-1970s when Kenyatta was still in power, Ali Mazrui who had resigned from Makerere University as a measure of impact of political authoritarianism on the university's freedom of choice, the University of Nairobi in Kenya refused to hire him. The fate of intellectualism became worse in Kenya during the years of President Daniel Arap Moi as intellectual opposition to capitalism in Kenya became increasingly a punishable offence.

This is why there is more perception among the committed intellectuals who have sought to understand why concepts such as imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism have taken a back seat to globalization as a way to organize thoughts and political possibilities. There is the proposition that the conception globalization is being used as a powerful deterrent to anti-imperialist action, and consequently, the use of concepts such as globalization contains no vision for the African people since it is being used to signal powerlessness on the part of the producers in Africa and the Third World (Harvey 1995).

The Elder Tradition

To Mazrui, elder tradition is heavily paternalistic, almost by definition. It is particularly strong where you still have the original first president of an African State. The notion of a *Founding Father*, with prerogatives not just in politics but also in opinion formation, is a major component of the total political picture. The elder leader or patriarchal leader is the one who commands neo-filial reverence, a real father figure. He may prefer to withdraw from involvement in the affairs of the nation and dominate the scene from a godlike position in the background rather than as a participating politician, and in general delegate duties to his lesser colleagues who carry out the day-to-day business of running the nation.

Patriarchal leadership can be profoundly African when it becomes intertwined with patriarchal leader – the massive presence of national authority, non-interventionist except when really needed, projecting an air of solidity and stability in spite of the cracks and cleavages of Kenya politics. The affectionate use of the title ‘Mzee’ for Kenyatta was a manifestation of his patriarchal status and the filial reverence he commanded. The Elder Tradition also carries heavy preference for consensus in the family. The father figure expects that consensus is not questionable and therefore has a profound distrust of dissent and dispute, even of the kind, which is indispensable for a vigorous political and intellectual atmosphere. The Elder Tradition also has a preference for reverence and reaffirmation of loyalty towards political leaders, and that reverence and reaffirmation of loyalty is

in turn sometimes hostile to the atmosphere of adequate intellectual independence and political criticism (Throup and Hornsby 1998). More often than not Presidents with patriarchal status rarely accommodate dissenting political views. During Kenyatta's time, political assassinations of the late politicians Tom Mboya 1969 and J.M. Kariuki in 1975 have always been linked to political dissent to Mzee's leadership.

The Warrior Tradition

Increased attention has recently been paid to the phase of 'primary resistance' when Africa first had to confront Western intrusion. The arguments of scholars like Terence Ranger for Eastern Africa and Michael Crowder for Western Africa identify those early-armed challenges by Africans against colonial rule as the very origins of modern nationalism in the continent. By this argument, Tanzania's ruling party and its functions as a liberating force has for its ancestry both the Maji Maji and earlier rebellions against German rule. African struggles against colonial rule did not begin with modern political parties and western-trained intellectuals, but originated in those early 'primary resisters' with their spears poised against Western military technology.

Yet, while some scholars regard the Nkurumahs and Nyereres of modern Africa as the true heirs of these primary resisters, it is certain military regimes in independent Africa, and the liberation fighters in Southern Africa, who really carry the mantle of the original primary resisters. The warrior tradition was not a technique invented to counter colonialism. Present-day military rulers and freedom fighters are a symbol of the beginning of a new warrior tradition, or perhaps a resurrection of the old one. The struggle against dependency as exemplified by certain military regimes is a reactivation of the ancestral assertiveness of warrior culture (Mazrui 1972).

Yet warrior tradition revived before the colonial period was over. The Mau Mau movement helped many Kikuyu Christians transcend the conditioning of 'turning the other cheek, as well as overcome the terror of eternal Christian damnation. The oaths, which ensured militant commitment, helped to counter the emasculating

consequences of the colonial experience. The forest fighters were militarily defeated by the British, but this was clearly a victory that vanquished. The political triumph went to Africans, even if the military success was retained by the colonists. The stronghold of the white settlers was at last broken, and before long Kenya was preparing for independence.

Mau Mau was the first great liberation movement of the modern period. All the efforts which are now being made in Southern Africa to consolidate resistance, organize sabotage, and seek to dispel which power and privilege, have for the their heroic ancestry the band of fighters in the Nyandarua forests of Kenya. The warrior tradition was at least temporarily revived at a critical moment in Kenya's history (Mazrui 1972).

In addition to these types and styles of leadership, there have been a number of pre-colonial cultural traditions, which affected those types and styles. The most obvious was the elder tradition in pre-colonial African culture, which has probably conditioned the patriarchal style after independence. The reverence of Jomo Kenyatta as Mzee (the Elder) in Kenya was substantially the outcome of the precolonial elder tradition still alive and well. Nelson Mandela by the time of his release was also a heroic Mzee (Elder). Did the American people hold Ronald Reagan in affection partly because he was perceived as an elder?

Conclusion

There will continue to be an ideological and intellectual crisis in the African world until Africans understand Pan-Africanism, its value and luminaries' visions like those of Kenyatta, and apply them to their many problems. These include 'foreign debts', reparations, repatriation of African intellectual property from the museums of Europe, lack of continental railroads and air routes, intra-trade, communication and technological development among the African people and states. The triumph of Pan-Africanism, the only way Africans can survive the foreign onslaught and live as a truly liberated people, will come out of the sweat and blood of the African people themselves. As Nkrumah put it:

Only a united Africa can redeem its past glory, renew and reinforce its strength for the realisation of its destiny. 'We are today the richest and yet the poorest of continents, but in unity our continent could smile in a new era of prosperity and power.

Ali Mazrui promotes the view that Africa needs a process of 'social engineering' to instigate nation-building, with the four imperatives: '*emphasising* what is African, '*nationalising* what is tribal, '*idealising* what is indigenous, and '*indigenising* what is foreign.' In other words, he is calling for an approach that allows room for being specifically African and not merely dependent on western models. It illustrates the danger of ideological and political imitation that has no roots in African soil and is therefore too alien to achieve authenticity (Berman 1990).

Modernisation in Africa need not be synonymous with the import of westernisation or the attempt to erase ethnic consciousness. The incorporation of ethnicity into political legislation seems to be crucial if the threat of ethnic warfare, as has been recently witnessed in Rwanda, is going to be removed. The option of federalism seems to have been left relatively untouched, despite the fact that it has the mechanisms and potential within it to incorporate ethnic diversities in such a way that does not threaten the national profile. With resources becoming scarcer every day, the intensity of ethnic feeling is only going to increase, and ignoring ethnic profiles within African states could become increasingly dangerous.

Politics in Africa continue to be characterized by two opposing trends. In some places, democracy is gaining ground, strengthening the argument that there is an African Renaissance "creeping slowly across the continent." For example, in countries such as Botswana, Mali, and South Africa, citizens enjoy more political competition, freer media, and greater civil liberties than at any time in their independent history. However, in many other parts of Africa, the process of democratization has been reversed, particularly in places like Zimbabwe and Cote d'Ivoire. Throughout the continent, the African Renaissance "continues to be threatened by poverty, power struggles, ethnic conflict, poor governance, and corruption. With the call of the African patriarchy and living their examples, I have argued that the African renaissance can be achieved with ease.

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