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Abstract

Purpose: The Kenyatta regime generally encouraged the Church state partnership in nation building, and the Church played a great role in education, health, national cohesion and unity. However since the mission of Churches is evangelization, mainline churches greatly laid emphasis on evangelism and individual salvation. The present study concentrates on the state and the role of mainline Churches in nation building and public affairs during the Kenyatta era, 1963-1978.

Methodology: The methodology the study employed is qualitative in nature. The study relied mainly on the analysis of an existing dataset from secondary sources. The data was gathered from technical reports, scholarly journals, reference books, past sermons, church publications, official and unofficial doctrine, theologies and from the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi. Other sources of data collection for the study included official statistics collected by government and the various agencies, bureaus and departments. The target population for this study was the mainline churches in Kenya and the role these churches played in state and public affairs in Kenya between 1963 and 1978.

Results: In reviewing the existing relevant literature in the area, the paper argues that, the changes exhibited by the church at the beginning of the 1990s were symptoms of the new ideological flashpoint in the post-Cold War era. The transformations that were taking place in African societies meant that it was more urgent than ever to understand the role of religion in political processes. In the post-independence period the Christian-capitalist separation of state and church was deemed to be of fundamental importance in the development of modern centralized states. African rulers concentrated primarily on remaining in power and officially, but certainly secondarily, on building socially cohesive, economically successful polities.

Unique contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study recommended that the government should put in place laws that would involve the church in government matters. This can be done by introducing motions into parliament that advocate for the direct involvement of the church. This would involve laws which ensure that a portion of all members sitting in any committee represents the church.

Keywords: *Church, State, Political process*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Kenya has existed as a classic, patronage state since the mid-1960s, and the Catholic and Protestant churches always challenged the state's rule, despite the fact that the relationship has been that of opposition in areas understood as oppressive. During the Colonial era, all the main protestant denominations present in Kenya had been politically quiescent. This is because they 'possessed a very limited theology of secular power'. Throup observes that, most clergy and lay workers of the church missionary Society and of the Church of Scotland Mission had belonged to the conservative evangelical tradition, with its belief in the strict authenticity of the Bible and the primacy of individual salvation. This was a challenging period since the church only believed in the heavenly kingdom and assumed that life in this world belonged to the secular. Engaging in social life appeared to be a diversion from the truth and getting enticed by the worldly matters.

These Churches quoted from the scriptures which say, "Do not love the world and or anything in the World. If anyone loves the world, then the love of the father is not in him".⁴(John 2:15). At some point, Throup observes that the Church in the colonial era was represented by white clergy men such as Reverend Dr Arthur of the Church of Scotland Mission. The white clergy men were even nominated to represent African interests on the Legislative and executive Councils.⁵

This study presents the role of church in state and public affairs during the Kenyatta era, 1963-1978. It focuses on the role of the Church in Kenya's Politics since President Jomo Kenyatta came to power as the first President of the Republic of Kenya. It also discusses the state of the Church during pre-colonial period and immediately after Kenya attained its independence. This is an important era since it narrates the mood of the relationship between the Church and the colonial government and the state of the Church in independent Kenya. The paper further explores how the Church engaged the state and how the state responded to her engagement.

Objective of the study

The objective of the study is to investigate the role of Main Line Churches in State and Public affairs During Kenyatta Era, 1963-1978.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The methodology the study employed is qualitative in nature. The study relied mainly on the analysis of an existing dataset from secondary sources. The data was gathered from technical reports, scholarly journals, reference books, past sermons, church publications, official and unofficial doctrine, theologies and from the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi. Other sources of data collection for the study included official statistics collected by government and the various agencies, bureaus and departments. The target population for this study was the mainline churches in Kenya and the role these churches played in state and public affairs in Kenya between 1963 and 1978.

⁴ D. Throup, *Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesars'*, 1990

⁵ D. Throup, *The politics of the Church State conflict in Kenya*, 1990

3.0 RESULTS

During the Kenyatta era, the study found out that, the Church in general was at a learning stage on how to co-exist with the African government. African Inland Church (AIC) in particular was still in the hands of foreign missionaries for a great part of Kenyatta regime. The other factor was “sacralisation” of political leadership. Kenyatta was given some sacred postures that ensured that no Church leader thought of criticizing his leadership. Although AIC and Catholic Ndingi Mwana Nzeki criticized the 1969 oathing practices, the study established that AIC spoke because the oathing was infringing upon her moral Christian values.

As stated earlier, the 1960s and 1970s represented a unique phase in Kenya’s history, for like many other African states emerging from colonialism, she had to grapple with the contradictions of development generated by the colonial state. Some of the burning development questions revolved around political equality, social justice, freedom from want, and the provision of equal economic opportunities as laid out in *Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965*.⁶ Accepting the enormity of the development problem, the Government actively encouraged self-help efforts in the generation of development noting that, in a country short of resources every method that increases the allocation of resources to development must be utilized. Self-help in Kenya has strong roots in African traditions and has therefore important potential for development.

During the colonial administration the Church supported the government, a situation which perhaps could not have been avoided since the leaders of the Church at this period originated from the same country as the government administrators. This common origin of the church leadership and that of government played a significant role in determining the close State-Church relationship that became established; such that the Church could not criticize the government over injustices or abuse of power

In 1963 after independence it is known that the Church maintained a close relationship with the State and would not challenge any abuse of its power. During this time through the process of Africanization the church leadership in the mainline churches gradually came under African clergy who assumed responsibility. The Church then slowly started involving itself in limited advocacy activities. The involvement of the Church in the political system was borrowed from the colonial era⁷. The early years of Kenyatta regime saw the Church in partnership with the state in nation building, but the mainline churches had a great emphasis on evangelism and individual salvation.

The Kenyatta era (1963-1978) is thus credited with creating a strong base for the voluntary sector in Kenya through the Non-governmental organization (NGO’S) and religious open door policy. However, it is important to note that most NGOs operating in Kenya were largely involved in development activities as opposed to political activism. Active criticism of the Kenyatta regime remained largely limited to University of Nairobi academics and the radical student body (SONU). As earlier argued the developmental role of NGOs and of the voluntary sector as a whole could be attributed to the deliberate attempt by the Kenyatta regime of

⁶ Republic of Kenya, 1965

⁷D. Throup, *Being a responsible christian in a non-christian society*.

encouraging them to act as supplements to his government in the development process. However, more important was the fact that his regime made no deliberate consistent effort to emasculate NGOs and civil society.

3.1. The early Years of Kenyatta State and the Church (Change of sub-title)

At Kenya's independence the assumed position envisaged the churches cooperating with the state to consolidate the gains of political emancipation. For example, under the regime of founding president Jomo Kenyatta, ecclesial bodies like the Kenya Episcopal Conference accepted their cordial role as the conscience of society, a role they fulfilled by issuing pastoral letters and exhortations to public office holders⁸.

The role of the church in Kenya's politics is traceable to the advent of colonialism. Throup, for instance has shown that during colonial period, the church and state were fused⁹. He characterises the colonial state as quasi-religious due to the pervasive political influence of the Church and its role in augmenting the government role in provision of services. By 1963, when Kenya attained independence, the church was firmly entrenched in development arena with more than 70 percent control in the sphere of education, healthcare, social welfare and economic training. The cohabitation persisted during Kenyatta regime, when the church and state had amicable relationship. Throup attributes this to the role of ethnicity¹⁰. He argues that, one cannot explain the nature of the relationship between the church and state without factoring in the role of ethnicity. Commenting on these relationship during Kenyatta regime he states, 'the relationships were largely amicable because the CPK, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa and Roman Catholics after independence all became increasingly dominated by Kikuyu chairmen and their congregation in Central province, whose lay members held influential positions in the government¹¹.

When Mau Mau ushered Kenya into independence, it convinced Prime Minister Macmillan that Britain could no longer support minority regimes in Africa, that the Kenya colony was as well as the Central Africa Federation [Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi] had to be given up. In 1961 Jomo Kenyatta, was released after [is this 20 years or 10 years] of detention and on 12th December 1963 entrusted with full powers as the Prime Minister and thereafter as the President of the country. He was a shrewd politician but his calls to "forgive and forget" and love "your neighbor as yourself also revealed his Christian heritage. In response to his calls of cooperation, bare of any retaliation, the British government made a substantial contribution to solve the long overdue land question: it bought the land from its repatriating settlers and twice gave one million acres to the Kenya government for free distribution.¹²

⁸B. Harden, *Africa: Dispatches from fragile continent*.

⁹D. Throup, *Being a responsible christian in a non-christian society*.

¹⁰J. Hofmeyr, *History of Christianity in South Africa*.

¹¹B. Hansen, *Religion and politics in East Africa*.

¹²R. O. Antony, *Africa since 1800*

The settler problem once solved, the Kenyan religious atmosphere improved tremendously in the first 25 years of independence. The population rose from roughly 50% to 75%. The dominant role was still played by the protestant churches in the NCCK but the Catholic Church experienced a growing influence through its Episcopal conference and the Kenya Catholic secretariat (KSC). Anglicans and Presbyterians under African leadership renewed their former tradition of sharing in politics becoming more outspoken as the years passed by.¹³

Further still, some churches have failed to deliver as expected by their followers and therefore, lack a grip over their faithful. Some of the earlier evils committed by churches which are still vivid among the followers may also aggravate the problem. For instance, in the first year of post-independence Africa, the Christian churches in Africa, as it is the case in Kenya took a low profile because of its earlier close association with the European colonial powers.¹⁴ The association that existed between European missionaries and the colonizers can explain this further. Sometimes, there was no big difference in functions of state and the functions of the church. The church for instance could hire civil servants and pay them in church compounds. It was not until in 1969, during the post-colonial Africa, when Tom Mboya, a government minister in Kenya was assassinated that several church leaders expressed anxieties over pastors and priests making political comments. While Jomo Kenyatta remained president of Kenya, government attacks upon individual churchmen was never eradicated.¹⁵

Both the Churchmen or clerics and laymen fell victims of the wrath of the government. An individual could not stand to oppose the evils of the state. It needed a stronger watchdog to do this. Perhaps this watchdog needed to be stronger than the international bodies. It was also the case that these watch dogs in most cases intervene in cases where they are likely to benefit.

Kenya had now achieved internal self-government with Jomo Kenyatta as its first prime minister. The British and KANU agreed, over KADU protests, to constitutional changes in October 1963 strengthening the central government. Kenya attained independence on Dec. 12, 1963 as the Dominion of Kenya with Her Majesty the Queen as Head of State.¹⁶ In 1964 Kenya became a republic, and constitutional changes further centralized the government. The British government bought out the lands of white settlers who eventually left Kenya. The Indian minority dominated retail business in the cities and most towns, but was deeply distrusted by the Africans. As a result 120,000 of the 176,000 Indians kept their old British passports rather than become citizens of an independent Kenya; large numbers left Kenya, most of them headed to Britain.¹⁷

¹³ M. G. Gekaga, *Religious movements and democratization in Kenya*

¹⁴ B. Holger, Hansen et.al. (eds), (1995) Twaddle, Michael „The Character of Politico-Religious Conflict in Eastern Africa“ In *Religion and Politics in East Africa*. p.7

¹⁵ B. Holger, Hansen et.al. (eds), (1995) Twaddle, Michael „The Character of Politico-Religious Conflict in Eastern Africa“ In *Religion and Politics in East Africa*.

¹⁶ See the 1963 Constitution of Kenya

¹⁷ 1973 newsreel about Kenyatta's rule

Jomo Kenyatta was acclaimed from all quarters of the world as a true son of Africa, a visionary leader. During his tenure, Kenya enjoyed political stability, and economic progress. In 1974, he declared free primary education up to primary grade 4. He is also remembered for urging Kenyans to preserve their culture and heritage. As a true Pan-African it is reported that on Friday, October 24 1969, Jomo Kenyatta during his tour of Western Province to familiarise himself with the development in the province, upon reaching Nyanza and shown Broderick Falls as a major key attraction became angry that after independence of Kenya the prominent tourist spots continued to bear names of foreigners.¹⁸ There and then, the President issued a directive that both the leaders and locals look for a substitute name for the tourist feature. He caused laughter when he asked whether there was a Luhya man who was called Broderick. Following this directive, many roads bearing colonial names were changed. Plaques bearing names of colonial masters were similarly removed and the names changed.¹⁹

For his unyielding fighting spirit Kenyatta was described by former governor of Kenya Sir Patrick Renison as the African leader to darkness and death. He also showed the magnanimity of Africans and their willingness to forgive and forge ahead when after gaining independence he said although his government aimed to free itself from British colonialism, it would not try to avenge past injustices. Kenyatta is quoted to have advised not to look to the past including the denial of fundamental rights, racial bitterness and the suppression of the country's culture, and insisted on letting forgiveness be part of the population. Kenyatta is conventionally seen as a consummate political fixer, a 'prince' rather than an ideological 'prophet' like his neighbour Nyerere of Tanzania.²⁰

The era was strongly imprinted of the personality of the president characterised in the state; presidential powers being very superior. The need for a coalition was at this time not important given that the Kenyatta government did not have much opposition. Kenyatta had an economically strong Kikuyu coalition. He needed not to construct a capital base for his coalition because Kikuyu coalition then was very strong. His slogan for these early years of his presidency was *Harambee!* - A Swahili word which means 'let's all pull together'.²¹ Through his "Harambee" slogan, he preached continuity which was captured in political ideology including basic ingredients of peace, love, and unity. Kenyatta laid the path of 'one-party democracy'.²²

¹⁸He is quoted to have told the people of Western Province that he felt ashamed trying to pronounce Broderick falls. He argued that these names reflected servitude.

¹⁹ Sourced from <http://kwekudee-tripdownmemorylane.blogspot.co.ke/2013/11/mzee-jomo-kenyatta-carpenter-who-became.html>

²⁰ C. Lonsdale, & A. Cox, (2000). *The historical development of outsourcing: the latest fad?*. Industrial management & data systems, 100(9), 444-450.

²¹ Maxon and OfCansky, Historical Dictionary of Kenya. (2000)

²² J. Rawls, The law of people,

Although Kenyatta had initially appealed to all sectors of Kenya's population, appointing members of government from various ethnic groups - he did this more to avoid the development of an ethnically based opposition. But the central core of his government was strongly Kikuyu in make-up. KADU merged with KANU on 10th November 1964; Kenya was now effectively a one-party state with Kenyatta in charge. Kenyatta also sought to gain the trust of the white settlers of the Central Highlands. He outlines a program of conciliation, asking them not to flee from the country but to stay and help make it an economic and social success.

The minority party, the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), representing a coalition of small tribes that had feared dominance by larger ones, dissolved itself voluntarily in 1964 and former members joined KANU. KANU was the only party 1964-1966 when a faction broke away as the Kenya People's Union (KPU). It was led by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, a former vice president and Luo elder. KPU advocated a more scientific route to socialism- criticizing the slow progress in land redistribution and employment opportunities, as well as a realignment of foreign policy in favour of the Soviet Union. Hostility between Kikuyu and Luo was heightened, and after riots broke out in Luo country KPU was banned. The government used a variety of political and economic measures to harass the KPU and its prospective and actual members. KPU branches were unable to register, KPU meetings were prevented, and civil servants and politicians suffered severe economic and political consequences for joining the KPU. Kenya thereby became a one-party state under KANU.²³

In 1966 Kenyatta was re-elected un-opposed, and the next year he had the Constitution amended to expand his powers. At this time there featured border conflicts with Somalia, and more political opposition. He consolidated his power greatly, and placed several of his Kikuyu tribesmen in most of the powerful state and security offices and posts. State security forces harassed dissidents and were suspected of complicity in several murders of prominent personalities deemed as threats to his regime, including Pio Gama Pinto, Tom Mboya and J.M. Kariuki. MP and Lawyer C.M.G. Argwings-Kodhek and former KADU Leader and Minister Ronald Ngala, also died in a suspicious car accident.²⁴

In 1969, Tom Mboya, a Luo member and ally of Kenyatta who some believed was being groomed as his successor since he was considered potential, was assassinated. His assassination sent shock waves through the nation and led to tension and violence between the Luo and Kikuyu. Kenyatta's position was, however, unaffected, and he was re-elected for a second presidential term at the end of the year.²⁵

²³D. S. Mueller, "Government and Opposition in Kenya, 1966-9," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 1984 22(3): 399-427.

²⁴D. S. Mueller, "Government and Opposition in Kenya, 1966-9," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 1984 22(3): 399-427.

²⁵D. S. Mueller, "Government and Opposition in Kenya, 1966-9,"

Kenyatta also rejected calls by African socialists to nationalize property, following a pro-Western, capitalist approach instead. Amongst those alienated by his policies was his first vice-president Oginga Odinga. But Odinga, and the rest, soon discovered that under Kenyatta's smooth façade was a politician of stern resolve. He brooked no opposition, and over the years several of his critics died under mysterious circumstances, and a few of his political opponents were arrested and detained without trial.

As discussed above, the government in a variety of ways and measures harassed the KPU and both its prospective and actual members. As a matter of fact, Kenyatta increasingly isolated Odinga who left KANU to form a left-wing opposition party, the Kenya People's Union or KPU, in 1966. But by 1969 the party had been outlawed and Odinga and several other prominent members were in detention.²⁶ In the 1969 elections, Kenyatta banned the only other party, the Kenya People's Union under the leadership of his former vice president, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga who had been forced to quit KANU along with his other allies. He detained its leaders, and called elections in which only KANU was allowed to participate. For all intents and purposes, Kenya was now a one-party state.²⁷

Kenyatta once in power, swerved from radical nationalism to conservative bourgeois politics. The plantations formerly owned by white settlers were broken up and given to farmers, with the Kikuyu the favoured recipients, along with their allies the Embu and the Meru. By 1978 most of the country's wealth and power was in the hands of the organisation which grouped these three tribes; into the Gikuyu-Embu-Meru Association (GEMA), together comprising 30% of the population. At the same time the Kikuyu, with Kenyatta's support, spread beyond their traditional territorial homelands and grabbed lands stolen or settled by the whites; even when these lands previously belonged to other groups or communities. The other groups, a 70% majority, were outraged, setting up long-term ethnic animosities.²⁸

Ignoring his suppression of the opposition, Kenyatta continued factionalism within KANU and the imposition of one-party rule which allowed him to continue leading the country, which he had led since independence, and claimed he had achieved political stability. Underlying social tensions were evident, however, Kenya's very rapid population growth rate and considerable rural to urban migration were in large part responsible for high unemployment and disorder in the cities. There also was much resentment by blacks at the privileged economic position in the country of Asians and Europeans.²⁹

On 29 January 1970 Kenyatta was sworn in as President for a further term. For the remainder of his presidency, Kenyatta held complete political control of the country. He made use of detention, appeals to ethnic loyalties, and careful appointment of

²⁶ Maxon and Cansky, *Historical Dictionary of Kenya*. (2000)

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ G. Prunier, "Kenya: roots of crisis,"

²⁹ Maxon and Ofcansky, *Historical Dictionary of Kenya*. (2000)

government jobs to maintain his commanding position in Kenya's political system. However, as the 1970s wore on, advancing age kept him from the day-to-day management of government affairs. He intervened only when necessary to settle disputed issues. His relative isolation resulted in increasing domination of Kenya's affairs by well-connected Kikuyu who acquired great wealth in the process.

By 1974, riding on a decade of high economic growth based on exports of cash crops and financial aid from the West, Kenyatta won a third presidential term. But the cracks were starting to appear. Kenyatta's family and political friends had gained considerable wealth at the expense of the average Kenyan. And the Kikuyu were openly acting as elite, especially a small clique known as the Kiambu Mafia who had greatly benefited from land redistribution in the early days of Kenyatta's presidency.³⁰ On Nov 5, 1974, he was sworn in as President for a third term. His increasingly feeble health meant that his inner circle effectively ruled the country, and greatly enriched themselves, in his name. He remained president until his death four years later in 1978. Since 1967, Kenyatta's vice president was Daniel arap Moi, a Kalenjin, a collective name for several small ethnic groups settled in the Rift Valley. Earlier in 1966 Kenyatta suffered his first heart attack and when he suffered his second heart attack in 1977, the Kiambu Mafia became worried: according to the constitution when the president died the vice-president would automatically take over. They however, wanted the presidency to remain in the hands of Kikuyu. It is to Kenyatta's merit that he safeguarded Moi's position when a constitutional drafting group attempted to have this rule changed.³¹

At Kenyatta's death (August 22, 1978), Vice President Daniel Arap Moi became interim President. On October 14, Moi became President formally after he was elected head of KANU and designated its sole nominee. In June 1982, the National Assembly amended the constitution, making Kenya officially a one-party state. On August 1 members of the Kenyan Air Force launched an attempted coup, which was quickly suppressed by Loyalist forces led by the Army, the General Service Unit (GSU) paramilitary wing of the police and later the regular police, but not without civilian casualties.³²

During the Kenyatta years, KANU was a dead party. Unlike his successor, Kenyatta did not enjoy the goodwill of Kenyan masses since he had marginalised the masses and, therefore, there were no grievances against the ethicised Kenyatta regime³³. The Kenyatta era had installed harsh, criminal rule. People identified with the state created in Moi's image. [Clarify the statement]

While the Kenyatta strategy left governance to a clique of corrupt Kiambu mafia, the Moi one coalesced around himself and a clique of corrupt Kalenjin mafia. Moi does not seem to have paid specific attention to people's specialties and qualifications before

³⁰D. S. Mueller, "Government and Opposition in Kenya, 1966-9,"

³¹ Alistair Body, *From the Mau Mau Rebellion to Kenyatta Presidency*, Nairobi Kenya

³² Maxon and Ofcansky, *Historical Dictionary of Kenya*. (2000)

³³ Ndarangwi, M. *Exploring the social impact of christianity in Africa*.

appointing them to technical positions. Thus, a professor of history once became a chairman of the Central Bank while an illiterate politician chaired the national committee on environment³⁴. In the long run, the legislature, executive, judiciary and most importantly, the bureaucracy were staffed or led by ignorant, inept and, at times, illiterate officers. Many of them presided over high levels of primitive accumulation, public malfeasance and corruption. They constituted one reason for state illegitimacy since a poor economic performance and questionable delivery of public services was traced to such inept officers. However, one cannot overlook Lonsdale's plausible argument that 'Kenyatta was a lucky President in terms of the World economy, Moi, unlucky³⁵'.

The international economy in the Kenyatta days favoured welfare's state that intruded in the daily running of public affairs and allocation of resources. This was part of the Keynesian economic thinking that developed after the end of the World War II. Such economic thinking prevailed until the 1970s when the oil shocks and rising rates of inflation shattered it. The oil shocks occurred at a time when conservative regimes in Britain (Margaret Thatcher), Germany (Helmut Kohl), America (Ronald Reagan) and Canada (Joe Clark) were about to assume power³⁶. This configuration of forces led to a new form of neo-liberalism that was anti-statist in orientation and emphasised market forces in the allocation of resources. It should be observed that trends towards a world economic recession were already evident by the early 1970s. By the time Moi took over power, these trends were already negatively impacting on the local Kenyan economy³⁷.

According to Throupe,³⁸ the economy slowed down in the late 1970s. The oil shocks of 1973 and the growing inflation led to lower growth rates than in the 1960s. But, being in the thick of the Cold War, 'foreign aid [continued to generously flow] from western donors who saw Kenya as an anti-Communist bulwark in the uncertain political and strategic arenas of East and Central Africa'. As late as 1972, British support of the regime was still a crucial component of foreign policy and this cushioned the Kenyatta regime from the harsh economic realities that were gathering storm towards 1978. 'The oil shocks of 1973 and 1978, soft foreign markets for exports, inflation in the West raising the cost of imports, declining inflows of foreign private capital, growing foreign debt, and high interest rates, all made it increasingly difficult to maintain a large state

³⁴D. Persitau, *Gospel without borders*.

³⁵R. Rorty, *Religion as conversation stopper*.

³⁶D. Smith, *Religious politics and social change in the third world*.

³⁷A. Tarimo, Religion and civil society: Challenges and prospects for Eastern Africa. *Journal of Hekima College, the Jesuit School of Theology*, 16-28, 2009

³⁸ D. Throup, *Being a responsible christian in a non-christian society*

sector and juggle political tensions generated by the economic sectors and ethnic calculations as a strategy of rule³⁹

Mzee Jomo Kenyatta was an important and influential statesman in Africa. He is credited with leading Kenya to independence and setting up the country as a relatively prosperous capitalist state. He pursued a moderate pro-Western, anti-Communist economic philosophy and foreign policy. He oversaw a peaceful land reform process, oversaw the setting up of the institutions of independent Kenya, and also oversaw Kenya's admission into the United Nations. However, Kenyatta was not without major flaws, and did also bequeath Kenya some major problems which continue to bedevil the country to date, hindering her development, and threatening her existence as a peaceful unitary multi-ethnic state.⁴⁰

He, however, failed to mould Kenya, being its founding father, into a homogeneous multi-ethnic state. Instead, the country became and remains a de facto confederation of competing tribes. His authoritarian style, characterized by patronage, favoritism, tribalism and/or nepotism drew criticism and dissent, and set a bad example followed by his successors. He had the Constitution radically amended to expand his powers, consolidating executive power. He is also criticized for having ruled through a post-colonial clique consisting largely of his relatives, other Kikuyu, mostly from his native Kiambu district, Offspring of former colonial chiefs, and African Kikuyu colonial collaborators and their offspring, while giving scant reward to those whom most consider the real fighters for Kenya's independence. This clique became and remains the wealthiest, most powerful and most influential class in Kenya to date.⁴¹

Kenyatta has even further been criticized for encouraging the culture of wealth accumulation by public officials using the power and influence of their offices, thereby deeply entrenching corruption in Kenya. He is regularly charged with having personally grabbed and accumulated huge land holdings in Kenya. The regime of Kenya's first president, Jomo Kenyatta, was riddled with land grabbing which was perpetrated by him for his benefit and members of his family. Between 1964 and 1966, one-sixth of European settlers' lands that were intended for settlement of landless and land-scarce Africans were cheaply sold to the then President Kenyatta and his wife Ngina as well as his children. Throughout the years of President Kenyatta's administration, his relatives, friends and officials in his administration also benefited from the vice with wanton impunity.⁴²

His policies are also criticized for leading to a large income and developing inequality gap in the country. Development and resource allocation in the country during his reign was seen to have favored some regions of the country over others. His resettlement of many Kikuyu tribesmen in the country's Rift Valley province is widely considered to have been done unfairly.⁴³

³⁹G. Magarian, *Religious argument*.

⁴⁰ Maxon and Ofcansky, *Historical Dictionary of Kenya*. (2000)

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Quoted from Kenya's Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, 2015

⁴³ G. Prunier, "Kenya: roots of crisis," Jan 7, 2008

3.2 The State, Church and Education during the Kenyatta era.

Kenyatta's achievement in education was impressive. Adult illiteracy, which at independence stood at 50 per cent of the population, fell steadily. Gross secondary school enrolment grew from two per cent in 1960 to a peak of 28 per cent of secondary school age children in 1991. The first university, the University of Nairobi, was established in 1970. Kenyatta also encouraged the churches to continue playing an important role in the development of education. Churches introduced vocational training institutions, commonly called village polytechnics. The Church also established badly needed special schools, such as schools for the blind, the deaf and the physically handicapped.⁴⁴

3.3 The State, Church and Health during the Kenyatta era.

In 1970, the Ministry of Health nationalized the health system and assumed responsibility for operating all public health facilities, a move that slowed down the mortality rate. The Kenyatta National Hospital was being expanded, having been turned to a teaching and referral hospital in 1963. Over fifty per cent of rural hospitals and clinics fall under the ambit of the Church. The Church is also heavily involved in rural development programs that greatly augment efforts by the Government. In such instances, the Church was seen as a partner with the government in helping to alleviate human suffering.⁴⁵

Kenyatta is credited with creating a strong base for the voluntary sector in Kenya through the government's NGO and religious open door policy. However, it is important to note that most NGOs operating in Kenya were largely involved in development activities as opposed to political activism. Active criticism of the Kenyatta regime remained largely limited to University academics and the radical student body of the University of Nairobi. The developmental role of NGOs and of the voluntary sector as a whole could be attributed to the deliberate attempt by the Kenyatta regime of encouraging them to act as supplements to his government in the development process. However, more important was the fact that his regime made no deliberate consistent effort to emasculate NGOs and civil society.⁴⁶

3.4 The State, church and National cohesion and unity during the Kenyatta era

With several African nations facing internal strife, Kenyatta maintained national cohesion by discouraging divisive politics. The voluntary dissolution of the opposition Kadu party had solidified national unity under KANU. It is now debatable whether the death of the opposition at that time ensured national cohesion or was to blame for the excesses within Kanu. But Kenyatta ensured that there were no divisive politics. One example was when he stopped on October 6, 1976, a campaign that had started to ostensibly change the Constitution to bar Vice-President Daniel Arap Moi from taking over for 90 days in case Kenyatta was incapacitated. The campaign had been started by Nakuru North MP Kihika Kimani, the national organizing secretary of Gema (the Gikuyu, Embu and Meru Association) at a rally attended by three Cabinet ministers and 20

⁴⁴ S. Kay, (1975). Curriculum innovations and traditional culture: A case history of Kenya. *Comparative Education*, 11(3), 183-191.

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Ibid

MPs. There at a meeting where Vice- President Daniel Arap Moi was the man under attack; Kihika led a call for the Constitution to be changed so that the Vice-President would not automatically succeed the President in the event of death, illness or insanity. Kimani received support from Gema chairman Njenga Karume and Cabinet ministers Njoroge Mungai (Foreign), James Gichuru (Defence), Jackson Angaine (Lands and Settlement) and many other political power players.⁴⁷

Cooperatives Minister Paul Ngei warned that a lot could happen within the 90 days ‘before an election after an unexpected departure of the President: “If you give me that period,” he said, “I can really teach you a lesson and I would assure you that it would not be a pleasant lesson.”

As these calls heightened, Kenyatta ordered a stop to the Change-the-Constitution campaign. After a meeting in Nakuru with Kenyatta, constitutionalist Attorney-General Charles Njonjo, reminded Gema members: “Those few who are being used to advocate the amendment, (should know) that it is a criminal offence for any person to compass, imagine, devise or intend the death or deposition of the President, the mandatory sentence for any such offence by a citizen is death.” With that, the campaign to bar Moi from ascending to the presidency came to an abrupt end. Earlier, Kenyatta had faced other challenges that threatened national unity. The first was the assassination of freedom hero, Pio Gama Pinto, in 1965.⁴⁸

Dogged by ill-health from 1968, Kenyatta’s rule was complicated by the emergence of an opposition party led by his erstwhile Vice-President Odinga. Before that, a turf war between Mboya and Odinga and which was largely informed by ideological differences between the two had emerged. The defection of 29 MPs to Odinga’s KPU worried Kenyatta and, fearing a backlash, a retrospective legislation; the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution since independence was passed in a record one day. All MPs who had abandoned Kanu had to seek fresh mandate in a By-election.⁴⁹

Another constitutional amendment in June and July, 1966, gave the Minister for Home Affairs powers to detain individuals without trial. It was, however, the assassination of Mboya on July 5, 1969, which saw Kenyatta’s administration painted as brutish. The death united the Luo, who felt that Mboya was the target of a group in the Kenyatta government eager to perpetuate the Kikuyu leadership. The death of Mboya saw the rivalry between the Luo and the Kikuyu deepen, with reported skirmishes in major towns pitting the two. The row climaxed in October, 1969, when Kenyatta visited Kisumu to open the New Nyanza Hospital. The public rally in Kisumu town not only turned rowdy but Kenyatta’s motorcade was stoned. KPU was banned shortly after and all KPU officials, including Odinga, became the first group to be detained under the new detention-without trial laws.⁵⁰

Thus, Kanu held the 1969 general elections as the only contesting party and barred any KPU sympathizers from contesting. Another poser that faced the Kenyatta government was the

⁴⁷ R. Beauchamp, *Post-colonialism and the politics of Kenya*.

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ A. T. Borer, *Challenging the state*,

⁵⁰ Ibid

disappearance of freedom fighter, Kungu Karumba in June, 1974. Karumba, who was part of the Kapenguria Six, went missing in Uganda where he had gone on a business trip. A year later, populist politician, Josiah Mwangi Kariuki was murdered. While the killers of JM were never found, a Select Parliamentary Committee had pointed fingers at senior government figures and security agents. None of these were investigated.⁵¹

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

In the post-independence period the Christian-capitalist separation of state and church was deemed to be of fundamental importance in the development of modern centralized states. African rulers concentrated primarily on remaining in power and officially, but certainly secondarily, on building socially cohesive, economically successful polities. Religious, communal and regional issues were obviously unwelcome, regarded as ‘divisive’ and inappropriate during the phase of state building. National leaders hoped that as citizens became ‘modernized’ they would drop their ‘primordial’ allegiances, become ‘developed’ and follow secular ideologies of nationalism, state or ‘African’ socialism and thus, aid state consolidation and centralization.

There were several additional factors, which helped to produce particular relationships between religion and State. First, it was especially difficult for any manifestations of independent power to assert themselves for the first twenty or thirty years of the independence era, during which time the one-party or military regime seemed, rather powerful. The state’s security forces could quickly quell isolated manifestations of dissidence. Second, religious groups were usually slow to pronounce publicly on political issues because of the existence of two realms, the temporal and the sacred, which often resulted in the church “keeping its nose out of the state’s affairs.” Others did not have the capacity to speak because of ignorance and lack of knowledge of how to handle temporal issues. Third, mainstream religious institutions were also involved with the state in as much as political leaders expected them to be quiescent partners in the national unity project. The former, by their control of educational and other welfare- roles, which were of singular importance to many regimes, for the ability to replace the church in the provision of such goods was limited. As a result, the main churches were tolerated, even encouraged, and as long as they offered welfare services.⁵²

Recommendations

The study recommended that the government should put in place laws that would involve the church in government matters. This can be done by introducing motions into parliament that advocate for the direct involvement of the church. This would involve laws which ensure that a portion of all members sitting in any committee represents the church. This can also be done by the introduction of electoral posts for church

⁵¹ A. Thomson, *An introduction to African politics*.

⁵² S. Kay, (1975). Curriculum innovations and traditional culture: A case history of Kenya. *Comparative Education*, 11(3), 183-191.

representatives just as there are positions for women representatives. The study also recommends that amendments be made to the constitution to make a legal requirement that one of the nominated MPs must be from the church. The study has recommended that since gender balance is a key issue in the constitution, then religious balance also be made a key issue with positions open for church representatives. The study has further recommended that the church unite under one umbrella body so as to gather enough critical mass to be able to have a say in national matters or even gather enough signs to cause a referendum that will influence current laws. On the same note, the study recommends that the state should put in place mechanisms to ensure that all clergy men and women should be highly vetted then trained in theological matters before being licensed to serve as Church ministers. The presidential advisory committee should include a senior minister who is either a Bishop or Pastor to provide direction and advice in case of any decision that touches on the spiritual matters.

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