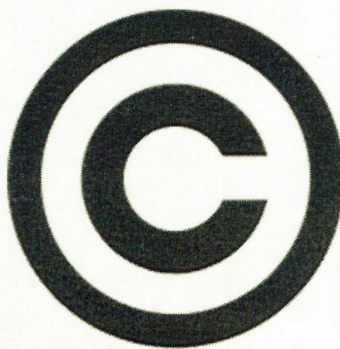


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## Chapter One

# Emergence of Authoritarianism

The anti-colonial struggles for political independence in Africa were struggles for democracy. They sought to replace the exclusive, exploitative, and oppressive colonial establishment with political systems based on the notion of government by the consent of the governed, formal political equality, inalienable human rights, including the right to political participation, accountability of power to the governed and the rule of law (see Ake, 2000). It was expected that the new democratic African states would place emphasis on concrete political, social, and economic rights to redress the injustices of colonial tyranny and kleptocracy, and invest heavily in the improvement of people's health, education, and capacity so that they could participate effectively in their political economies (see Ake, 1996). Towards this end, virtually all states in Africa emerged from the depredations of colonial domination into political independence under the guidance of vibrant nationalist movements, and nascent political parties that constituted the institutional basis for vibrant competitive politics in the envisaged new democratic era.

After attainment of independence, however, the process of political consolidation saw the emergence of single-party regimes, which were rationalized as the most viable means for maintaining national integrity and engendering nation and state-building. This turn of political events resulted in the rise of the phenomenon of the single-party state system and personal rule in Africa. This eventuality witnessed increasing consolidation of power in the hands of the executive in a conjuncture that led to the overwhelming dominance of the state in the African political economy. Michael Neocosmos (1993) argues that this phenomenon of statism simultaneously provided a vehicle of accumulation from above by large sections of the ruling class as well as the systematic economic plunder and political oppression of



the masses of Africa. Within this framework, the relations between the state and the mass of citizens in Africa remained directly coercive and oppressive.

In reference to the exploitative and coercive relationship between the elite and the masses, Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg (1982) observed that the state in Africa in the late twentieth century was an arena in which individuals could obtain great power. Jackson and Rosberg posited that what the Church represented for ambitious men in medieval Europe or the business corporation in nineteenth and twentieth century America, the state was in the late twentieth century for ambitious Africans with skill and fortune because it remained the major arena of privilege. In this context, the African political class simply adapted colonial-based political structures and processes to presidential authoritarianism (Nyong'o, 1989), or what Richard Sandbrook (1987) calls "neopatrimonialism." This neopatrimonialism<sup>1</sup> had a high propensity of degenerating into an economically irrational form of personal rule in which "a chief or strongman emerges and rules on the basis of material incentives and personal control of his administration and the armed forces" (Sandbrook, 1987: 89). This political process spawned conditions under which corruption and other forms of white-collar crime flourished with far-reaching implications for economic development (see Mutoro et al., 1999; Chikulo, 2000; Mbaku, 2000a, 2000b). A number of explanations have been advanced to explain the rise of authoritarianism as the dominant governance paradigm, exemplified by the emergence of the single-party political system on the continent.

## THE RISE OF "PARTY-STATES"

The emergence of the authoritarian paradigm of governance in Africa was particularly epitomized by the rise of the single-party state system. Aristide Zolberg (1966), in a seminal study on the party system in Africa, analyzed the rise of the "party-states" of West Africa and posited that the philosophy behind their establishment was quickly replicated in the rest of the African countries with variations based on local context. According to Zolberg, the rise of the West African "party-states" is explicable in terms of the absence of agreement on rules of the political game. Zolberg traced the search for electoral monopoly by incumbent parties and the emergence of the party-state to six kinds of pressures. These included (1) the perception that the opposition was led by people who challenged the fundamental values of the incumbent party. (2) The perception that resource scarcity made politics a zero-sum game, with the winners taking all and the losers receiving nothing. (3) The belief that fellow politicians had not internalized the rules of the

game, and that adherence to standards of political civility that normally attend the adoption of a Westminster parliamentary system could not be assumed. (4) The absence of factors that normally limit the kinds of issues up for negotiation. (5) The record of assassinations of heads of state in Africa, which induced fear of opposition. (6) A pattern of international involvement that made it possible for opposition groups to acquire more financial support than they could succeed in amassing from domestic constituents and that consequently undermined the legitimacy of the electoral system (see Zolberg, 1966: 37–65). This view, as Jennifer Widner (1992: 10) observes, suggests that the rise of “party-states” had roots in characteristics common to many African countries after independence, some social and cultural, others economic and even psychological. The gist of Zolberg’s thesis is that the party-states were established as a means for creating political order.

The second explanation of the rise of the party-state in Africa is rooted in the underdevelopment perspective. Scholars such as Walter Rodney (1981), Immanuel Wallerstein (1979), James Caporaso (1978), Colin Leys (1975), Richard Sandbrook (1975), Johan Galtung (1971), and Andre Gunder Frank (1967; 1970), among others, have elaborated the neocolonial and dependent nature of Third World economies in general and the African political economy in particular. According to this school, Western colonialism suppressed the economic, social, and political development of the Third World and the West is still to blame for the poverty therein. The essential argument here is that underdevelopment was, and is still, generated by the same historical processes that also generated economic development namely the development of capitalism. The logic of the world capitalist system, it is argued, is to keep the periphery perpetually in a dependent relationship with the center for purposes of further exploitation. Hence, in spite of these countries having gained political independence, they remain poor and economically subjugated to the West in a conjuncture that has been summed up as neocolonialism.

Accordingly, scholars such as Anyang’ Nyong’o (1989) and Mukum Mbaku (2000a; 2000b) identify the economic dependence of African elites on foreign enterprises and foreign governments as the source of African authoritarianism. According to this perspective, local political elites who manage subsidiaries of multinational corporations or who sit on the boards of these businesses depend on the survival and success of their foreign patrons and try to influence domestic policy-making to protect these interests. Hence government policies, inasmuch as they are responsive to foreign imperatives, prove inappropriate for generating economic growth. The policies benefit only local elites allied with multinational enterprises. As a



result, Anyang' Nyong'o argues, "[i]ndependent governments thus preside over the impoverishment of local majorities and have to be strong enough to master the tensions and conflicts generated among the mass of the people by the process of underdevelopment" (cit. in Widner, 1992: 15). This conjuncture inevitably leads to rule by fiat, of which single-party authoritarianism is emblematic.

Concentration of power and political departicipation is provided as the third explanation of the rise of the party-state. This focuses attention on the behavior of entrepreneurs vis-à-vis state officials. In Africa, economic power is overwhelmingly concentrated in the office of the head of state. As such, dependence on government officials for licenses, capital, infrastructure, foreign exchange, police protection, and protection against competition leads local entrepreneurs to invest in the careers of the bureaucrats on whose services or favor they depend to reduce the regulation-induced costs of business and make their enterprises profitable (Mbaku, 2000a: 13). In return, entrepreneurs pay back government officials through appointment to boards of trustees, hiring of relatives, or outright payment, which is an important source of extra-legal income for most African civil servants according to Mukum Mbaku. Once these transactions have taken place, the private-sector entrepreneurs seek to defend their investments and do so in direct proportion to the difficulty of maintaining their standards of living through occupations independent of government control. It is against this background that efforts at maintaining monopoly over power by incumbents through political corruption including vote buying, election rigging, solicitation of illegal campaign contributions, and outright repression may be understood.

Jennifer Widner (1992) provides a fourth explanation of the rise of the party-states in terms of bureaucratic authoritarianism in which high-level technocrats restrict electoral competition and the influence of electoral outcomes on policy choice. They do so, according to Widner, by seeking, not to mobilize followers, but to promote apathy on the part of citizens. Towards this end, bureaucratic authoritarianism eschews cultivation of corporatist links between groups in society. Instead, "the links between civil society and the bureaucratic-authoritarian regime are achieved through the co-optation of individuals and private interests into the system" (Widner, 1992: 19). This form of authoritarianism, however, is more applicable to Latin America than to Africa, and, in any event, it varies only slightly from the third explanation.

The fifth explanation differs from the foregoing four in the sense that it shifts from the state-centric approach to explaining the rise of the party-state in terms of the notion of weak states confronting strong societies.

This explanation is attributed to Joel Migdal (1988) according to whom the difficulty of securing agreement on the "rules of the game" in African politics traces back to characteristics of economic and social structures. Dispersion of power among multiple, contending centers of authority including ethnic and religious communities and local economic strong men, creates special difficulties for policy implementation. This is especially so when most production and consumption takes place through the kinds of lineage structures that are the common ways of organizing labor in Africa and given the limited economic dependence of residents on observable, official market transactions. For Migdal, the state in the Third World remains weak and is indeed subverted by the actions of the provincial-based strongmen and power brokers who maintain alternative organizational structures and are even more able to garner the loyalty, support, and obedience of the masses. In short, center-periphery relations in most Third World countries remain an endless struggle for social control between the state elites on the one hand and local moneybags and petty despots on the other. This view, as Widner (1992: 11) notes, holds that political "departicipation" of which the shift to a party-state is symbolic, derives from the difficulty in policy implementation in African settings where weak states confront strong societies. Herein, the rise of the party-state, or the authoritarian paradigm for our purposes, is seen as an effort by the national elite to effect some semblance of control and mobilization of the masses.

Most of the above explanations of the emergence of authoritarianism have a number of faults and limitations. With regard to the first explanation based on Zolberg's study of West African states, Widner (1992: 10) rightly argues that Zolberg's exposition is less of a theory than an inventory of circumstances that correlated with the shift to a party-state in the West African cases. The perspective does not seek to identify necessary and sufficient conditions, leaving the reader to wonder whether party-states emerge when all of the six circumstances, or only some of them, obtain. With respect to the power concentration thesis, Widner argues that to be useful, the approach must pursue the relationship between particular kinds of economic policies and the character and strength of the interest groups they spawn. It is important to ask, she asserts, what conditions give rise to groups with countervailing power, groups that are simultaneously independent of the government for their incomes, but sufficiently affected by government actions to have a stake in the quality of public management and thus in the preservation of the political space necessary to contest policy choices (Widner, 1992: 19).



Three key limitations can be attributed to the bureaucratic authoritarianism explanation. First, as Widner has noted, neither the military nor the bureaucratic establishments in Africa exhibited the same self-confident claim to technical mastery, much less the ideological commitment to a national capitalist development strategy as, for example, their Latin American, especially Brazilian, counterparts. Second, she points out that in Africa, popular classes display little programmatic political organization and are insufficiently strong to repeatedly press for platforms antagonistic to the interests of business. And finally, she argues that the tactics used to generate apathy among popular classes by some Latin American governments differ substantially by those favored by African heads of state. "Except in a few extreme cases, military or police 'death squads' are not part of the tactical repertoire in most African authoritarian systems. Detention without trial and petty harassment are more common" (Widner, 1992: 21).

Similarly, Widner argues that the underdevelopment perspective, even in its modified form, fails to explain preferences for specific strategies, institutions, or forms of authoritarian rule and ". . . therefore supplies little intellectual leverage in understanding the rise of party-states. It operates at too high a level of generality" (Widner, 1992: 17), she laments. She also finds that the "weak states, strong societies" approach fails to explain adequately the variations between and within countries. Indeed, Although Migdal's weak state, strong society thesis is compelling and analytically insightful, his conclusion lends credence to the pessimistic prognosis that most modern Third World countries are not engaged in state building but plagued by state disintegration. In addition, Migdal does not clarify whether strong states in Africa are based on democratic foundations or are products of effective employment of instruments of coercion as manifested in most military dictatorships in Third World countries. Migdal's analysis can also be faulted for failing to deeply explore the cultural normative basis of mass allegiance and loyalty to the state, which is crucial for the perpetuation of strong states. Furthermore, Migdal's thesis amounts to a "soft" form of cultural determinism, in which case, the "strong" societies should promote sub-state units rather than the central state.

In spite of the flaws that Widner finds with the above explanations, she goes on to build her hypotheses on elements of the same views in her examination of the rise of the party-state in Kenya. She in particular proceeds from Anyang' Nyong'o's thesis and blends this with Zolberg's exposition in regard to West Africa. Indeed, as noted above, Widner is cognizant of the fact that Zolberg's postulation is less of a theory than an inventory of circumstances that correlated with the shift to the party-state in West

Africa. Yet this notwithstanding, she is more than content to elevate Zolberg's "inventory of circumstances" into a theoretical framework capable of theorizing the transition from a single party to a party-state in Kenya (Ajulu, 2000: 139). Widner's study thus falls victim to the same flaws and limitations. The gist of this study's argument is that the emergence of authoritarianism in Africa as exemplified by the rise of the party-state—as well as the advent of democratization—can best be explained by the rational choice perspective.

## THE RATIONAL CHOICE APPROACH

The emergence of the rational choice approach in social analysis is traced to the writings of Jeremy Bentham (1781), especially his enunciation of the principles of utilitarianism. The approach was subsequently elaborated by, among others, Von Neumann and Morgenstern (1944), Anthony Downs (1957), and Olson (1965). It has since been applied and critiqued by many scholars within the realm of political science.<sup>2</sup> According to Margaret Levi (1999: 20), rational choice reveals how intentional and rational actors generate collective outcomes and aggregate behavior. The strength of rational choice in comparative social analysis, she writes, is evident in three ways. First is its capacity to spawn testable theory with clear scope conditions. Second is its ability to make sense of the correlation of a set of events by providing a plausible and compelling story that identifies the causal mechanisms linking the independent and dependent variables. And third is its universalism that reveals generalizable implications applicable to cases beyond those under immediate investigation. The emphasis of this model is on rational and strategic individuals who make choices within constraints to obtain their desired ends, whose decisions rest on their assessment of the probable actions of others, and whose personal outcomes depend on what others do (Levi, 1999: 23).

For his part, George Tsebelis (1990) points out that the rational choice approach assumes that individual action is an optimal adaptation to an institutional environment while interaction between individuals is assumed to be an optimal response to each other. Hence the prevailing institutions, or the rules of the game, determine the behavior of actors, which in turn produces political or social outcomes (Tsebelis, 1990: 40). Although the approach is methodologically individualist, therefore, its focus is not on individual choice but on the aggregation of individual choices. The rationality implied in this approach is one in which individuals are assumed to act consistently in relation to their preferences. Amílcar



Barreto (2001) points out that before embarking on a course of action, rational individuals assess not only the factors favoring a particular action but also those against it. Accordingly, there are five characteristics of a rational actor:

(1) He can always make a decision when confronted with a range of alternatives; (2) he ranks all the alternatives facing him in order of his preference in such a way that each is preferred to, or indifferent to or inferior to each other; (3) his preference ranking is transitive; (4) he always chooses from among the possible alternatives that which ranks the highest in his preference ordering; and (5) he always makes the same decision each time he is confronted with the same alternatives. (Downs, 1957:6)

In applying this approach, the trick is to define the preferences in general, *ex ante* to a particular application. Generally, this involves observation of what is of principal concern to the class of actors under consideration (Levi, 1999: 24). For the typical *homo economicus*, it is maximization of wealth; for *homo politicus*, maximization of power; for *homo sociologicus*, it is maximization of prestige, honor, or social status (Barreto, 2001: 83). Overall, the assumption is that whatever rational actors do, be they individuals, political parties, interest groups, or governments, they consider net payoffs, which may be material or psychological, egoistic or altruistic. Nonetheless, as Levi (1999: 20) points out, although the choice of each actor may be intentional and individually rational, the results may seem unintentional and socially irrational to many. It is in regard to this that Tsebelis (1990) argues that seeming suboptimal choices by actors indicate the presence of “nested games” wherein events or strategies in one arena influence the way the game is played in another arena.

Against the foregoing, it is the contention of this study that the actualization of the authoritarian paradigm in Africa was a deliberate rational choice on the part of the dominant political elite to maximize and monopolize power and thus reign supreme. This eventuality was a result of the strategic interaction between the incumbent political elite and the nascent opposition politicians within the rubric of weak political institutions and fragile constitutional frameworks, what Okoth-Ogendo (1991) calls “constitutions without constitutionalism.” As Anyang’ Nyong’o (1989) has argued, sections of the nationalist coalitions in Africa favored this establishment of authoritarianism, seeing in it an opportunity to have access to state apparatuses and thereby acquire avenues for capital accumulation and personal enrichment.

Fredrick Wanyama (2000: 31) rightly observes that African leaders wished to also enjoy the privileges, which the authoritarian colonial administration had exclusively afforded colonialists. Having witnessed the efficiency with which control of state institutions had enabled the colonial elite to convert the "national" economy into some kind of private estate, emergent African leaders simply sought to inherit the same institutions intact for their own benefit. They thus rejected the pluralistic political structures that were part of the negotiated independence package soon after assuming political power. The dominant political elite, however, camouflaged their realist self-interest in idealistic nationalist rhetoric. To justify their ill motives, they hid behind the call for national unity as the precursor of rapid economic development:

They convincingly argued that a defused political structure would simply divide people along ethnic lines (given the ethnic plurality in African countries) rather than unite them. Reference was also made to the much-cherished traditional African society and argued that a plural political structure was incompatible with the traditional African lifestyle that was essentially communal and, hence, united. (Wanyama, 2000: 32)

Wanyama notes that the above arguments provided African leaders with a "sound" backing to return to the authoritarianism and autocracy of the colonial period after a brief stint with plural politics. Once in power, therefore, the first generation of African political leaders closed the door of politics and co-opted the colonial discourse of "development" (Young, 1994: 231). To discourage opposition and perpetuate their power positions, ". . . they argued that the problems of development demanded complete unity of purpose, justifying on these grounds the criminalization of political dissent and the inexorable march to political monolithism" (Ake, 1991: 32). The kind of political centralization that followed seemed to suggest that the essence of decolonization was simply the replacement of alien rulers with indigenous ones (Wanyama, 2000: 32). To this extent, as Rok Ajulu (2000: 150) observes, the colonial state was simply deracialized but it was never democratized; the colonial governor was replaced by the African president but the provincial administration and its entire legal paraphernalia, through which the governor had ruled was left more or less intact. "The new elites' economic fortunes rested heavily on access to state power. Any attempts to democratize the post-colonial state would obviously threaten the new political class' access to the state and the privileges that accrued from such control" (Ajulu, 2000: 151).



The emergence of single-partyism in Kenya and Zambia amply illustrate this rational choice approach to engineering authoritarianism in Africa, which was achieved through a combination of carrot-and-stick strategies.

## THE CASE OF KENYA AND ZAMBIA

Both Kenya and Zambia are former British colonies. The two countries attained their political independence in 1963 and 1964 respectively. Both emerged into their independence with multiparty political systems defined by their respective constitutions. The two main political parties in Kenya were the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the opposition Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU). In Zambia the parties were the ruling United National Independence Party (UNIP) and the opposition African National Congress (ANC). It would seem, however, that the founding presidents of Kenya and Zambia, Jomo Kenyatta and Kenneth Kaunda respectively, were keen on establishing a single-party system and this they attained through different ways.

### *One-Partyism in Kenya*

The process of political consolidation in Kenya began with nipping in the bud the constitutional provisions for a *Majimbo* (quasi-federal) system of government. The opposition KADU had pursued this philosophy of *Majimboism* that would allow semiautonomous ethnically-based regions to have substantial decision-making power over agricultural land, primary and intermediate education, local government, and public health among others.<sup>3</sup> The central government was responsible for external affairs, defense, customs, international trade, major economic development, and sourcing of foreign economic assistance. At the center was a bicameral legislature. The Lower House consisted of elected representatives from single-member constituencies while Senate was made up of elected members, one from each of the country's then 41 administrative districts. "Senate was constituted to guard the constitution from arbitrary amendment, as such amendment would require a 75 percent majority in the Lower House and a 90 percent majority in Senate" (Nasong'o, 2001a: 121). In effect, Senate was given powers to delay bills except those dealing with finances, powers that paralleled the delay powers of the United Kingdom's House of Lords.

Whereas KANU was dominated by the Kikuyu and Luo, KADU was essentially a coalition of politicians from the Luhya, Kalenjin, and Mijikenda, and was led by Ronald Ngala, Masinde Muliro, and Daniel arap

Moi. These leaders argued that *Majimboism* was the only way of ensuring that no single large ethnic group could dominate the country. It was thus a strategy to counter the domination of KANU by the then two largest ethnic groups in the country, the Kikuyu and Luo. KANU acquiesced to the *Majimbo* constitution during the independence constitutional negotiations at Lancaster House, London. This acquiescence was, however, merely a strategic move on the part of KANU leaders to hasten the granting of independence. As V. G. Simiyu argues, it looks like all African leaders took the advice of Kwame Nkrumah very seriously when they were negotiating constitutions for their independence and could not agree on democratic checks and balances:

Nkrumah said, at least in the case of Kenya, he told Koinange, 'go and tell Kenyatta in London [the second Lancaster House conference] to just accept what the British are telling him. If they want regionalism, and what-have-you, accept, let it be in that constitution, get independence then do what you like.' So for Kenya the 1962 constitution was only good for getting the independence.<sup>4</sup>

After independence, the new KANU government set about systematically dismantling the system that had been agreed upon. President Kenyatta was quite uneasy about opposition to his rule and the decentralized nature of the *Majimbo* system. He was devoted to a single-party dictatorship within the framework of a unitary state right from the beginning of Kenya's independence. Speaking at Bungoma's Kanduyi stadium, in the then Western Region in March 1964, he asserted that the opposition KADU—the champion of *Majimboism*—was a dying horse and predicted: "very soon, the country would see to it that Kenya had only one party—KANU" (Nasong'o, 1997: 10). The then Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Tourism, Achieng' Oneko added that this would facilitate accomplishment of the country's requirements as Kenya would "speak with one voice." KADU President Ronald Ngala reacted sharply to this one-party state idea and argued:

. . . for a democratic government to rule properly it must have a constructive opposition. The opposition is in fact the watchdog of the ordinary persons in the country [and] government ought to use its majority in parliament to fulfill the country's demands or else resign and pave way for the opposition to rule. (Nasong'o, 1997: 10–11)

Nonetheless, by year's end, through the politics of intrigue, arm-twisting, and outright denial of resources to the Regional Authorities, the



opposition KADU was forced to dissolve itself. Walter Oyugi recounts the deliberate strategy used by KANU to frustrate the opposition:

. . . the strategy involved ignoring the stipulations of the constitution. When it came particularly to matters relating to financial allocations, regions were deliberately starved as a result of the center's refusal to release funds that were due to them. Development projects stalled and ministers went around reminding the opposition that no development funds could be released to their constituencies. In the meantime they were also denied permits to hold political meetings by the provincial administration which, contrary to the stipulations of the Majimbo constitution, continued to be answerable to the center. The message sank and KADU disbanded in October 1964, thereby enabling Kenya to become a de facto one party state under KANU, with KANU emerging thereafter as a multi-ethnic party soon to become an arena for factional ethnic infighting. (Oyugi, 1992:13)

In announcing the dissolution of KADU to parliament, Ronald Ngala, the party president said: ". . . in the interests of Kenya, I have full mandate to declare today that the official opposition is dissolved and KADU joins the government under the leadership of Mzee Jomo Kenyatta . . . we intend to face the national issue with one purpose" (Mutoro et al., 1999: 73). Two years later, the two Houses of parliament were merged. The dissolution of KADU saw President Jomo Kenyatta declare enthusiastically that ". . . opposition for opposition's sake has died for ever and ever, Amen" (Gertzel, 1972: 110). The absorption of KADU members of parliament into KANU, however, swelled the ranks of the KANU left wing thereby heightening the ideological polarization between the left wing, led by Vice President Oginga Odinga, and the right wing led by President Kenyatta. The subject of contestation between the two groups revolved around the question of land and the kind of post-colonial state to be crafted.

On the issue of land, the progressives argued that social justice demanded the return of the three million hectares of prime land expropriated by the colonial settlers to the landless Africans without cost to them or to the government. However, in the independence negotiations, the British government had, on behalf of the settlers, secured an agreement to the effect that a smooth transfer of land would be on the basis of willing-seller-willing-buyer. The conservatives thus held that social justice demanded protection of private property and just compensation if an individual's property had to be taken over. They ruled out nationalization of the "White Highlands." The progressives viewed this as a dereliction of nationalist duty and a betrayal of the nationalist struggle for independence. Indeed, because of his

fervent criticism of government agrarian policies, especially the slow pace of Africanization, Bildad Kaggia, a veteran of the radical trade union movement of the 1950s and an ex-Kapenguria trialist,<sup>5</sup> was dismissed as an assistant minister for education in early 1964 (Ajulu, 2000: 141). The issue of land remained a thorny one with great socio-economic implications.

With regard to the kind of post-colonial state to be established, the conservatives were content to retain the capitalist colonial state apparatus to which they had succeeded. The progressives, on the other hand, pushed for the deconstruction of the colonial state and the crafting of a new one based on socialism and reflecting the people's aspirations. They urged for nationalization of the commanding heights of the economy and pushed for radical agrarian reforms. Observing that the socialist way of life was not entirely new to Africa, Oginga Odinga denounced capitalism arguing that Kenyans had not fought for independence so as to supplant colonial masters and adopt the same system of exploitation and plunder against the Kenyan masses. He took advantage of representing Jomo Kenyatta at a United Nations conference in 1964 to disclose that, ". . . the government of Kenya is dedicated toward the establishment of a 'Democratic African State' . . . [and] to take steps away from the Western orbit to redress the imbalance caused by former colonial ties" (Okoth, 1992: 86).

Inevitably, the ideological divide between the progressives and conservatives became linked to the Eastern and Western ideological blocs then engaged in a raging Cold War. In particular, the progressives identified with the Soviet Union and China while the conservatives were supported and bolstered by the United States and Great Britain. Washington was especially wary of Oginga Odinga whom it regarded as ". . . the opening wedge in the Communist attempt to penetrate Kenya" (Okoth, 1992: 88). Emboldened by Western support, Kenyatta moved to stem the rising tide of the radical socialists and to marginalize them from the center of power. First, Pio Gama Pinto, a veteran of the Mau Mau underground struggle and acknowledged tactical advisor to Oginga Odinga, who had just won special election<sup>6</sup> to parliament as the progressives' candidate, was assassinated in Nairobi in mid 1965. "At the trial, the man who pulled the trigger, Mutua Kisili, told the prosecution that he had only been an agent of the 'Big Man.' But nobody seemed keen to pursue the Big Man" (Ajulu, 2000: 141). Then at the March 11–13, 1966 American and British-sponsored KANU delegates conference in Limuru, which "took on the pattern of a closely stage-managed American-type political convention" (Okoth, 1992: 95), Odinga's position of deputy party president was scrapped and eight regional vice presidents elected in his place.



Odinga and Bildad Kaggia reacted by quitting KANU and establishing the Kenya Peoples Union (KPU). Ten Senators and nineteen Representatives defected to join Odinga and Kaggia on the opposition side and, as Rok Ajulu (2000: 142) argues, as a result of the build up of pressures in the constituencies, "there were indications that more members would follow Odinga and Kaggia into the opposition." To forestall this eventuality, a constitutional amendment was enacted (the fifth in the three-year old republic) requiring members of the National Assembly who changed parties to seek a new electoral mandate from their constituencies. In the "little general election" that followed in 1966, insurmountable obstacles were placed in the way of KPU candidates. The government used its monopoly of sanctions and economic rewards to close the party out of the rest of the country, leaving it to operate only in Nyanza, the KPU leader, Odinga Odinga's home province. In this event, KPU won only two of the ten contested Senate seats and only nine of the nineteen House seats (Ajulu, 2000: 142). The KPU Vice President, Bildad Kaggia, who hailed from President Kenyatta's Central Province, lost his Kandara seat where "Kenyatta and Koinange took personal charge of Kaggia's personal harassment. Kandara was too high a stake to be left to chance. Kaggia lost the election, but a few days later newspapers reported Kaggia's abandoned ballot papers floating on Chania River" (Ajulu, 2000: 142). Three years later, KPU was banned altogether, and its leaders detained following a heated verbal exchange during an official function in Kisumu between Odinga and Kenyatta and a riot by Odinga's supporters (see Mutoro et al, 1999: 74). This turn of events ushered Kenya into a *de facto* single party system.

Political developments in Kenya following the banning of the KPU saw an active people's participation in politics decrease and the steady emergence of institutional authoritarianism (Chepkwony, 1987). Once he had used KANU to marginalize the Odinga faction from power in 1966, Kenyatta felt so comfortably powerful that "he had no more use for the party and left it into abeyance with neither meeting of its top organs nor national party elections between 1966 and 1978 when he eternally left the political scene" (Nasong'o, 2001a: 122). It is this reality of a largely dysfunctional party under Kenyatta that Jennifer Widner (1992) describes as a loosely organized debating society with little policy influence. She contends that "Kenyatta perceived that the best way to maintain political order in a society where ethnic or community boundaries usually coincided with economic differences, and where no one community constituted a majority of the nation's voters, was to eschew central control of political views" (Widner, 1992: 73). Instead, she asserts, Kenyatta employed a unique extra-parliamentary bargaining system

in the name of *Harambee* (self-help movement), and a loosely defined political party to focus the attention of politicians on local issues and on the formation of alliances across communities, while limiting their power to force agendas on one another. Arguably, however, Kenyatta and his faction simply used the party to entrench their power positions by shutting out their competitors after which the party became superfluous, at least for their purposes. As Anyang' Nyong'o (1989) argues, the disintegration of the nationalist coalition had enabled a strong authoritarian president to emerge. Consequently, the dominant faction maintained the party when it suited its interests to do so, and then allowed it to atrophy to deny any other organized faction the chance of using it politically to attain its objectives within the bounds of law.

The Kenyatta regime went further to create a power base disguised as a welfare association known as Gikuyu Embu Meru Association (GEMA),<sup>7</sup> which by the mid 1970s acted informally as parliament, cabinet, and quite often, as judiciary in the country. This reality prompted the late popular member of parliament for Nyandurua North, Josiah Mwangi Kariuki to remark thus: "I tell you the cabinet is not running the country. It is no use having ministers who do not take decisions, who have no control over their ministries" (Chepkwony, 1987: 169). In the same vein, Martin Shikuku, member of parliament for Butere, complained in parliament that the Kenyatta regime was intent on killing parliament the same way it had killed KANU; a remark that elicited calls for substantiation or withdrawal. The presiding Deputy Speaker, Jean Marie Seroney, member for Tinderet, wondered loudly how Shikuku could substantiate the obvious! In spite of provisions for parliamentary immunity, both Shikuku and Seroney were arrested within the precincts of parliament and detained without trial with Jomo Kenyatta metaphorically warning that "the hawk in the sky is ready to swoop on the chickens" (Nasong'o, 2001: 123; Chepkwony, 1987: 167). Later in 1977, the two were followed in detention by radical parliamentarians George Anyona and Koigi wa Wamwere (see Ajulu, 2000: 144).

For his part, when he assumed power following Kenyatta's death in August 1978, Daniel arap Moi released all political detainees, did away with detention without trial, declared war on *magendo* (smuggling), and, quite significantly, affirmed that he would follow in Kenyatta's *Nyayo* (footsteps). Moi thus remained popular for about four years up to the attempted coup of August 1982. After this, the clamp down on political dissenters was so intense that most dissenters either fled to exile or were forced to operate underground leading to the emergence of an underground organization known as *Mwakenya—Muungano wa Wazalendo wa*



*Kukomboza Kenya* (Patriotic Union for the Liberation of Kenya) with its publications *Pambana* (Struggle) and *Mpatanishi* (The Arbiter). In June 1983, detention without trial was reinstated as populism was replaced by repression on a scale unprecedented even by the Kenyatta standards. This saw the detention and conviction of members of the country's traditional left wing—university lecturers and student activists—as well as those associated with the former vice president and doyen of opposition politics, Oginga Odinga under the guise of a crack down on *Mwakenya*.

President Moi systematically dismantled Kenyatta's ruling coalition and established his own. He began by hounding the former attorney general and then minister for constitutional affairs, Charles Njonjo out of office by accusing him of plotting to overthrow the government in cahoots with a foreign power, and then instituting a commission of inquiry to investigate this. Then, demonstrating a remarkable reluctance to co-opt powerful regional figures into government, Moi dispensed with Stanley Oloitip (then minister for Local Government), G. G. Kariuki (minister of state in the President's Office), Charles Rubia, Zachary Onyonka (minister for Education), as well as Robert Matano, a cabinet minister and long-serving secretary general of KANU. "Even within his (Moi's) old KADU peers, men of independent minds like [Masinde] Muliro were sidelined" (Ajulu, 2000: 146). Whereas Kenyatta had dealt with the "problem" of regional party bosses with power bases independent of the center by simply letting the party to atrophy, Moi sought to solve the same by imposing his men at all levels of the party hierarchy. Towards this end, he set about reorganizing and strengthening the party, KANU, and accorded it pride of place in the country's political process. In 1982, he rushed through parliament a bill introducing the now infamous section 2(A) to the Kenyan constitution, making the country a *de jure* one-party state. He did this ostensibly to forestall the eventuality of an opposition political party, which Oginga Odinga and George Anyona were preparing to register at the time.

In 1986, the Moi regime pushed the frontiers of authoritarianism even further by removing the security of tenure for the constitutional offices of judges, the attorney general, and the comptroller and auditor-general. The regime affirmed that KANU "has supremacy over parliament and . . . the party is also supreme over the High Court" (*Weekly Review* [Nairobi], November 21, 1986). The regime went further to adopt the queue voting (*Mlolongo*) system which it put to use in the 1988 general elections, thereby ensuring complete top-down control of the electoral process to the extent that the 1988 general elections have gone down as the most rigged elections in Kenya's history. It is against these developments