

1 Reflections on the Legitimacy of Mau Mau Rebellion 50 Years 2 after Independence in Kenya

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3 Abstract

8 Almost a half century after it broke out, Mau Mau uprising continues to be a subject of
9 controversy. Major questions are: What is the legacy of Mau Mau in Kenya? What is its
10 legitimacy? Was Mau Mau a nationalist or tribal movement? Is Kenya's independence a
11 product of Mau Mau? As the amount of literature on the subject of rebellion continues to
12 grow, it is becoming clear that the historical meaning and interpretation of a movement such
13 as Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya is to be determined to a large extent by the perspective of the
14 historian who is making the study. Mau Mau has been described as a peasant revolt, an
15 atavistic socio-religious movement, a visible manifestation of the psychological breakdown of a
16 primitive tribe in a modern age, a critical stage in the development of a legitimate nationalist
17 movement, and innumerable other things. The only element which appears to remain
18 consistent throughout all these various views is that the context of the historian and his/her
19 method of analysis affect his/her interpretation as much if not more than the context of the
20 rebellion itself. However, any significant historical event is marked by its attachment to the
21 people, events and institutions to either side of its occurrence. This nexus, or series of
22 linkages, is the determinate, if unstated, context of the event which gives it nearly all its
23 importance. If a movement, person or event came out of nowhere and went nowhere, people,
24 and especially historians, would very soon forget it. The Mau Mau rebellion continues to
25 attract the attention of many people for the simple reason that it still has a great effect on
26 people of Kenya and the rest of the world. Obviously it has in some fashion advanced into the
27 present day, fifty years after independence. This linkage was established not because Mau
28 Mau was successful, nor because it failed; it exists fifty years after independence because
29 people, especially historians, have been unable to define the legacy which Mau Mau has

Index terms— Reflections on the Legitimacy of Mau Mau Rebellion 50 Years after Independence in Kenya Dr. John Koskey Chang'ach Abstract-Almost a half century after it broke out, Mau Mau uprising continues to be a subject of controversy. Major questions are: What is the legacy of Mau Mau in Kenya? What is its legitimacy? Was Mau Mau a nationalist or tribal movement? Is Kenya's independence a product of Mau Mau? As the amount of literature on the subject of rebellion continues to grow, it is becoming clear that the historical meaning and interpretation of a movement such as Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya is to be determined to a large extent by the perspective of the historian who is making the study. Mau Mau has been described as a peasant revolt, an atavistic socioreligious movement, a visible manifestation of the psychological breakdown of a primitive tribe in a modern age, a critical stage in the development of a legitimate nationalist movement, and innumerable other things.

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51 established not because Mau Mau was successful, nor because it failed; it exists fifty years after independence
52 because people, especially historians, have been unable to define the legacy which Mau Mau has left for the
53 world. During the Emergency, the British Government was successful in its suppression of the Mau Mau fighters
54 in the Aberdares forest. However, only a few years later, Kenya gained its independence and the right to self-
55 government. Did Mau Mau gain Kenya its independence, or at least set the foundation for it? Many people think
56 so, and many others do not. The point here is that in such a confused state, people tend to make of the Mau
57 Mau rebellion what they want it to be. By any account, the problem of interpreting the significance of the Mau
58 Mau rebellion is an important one in Kenya today. If Mau Mau is the generative source of Kenyan independence,
59 then it is vital to Kenya's sense of history to acknowledge and cement Mau Mau connection with the present
60 generation. To a certain extent, Kenya will remain rootless and unsure of its identity until it can settle this issue.
61 This paper will examine some of the linkages which apparently bind Mau Mau to Kenya's past

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63 avid Potter examines the modern historian's concept of nationalism and its effect on historical interpretation.
64 Potter states that the historian initially seeks to use nationalism as a measurement of group unity. This aspect
65 of nationalism leads to several major implications for the treatment of history. First, it establishes intra-group
66 relationships rather than ethical standards as the criteria for justification of the group's actions. Secondly, it
67 causes the historian to view nationalism as an exclusive allegiance in ignorance of the fact that nationalism
68 builds upon its association with other group loyalties, and is in fact the sum of these loyalties, gaining strength
69 through their strength. Third, it leads the historian to explain nationalism solely in terms of cultural factors,
70 ignoring a necessary second psychological factor: common interests. In short, the historian opts for a formalistic,
71 institutional, and determinate concept of nationalism that is entirely inconsistent with his initial definition.
72 Potter believes that historians should utilize nationalism as it was originally conceived -as a descriptive term and
73 historical tool, not as a moral sanction.

74 Corfield was commissioned by the British Government in 1952 to compile a report on the factors which led up
75 to the declaration of the Emergency on October 20, 1952. He states in his preface, he has reached some fairly
76 solid conclusions regarding the nature of Mau Mau:

77 The origins of this unlawful association, which eventually dominated all but a small portion of the Kikuyu
78 people both in the reserves and in the settled areas, lie deeply in the past, and in an endeavour to give the fullest
79 consideration to any terms of reference I have found it necessary to examine almost every aspect of the social,
80 economic, and Governmental problems which arise when a new civilizing influence impinges with suddenness on
81 a primitive people who had stagnated for centuries. The failure of the Kikuyu to adjust themselves fully to the
82 needs of the sudden change, together with the planned exploitation of the attendant stresses and strains, were
83 the primary causes and origin of Mau Mau.

84 Corfield here would never consider Mau Mau to be a nationalist movement -his moral scruples will not allow
85 it. Corfield is appalled at the lawlessness of the Kikuyu.

86 He does not understand why the Kikuyu reacted to a situation that affected all other tribes in Kenya, but
87 drew a response from them alone. The reason must lie in a psychological failing on their part. Corfield labels
88 Mau Mau as an illegitimate movement on the part of a schizophrenic people, led by manipulative self-seeking
89 revolutionaries. Corfield advises that there should be no compromise with this wholly evil movement. Corfield
90 saw fit to state twice in his report that:

91 In the words of Father Trevor Huddleston, written as early as December, 1952: -'Mau Mau is a movement
92 which in its origins and in its development is wholly evil. It is the worst enemy of African Progress in Kenya.
93 It has about it all the horror of the powers of darkness: of spiritual wickedness in high places. There can be
94 no compromise, no common ground, between Mau Mau and the rest of the civilized world. It must be utterly
95 destroyed if the peoples of Kenya are to live together and build up their country.' This is the supreme lesson to
96 be learnt.

97 Carl Rosberg and John Nottingham give a complete political history of Kenya in the twentieth century,
98 analyzing the various social and political movements which they believe feed into Mau Mau. They believe that
99 there is a history of grievances and resistance to British authority which blossoms in the Mau Mau rebellion.
100 Mau Mau is a legitimate rebellion which reflects one stage in a true nationalist movement:

101 It is our contention that the history of Kikuyu protects against aspects of the colonial state may be more fully
102 understood as the history of a developing nationalist movement. In our view, the outbreak of open violence in
103 Kenya in 1952 occurred primarily because of a European failure rather than an African one; it was not so much

104 a failure of the Kikuyu people to adapt to a modern institutional setting as it was a failure of the European
105 policy-makers to recognize the need for significant social and political reform. In suggesting that the European
106 conception of "Mau Mau" constituted a myth, we maintain that "Mau Mau" was indeed an integral part of an
107 ongoing, rationally conceived nationalist movement.

108 Rosberg and Nottingham thereby stamp their seal of approval on the Mau Mau uprising. They approve
109 of Mau Mau, so they label it nationalistic. They also recognize, however, that Mau Mau does not fit into
110 the traditional form of nationalism -it has some distinctively tribal elements to it. Rosberg and Nottingham
111 state that nationalism is a European term which describes a process of political and social mobilization towards
112 selfgovernment in the form of the nation-state. Therefore, the primary objective of the group must be to seize
113 the political authority and power which will allow it to integrate its territorial and tribal elements.

114 There is a watershed, which is defined by the Emergency.

115 The socio-economic uniformity which Rosberg and Nottingham claims gives the movement its potential for
116 united action is broken down in the hierarchical structure of the Mau Mau organization. A de-centralized vertical
117 structure totally lacking in discipline replaces the organized protest structures extant before 1952. The forest life
118 displaced the Kikuyu from the land they treasure and initiated the breakdown of traditional Kikuyu community
119 structures by changing the role of the individual and women. The group which enters the forest is nearly all
120 male and of a single generation, indeed, it more than likely draws the bulk of its members from only one or two
121 age-groupings. There is a split between the literate and illiterate elements within the forest. The group which
122 supposedly inherited the tradition of the KISA closes down and terrorizes many schools through its opposition
123 to the Beecher report. The movement becomes anti-Christian. In short, the group which enters the forest is
124 almost totally lacking in the ideological clarity which Rosberg and Nottingham describe. In fact, one could say
125 that even if Mau Mau came out of the incipient nationalist movements of the pre-emergency era, the nationalist
126 movement itself committed suicide the second it entered the forest.

127 This breakdown of nationalist elements must be explained if the nationalism thesis is to hold. That the Kikuyu
128 were the only people forced into the terrible conditions of the forest means nothing if the forest fighters chose
129 to abandon important nationalist values simply because they were there. That Kenyatta and the rest of the
130 Kapenguria defendants were arrested and all political and trade union activity halted means nothing if Mau Mau
131 was not itself an expression of the true nationalism is a group loyalty that transcends and sums up other loyalties
132 and values. The loss of its political leaders cannot explain why the values and loyalties of Mau Mau are entirely
133 different from the nationalist movements which preceded it. If Mau Mau is to inherit the tradition of Kenyan
134 nationalism, it must also inherit the consciousness of that movement.

135 These discussions are overly harsh on the subject of Kenyan nationalism. That Kenyan nationalistic
136 development was basically a process of reaction instead of initiative does not mean that there was no such
137 thing as a very real sense of nationalism running through the Kenyan consciousness. Karigo Muchai points out
138 that nationalism can be something other than an aggressive sentiment:

139 Nationalism is essentially a negative philosophy based on strong popular feelings, demanding freedom from
140 foreign political domination.

141 At first glance this statement appears to be nothing more than a reiteration of Rosberg and Nottingham's
142 assertion that nationalism in Africa requires the seizure of political power from the colonial government before
143 it can bring about the integration of national and territorial elements. However, Muchai points out something
144 else in his statement which goes beyond even David Potter's all-inclusive concept: nationalism can be a negative
145 philosophy. Perhaps the Kikuyu could not conceive of a social unity in terms other than personal relationships;
146 they were simply too localistic and particularistic to envision a unified Kenya; they had no sense of the community
147 beyond the physical community level. Perhaps there was no feeling of oneness among the Kikuyu, but this does
148 not rule out the possibility of nationalistic action. Could it be that Kenyan unity involved no psychological belief
149 in community among Kenyans other than the complete rejection of all social confederation beyond the local
150 level -but this a belief common to all peoples of Kenya, thereby giving them a "negative unity" that can only
151 be seen as real opposite the Colonial Government? There was a real nationalistic movement in Kenya before
152 the declaration of the Emergency, but the Emergency marked its collapse, not its strength at zenith. However,
153 there must be an explanation different from the "reactive settler theory", because the Mau Mau rebellion was
154 essentially a civil war among the Kikuyu; it was not directed against the European Administration. There was a
155 different nationalism during the Emergency that had no connection in real terms with the developing nationalism
156 of the pre-Emergency era.

157 It was a nationalism of withdrawal and negative confederation which used the unified settler community as a
158 negative reference point for the formation of a decentralized nationalism. Isak Dinesen suggests how the Kikuyu
159 had a localistic view that could lend itself to a nationalistic confederation:

160 I told them that I had myself been told when I made inquiries in the matter that they must go into the Kikuyu
161 Reserve and find land there. On that they asked me if they should find enough unoccupied land in the Reserve
162 to bring all their cattle with them? And, they went on, would they be sure all to find land in the same place, so
163 that the people from the farm should remain together, for they did not want to be separated.

164 These people considered themselves to be the people of Baroness Blixen's farm first, Kikuyu second, and
165 Kenyans third. As Potter states in his essay, nationalism is a transcendent loyalty that sums up and must be
166 coordinated with other groups loyalties. The nationalistic ideology of Mau Mau ws the common denominator for

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167 the forest fighters, but the sum of loyalties which made up this nationalism was something very different from
168 one man to another. The other loyalties were so localistic as to be exclusive, yet similar enough in form that
169 they could be brought together for a vague concept of nationalism.

170 This explanation shows how the Kikuyu could be on the defensive, involved in the Mau Mau movement, devoid
171 of ideology, yet apparently stronger than they had ever been before in their conviction in independence for Kenya.
172 Oathing has long been before in their conviction in independence for Kenya. Oathing has long been sighted as
173 manifestation of Mau Mau solidarity in the formative stages during the late 1940's, yet even it can be cited as a
174 sign of the fragmentation of the developing nationalism and the ascendancy of a new form:

175 The earliest use of an oath in a modern political context appears to have occurred shortly after 1925, when
176 the leaders of the Kikuyu Central Association decided to introduce an oath of loyalty to the Association: the
177 transtribal character of the East African Association had probably militated against the use of oaths in that
178 organization.

179 The nationalistic content of the movement was gone, and an external form of nationalism moved in to replace
180 it.

181 This shallow form of nationalism cannot, however, describe the very real and rationally constructed
182 nationalistic ideal of Kenya's political leaders. In fact, one must explain several things. In his book, Mau Mau
183 From Within, Karari Njama describes how he made plans to travel to Ethiopia to negotiate for independence as
184 an agent for all of Kenya, not only the forest fighters. The generals in the Aberdares forest refused to submit
185 unless all of Kenya was declared independent. There was never any mention of secession or an attempt to
186 gain international recognition for an independent section or part of Kenya. The unit for independence in this
187 supposedly all-Kikuyu affair was not the Kikuyu tribe, but Kenya. This nationalistic ideal was matched by
188 the leaders of others tribes. Achieng Oneko was a member of the Kapenguria defence who was convicted but
189 shortly thereafter acquitted because it was found that he could not speak Kikuyu, and, therefore, could not have
190 participated in the oathing ceremonies. The significant point here is that Oneko never gave his non-Kikuyu status
191 as a defence; he was willing to abide by the conviction the same as the others because he saw the issue to be one
192 of Kenyan political freedom. Whether or not Mau Mau had been purged of its nationalist content, its leaders
193 were very much a part of the tradition of nationalism that had been developing in Kenya for fifty years. Kenya
194 was the political unit for Mau Mau leaders and nationalists alike.

195 Perhaps the failure of Mau Mau was not its suppression by the Colonial Government, but its failure to gain
196 international recognition. It pursued a defensive war that was limited to a local theatre. No appeal was made to
197 international organizations who could use Potter's distorted concept of nationalism to sanction Kenya's right to
198 self-rule. And perhaps the success of eleven detainees brought forth an international reaction of horror -within six
199 weeks there were major debates in the House of Commons which brought the atrocity to the world's attention.

200 These tentative suggestions leave Mau Mau at the point where this paper began. All there appears to be
201 arising out of these various interpretation is confusion. Is Kenyan independence a product of Mau Mau? Was
202 Hola the first step toward independence? Who can be credited with the success? By refusing to lead, Mugo had
203 become a legendary hero.

204 Jomo Kenyatta has been a figure whose continuous presence has marked Kenyan politics for fifty years. He has
205 consistently avoided the factional struggles of Kenyan politics to emerge as the acknowledged leader of Kenya.
206 He has always been a staunch nationalist as well as a transtribal, national, essentially non-partisan figure ?? He
207 was even acknowledged by both the forest fighters and the Colonial Government to be the head of Mau Mau.
208 If there is any single person who could coordinate all the nationalistic loyalties that disintegrated during the
209 Emergency, it is Jomo Kenyatta. However, Kenyatta himself was not one to admit his affiliation with Mau Mau:

210 He who calls us the Mau Mau is not truthful. We do not know this thing Mau Mau?(Note, this means, in the
211 idiom, that we do not 'want' or 'recognize' or 'approve' Mau Mau).

212 Speech The forest fighters believed that his few denunciations were for "political" reasons. The Government
213 believed that he was not being specific about Mau Mau because he wanted to protect other fighters. Upon his
214 release from Lodwar eight years after Kapenguria, Kenyatta was still stating his opposition to Mau Mau, and
215 now people began to listed to him. Many were surprised; many more felt betrayed:

216 We are determined to have independence in peace, and we shall not allow hooligans to rule Kenya. We must
217 have no hatred towards one another. Mau Mau was a disease which had been eradicated, and must never be
218 remembered again.

219 Kenyatta was determined to unite the country under his leadership. This meant that he could not offend
220 either of the extreme groups, neither the Europeans nor the forest fighters. He tried to make people forget Mau
221 Mau with speeches of unity:

222 The most essential need which I have constantly sought to proclaim and to fulfill in Kenya has been that
223 of national unity; nationhood and familyhood must and can be continued out of our many tribes and cultures.
224 Nationalism rooted in loyalty to Kenya must come first.

225 Perhaps Kenyatta simply realized that the situation was a very delicate one which required great care. His
226 country had essentially been through a civil war, and both sides involved had to live together in Kenya. Kenyatta
227 tried to leave the road open for individual achievement without government interference. On the subject of land,
228 Kenyatta laid out a policy that respected everybody's rights to land in a system of private ownership. Kenya
229 would not alienate any European land to reward the forest fighters. All land that was being used for the benefit

230 and betterment of Kenya would be protected. Foreign investment was encouraged as long as it was good for Kenya
231 and not meant to bring enrichment of individuals. Kenyatta called his blueprint of unity and self-betterment for
232 Kenya "African Socialism". Rejecting two-party politics, Kenyatta called for the cooperation of the government
233 and the people. Kenyatta's plans all went through, as the government offered no rewards for service to the Mau
234 Mau fighters and the only opposition party (KADU) dissolved voluntarily.

235 Unfortunately, Kenyatta's dreams of national unity failed to materialize completely. As Potter states,
236 nationalism must be able to coordinate with other groups' loyalties. Kenyan nationalism has had problems
237 coordinating the sub-group loyalties of Mau Mau fighters, loyalists and Europeans. Some can accept neo-colonial
238 rule by Africans, others cannot. It has become obvious that Kenyatta does not want to upset the existing
239 structures or values. The leadership has changed, but the ruling values have not. Kenya is still a capitalist
240 country which emphasizes private ownership of property and individual achievement. Independence brought
241 African independence and self-government, but it did not bring a revolution. One real problem with this situation
242 is that whereas the Mau Mau rebellion marked but a single stage out of many in the political career of Jomo
243 Kenyatta, it marked the only period of political participation in the lives of most Kikuyu. These people now
244 feel that they have a vested interest in Kenyan politics, a right to see their sacrifices playing a part in political
245 policy-making. These people all feel a sense of anticipation that political clichés, calls to unity, and policies of
246 accommodation cannot satisfy. Some observers might argue that the present regime has made the same mistake
247 the British made before the Emergency, except in reverse: the suppression of opposition parties such as KADU
248 and KPU has plugged the outlets for non-antagonistic ventilation of grievances by the groups on the extremes
249 of the political spectrum. Toleration and accommodation in this situation can only lead to disappointment and
250 frustration.

251 In his book, *Mau Mau Twenty Years After*, Robert Buijtenhuis gives a painfully frank and accurate explanation
252 of the dilemma which faces Kenya today. Mau Mau has created polar political groups which expect consideration
253 of their views, and the Kenya national government is caught in the impossible task of trying to please both.
254 Buijtenhuis points out that a country which has been through a civil war must have a selective memory. Myths
255 are necessary for nationbuilding, and in this case, the right myths for the nation are the wrong ones for Mau
256 Mau:

257 It is quite clear that the memory of Mau Mau, which, if it was not a tribal revolt, certainly was the revolt of
258 one tribe, may eventually become a negative factor in the process of nation-building.

259 Tribalism and political factionalism are too important in Kenya today for Mau Mau to be the focus of Kenyan
260 nationalism. After the assassination of Tom Mboya, the dissolution of KPU and the return of Bildad Kaggia to
261 KANU signaled the end of Kikuyu-Luo tensions, but at the cost of reaffirming tribalism as the basis of Kenyan
262 political parties -class interests were secondary. The Kikuyu dominate the economic, social and political life of
263 Kenya. Kiamba dominates Kikuyu political activity. The call for unity is a reaction to an apparent tendency in
264 Kenya politics to move towards an increasingly narrow political group to the exclusion of their own participation.
265 Mau Mau is a part of this tradition of narrowing the political base. The Europeans were not as scared of
266 African government as they were of Mau Mau government. The greatest stumbling block to the recognition of
267 the contribution Mau Mau made towards independence is that it denies non-Kikuyu a role in the independence
268 struggle:

269 Unhappily, however, although Tom Mboya and Oginga Odinga were responsible for many very laudable actions
270 in the Kenya Independence struggle, the only thing they cannot claim is that they took part in the first fight.

271 Mau Mau cannot become the central tradition of Kenyan independence because it is too exclusive.
272 Unfortunately, it appears that Kenya is faced with two legitimate claimants to the nationalist tradition: the
273 revived leaders of the pre-Emergency movement, and the Mau Mau forest fighters. Mau Mau, however, has
274 negative elements to it:

275 For the non-fighting population, the memory of Mau Mau certainly revives the sufferings of the Emergency
276 which they blame on the stubbornness of the forest fighters. At the same time they might be ashamed at their
277 betrayal and forsaking of the Mau Mau at a time when the freedom fighters needed help most.

278 For several years Kenya tried to pass over the difficult problem of acknowledging Mau Mau. This approach
279 led to only greater problems. Today Mau Mau is recognized, but not at the national level -there has been a
280 localization of the myth: there might be some 'method in the madness', in the sense that the Kenya Government
281 seems to distinguish sharply between the national level, where it has to steer a middle course between conflicting
282 interests and myths, and the local level where people are more or less left free to follow their inclinations in
283 honouring the freedom fighters.

284 However, Buijtenhuis points out that there is another reason for the localization of the myth of Mau Mau:

285 I do not have much information about this, but I did get the impression in Kenya that, at least among the
286 villages in Kikuyu land, the myth of Mau Mau is often a 'split up' myth, that while people are very well acquainted
287 with the facts of their local history during the Emergency, they know only a few rather loosely connected facts
288 about the Mau Mau revolt in general.

289 This statement points right back towards the localistic, particularistic view that was explained earlier as a part
290 of the "negative unity" model of nationalism. Mau Mau cannot be the central myth of the Kenyan nation, for it
291 does not represent a unified myth at the national level. Buijtenhuis claims that Mau Mau was a case of "tribalism

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292 serving the nation". This tribalism, however, was not hostile to other ethnic groups. Although exclusive and
293 somewhat de-centralized, Mau Mau was a nationalist movement:

294 The Mau Mau movement, although largely a Kikuyu movement by recruitment and in terms of its symbols
295 and ceremonies, thus wanted to serve a group of political leaders -some Kikuyu, others not -about whose national
296 outlook there can be no doubt. I think this proves sufficiently that in the end the Mau Mau fighters thought
297 more in national terms than in tribal ones, and for this reason I am convinced that the question of whether Mau
298 Mau was a tribal or a national movement is a faulty one. Mau Mau was both.

299 Localization of the myth of Mau Mau has been pursued in an attempt to make sure that the people of Kenya
300 recognize the difference between these two elements in Mau Mau. It is probably the only solution, although it
301 is not a satisfying one. Buijtenhuis suggests that localization of the myth be accompanied by local, but official
302 government assistance in recognition of the national elements in the myth.

303 The position of Mau Mau in the continuum of Kenyan political history is a difficult, but not impossible one
304 to define.

305 Kenya had a growing legitimate nationalist movement before the Emergency whose forms arose in response
306 to similar institutional forms on the side of the Colonial Government. As the settler position became less
307 stable within the Empire, the settlers were forced to consolidate their political authority and power by denying
308 the natural progression Global Journal of Human Social Science of this movement. The settlers' subsequent
309 decapitation of the trade-union movement and the major political parties cut away any hope for moderate
310 political action and forced the ascendancy of militant Kikuyu elements. The Emergency marked the conflict
311 between the Colonial Government and this radical wing. The movement to the forests marked the withdrawal,
312 the fragmentation, and the complete breakdown of any of the elements of the nationalist movement which might
313 have remained a part of Mau Mau ideology. The Mau Mau went into the forests without an ideology, a group
314 completely separated from the established nationalist structures. Mau Mau was a response to a political blunder
315 on the part of the British.

316 Today, however, Mau Mau is a true nationalist movement, after the fact. As they went into the forest, the Mau
317 Mau fighters could not have had a clear conception of themselves as a nation. However, the stigma of defeat,
318 the utter isolation from forms of legitimate political expression, the detachment from the British and other
319 Kenyan tribes, the memory of a unity of common experience, and the great sense of real political consciousness
320 of nationalism among the former forest fighters and many Kikuyu which rivals, but has very little to do with, the
321 pre-Emergency nationalist movement. The Emergency bestowed upon the forest fighters a legitimacy which did
322 not even exist before. The problem today is that form of the traditional nationalism whose development in a sense
323 caused the Emergency, and a vigorous revolutionary form of nationalism which was created by the Emergency.
324 As David Potter suggests, it is actually impossible to determine which of these groups has a legitimate claim.
325 What is becoming obvious is that it might not be possible to coordinate these two nationalisms. Mau Mau is
326 linked to the Kenya of today in a very real sense. But Mau Mau is a negative philosophy: it was created as a
327 localistic, "negative unity", and it continues to be a movement in opposition to the national level norms, policies,
328 and values of the present government.¹

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