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Author(s): James H. Meriwether

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African Americans and the Mau Mau Rebellion: Militancy, Violence, and the Struggle for Freedom

JAMES H. MERIWETHER

Let me preface what I am going to say with this: I hate violence and injustice to any people, regardless of color or religion. I love peace, harmony and brotherhood so much that I don't even like the use of angry words.

But what to do when there is a drive against one; and when if one does not submit meekly, violence is used against him? Should he still keep his hands to his side? Or should he defend himself in whatever way he can?

Take the Kikuyus.

Joel Rogers, May 1953¹

IN 1952 THE AFRICAN CONTINENT seethed with protest and resistance to white supremacy. In South Africa, people of color waged the Defiance Campaign against apartheid and the white minority government. In the Gold Coast (Ghana), Kwame Nkrumah pressed for constitutional changes, which made him prime minister of a country inexorably moving toward independence. And in East Africa, the Kenya Land and Freedom Movement, popularly known as the Mau Mau, launched a war to overthrow white supremacy and to reclaim the land.

Across the Atlantic, black Americans also struggled against white supremacy. As they wrestled with how best to conduct the fight for freedom and equality, they heard and read about African actions. The Defiance Campaign and the Mau Mau rebellion offered a particularly sharp contrast: the Defiance Campaign used non-violent resistance in the Gandhian tradition; the Mau Mau used armed violence.

The Mau Mau resort to violence, and particularly some of the more brutal killings, presented African Americans with a challenge. In general, African Americans roundly criticized the colonial rule of Kenya and the handling of the Mau Mau revolt. They supported the objective

of black majority rule in Kenya. But at the same time, Mau Mau tactics created a predicament: could one justify killing whites and blacks who, one claimed, stood in the way of freedom and equality?

Further, and more deeply, confronting Mau Mau also revealed how African Americans were debating their own freedom struggle, who was heading it, and what was the best path to be following in that struggle. The Mau Mau fought not only whites, but also against the traditional Kikuyu leadership and perceived supporters of the colonial government. Mau Mau killings of Africans far outnumbered those of white settlers. Indeed, the Mau Mau killed 1,880 civilians, all but 58 of whom were black.² This aspect of Mau Mau also resonated in black America. Even as civil rights leaders condemned the Mau Mau and their actions, more militant, mass voices spoke out in support of the Mau Mau and against the established African American civil rights leadership. Indeed, black elites' condemnation of Mau Mau spoke as much to their reading of its implication for their own situation as to their disagreement with Mau Mau tactics.

We see in responses to Mau Mau, then, how African Americans wrestled with the meaning of Mau Mau for their own lives, and over how to shape their own freedom struggle. The Mau Mau insurgency widened the parameters of debate over how to combat white supremacy, and helped foster and distinguish those who favored more militant approaches from the liberal civil rights leadership. The Mau Mau heightened long-simmering tensions within black America over the shape and leadership of that struggle. In years to come, the Mau Mau would become embedded in African American consciousness as a powerful symbol of resistance—both to white supremacy as well as to the traditional civil rights leadership.

MAU MAU, A STATE OF EMERGENCY, AND AFRICAN AMERICANS

During the post-World War II years problems of land alienation increasingly became exacerbated in colonial Kenya. With the end of the war, the colonial government worked to attract demobilized British veterans as well as British colonialists leaving India in the face of impending Indian independence. It now also pursued policies to severely restrict agricultural production by African squatters on white settler lands, production which had been encouraged during the crisis of the war years. The burgeoning number of white settlers combined with colonial

land policies to squeeze the growing African population onto reserves unable to support the people. This tactic benefited the settlers not only by freeing up land but also by ensuring a cheap labor supply. On the other hand, it increased bitterness among Africans, especially the Kikuyu, who populated the highlands that the settlers commandeered.³

At the same time, chiefs created and given power by the colonial government worked to increase their wealth and authority by solidifying their individual possession of land. Others involved with the colonial system, such as government employees, also sought individual land acquisition. This private land ownership was alien to Kikuyu traditions and tore at the fabric of the society. Younger Kikuyu who had no access to land, along with displaced tenants and dispossessed squatters, became greatly disaffected.

Disaffection spread through Nairobi, too. Between 1941 and 1948, the population of Nairobi soared by 17 percent each year. During World War II, Nairobi's African residents had not fared nearly as well as rural Africans, as wages trailed inflationary price increases. After the war, many of the migrants to Nairobi were the disgruntled squatters pushed off European farms or tenant farmers who lost their small plots. Prices continued to rise, unemployment grew, and crime became a serious problem.⁴

Frustrated, angry, and dispossessed, more and more Africans abandoned the advocates of constitutional politics and change in favor of more militant voices. The Mau Mau began in the late 1940s, and despite being banned by the British in 1950, grew rapidly. The backbone of the Mau Mau movement formed from dispossessed squatters from the White Highlands; poor peasants, tenants, and younger Kikuyu who had been transformed into a landless rural class as land became increasingly privatized by whites and Kikuyu elites; and the urban unemployed and destitute. Many of these people felt they had little to lose and much to gain by resorting to a campaign of violence.⁵

Central to the Mau Mau was the "oathing" during which, according to historian John Lonsdale, recruits "committed their life to the cause in swallowing a stew of mutton or goat, vegetables and cereals, sprinkled with soil, marinated in goat's blood, and watched by uprooted sheep's eyes transfixed on thorns." More sensational accounts of the oathing claim that even more occurred, including the drinking of menstrual blood and unnatural acts with animals.⁶ These accounts deliberately sought to portray the Mau Mau as savage and bestial, to be rejected and condemned.

As the militants became increasingly influential, events grew more volatile, and violence rose. The situation deteriorated rapidly over the summer of 1952. The assassination of Chief Waruhiu, a government supporter, on 7 October 1952, compelled the governor, Sir Evelyn Baring, to declare an emergency.

Baring's declaration of a state of emergency on 20 October 1952 and the concurrent arrest of nearly two hundred alleged leaders of the Mau Mau triggered a war that lasted nearly four years.⁷ During the first year alone, the British had to bring in five battalions of British troops, six battalions of the King's African Rifles, and several squadrons of R.A.F. light and heavy bombers. These forces supplemented the thousands of members of the Kenya Police, the loyalist Kikuyu Home Guard, and the white settler's Kenya Regiment.⁸

Against these forces ranged the ill-equipped and barely trained Mau Mau. For four years, periodically with striking success, the Mau Mau nevertheless resisted the British. Mau Mau fighters took the war both to the whites of Kenya and to perceived African loyalists. Its ability to resist British efforts to eliminate it led, in turn, to draconian actions and reprisals on the part of the British and white settlers.⁹

Brutality by the British, the white settlers, and the Africans in their employ stiffened African American opposition to colonial rule. African Americans broadly criticized economic, social and political repression in Kenya. They focused their harshest criticism on the land alienation that the Kikuyu suffered at the hands of the white settlers and the British.

In denouncing the criminal charges against nationalist leader Jomo Kenyatta for "inciting disaffection against the Kenya government," the *Baltimore Afro-American* found oppression, exploitation, and being "systematically robbed of their best land," not Kenyatta, to be the forces that had spawned disaffection. The trial of Kenyatta, according to the *Pittsburgh Courier*, "focused the attention of the entire world on the terroristic system which led to the uprisings in Kenya." The *Courier* argued that the British needed to address "the just grievances of the Kikuyu people who number over a million and have been deprived of their fertile lands in favor of the white planters," and who had been subjected to "the worst features of South Africa's apartheid policy."¹⁰

Journalist and author Joel Rogers also used the comparison to South Africa. "Nowhere in Africa, including South Africa, have the whites been so voracious as in Kenya. Grabbing all the best lands of the natives, they made virtual slaves of the latter." And on several occasions,

The Crisis informed its readers that the cause of the Mau Mau rebellion was land alienation stemming from colonial practices.¹¹

As the revolt progressed, African Americans also criticized the British handling of the insurgency itself. African Americans wholly condemned the practice of “collective punishment,” by which the British punished whole villages for allegedly aiding or harboring Mau Mau; the wholesale arrests, deportations, and establishment of “detention” and “rehabilitation” camps for Mau Mau suspects and prisoners; and the British prosecution of Kenyatta as an alleged Mau Mau leader. Indeed, British attacks on Kenyatta actually solidified his standing in black America as a black nationalist hero.¹²

The *New York Amsterdam News*, for example, proclaimed that Kenyatta “upheld the African’s right to determine his own way of life, which is one of the things our Founding Fathers fought for,” and declared that “in our book, Jomo (Burning Spear) Kenyatta is a black patriot and Africa could use more like him.” The *Afro-American* condemned the British for allowing the “ruthless and promiscuous slaughtering of Africans without any evidence of guilt,” and decried the British “collective punishment” policy under which they threw thousands of Africans into jail “in a page straight out of Hitler’s book.” Congressman Adam Clayton Powell called for an end to all United States aid to Kenya because of British “massacres” of Africans.¹³

The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) held a mass meeting in 1953 to protest and condemn the attacks against Africans in Kenya and South Africa. A. Philip Randolph, New York councilman Earl Brown, Powell and others addressed the meeting. The BSCP soon after introduced a resolution at the American Federation of Labor (AFL) convention stating that, whereas “the fires of nationalism are raging and sweeping across the continent of Africa, in the forms of revolts and insurrections against the arrogant and ruthless domination of the white colonial government officials and selfish and greedy white settlers, who, with their guns and bombs, grab the choicest, most desirable and productive land and drive the natives into the worst part of the land known as the Reserves,” the membership condemns imperialistic colonialism in Africa, and supports a trade union mission to Kenya and other parts of Africa “to investigate the terrorism of the settlers and colonial government leaders.” The resolution further directed the president of the AFL to call upon President Eisenhower and Congress to cut off all economic and financial aid and new loans to colonial metropolitan governments who planned to use such aid and loans in their colonies.¹⁴

At the same time, segments of black America felt great reluctance to support Mau Mau actions. As the Mau Mau took up their weapons, the world press took up its pens. African Americans' limited access to the events in Kenya forced them to rely on these press accounts to a great extent. The Mau Mau, with their blood oaths, secrecy, and deadly acts, were caricatured and stereotyped. The white settlers and the British made effective use of language to characterize the Mau Mau, offering to the world images of primitive and bloodthirsty savages bent on rampage and destruction. "It is testimony to the effectiveness of this campaign of criminalization," according to historian Frank Furedi "that the irrational image of Mau Mau still endures."¹⁵

Negative and lurid depictions made their way into the American press, including the African American press. An early *Chicago Defender* story on the Mau Mau wrote of "fanatic Africans" who "continue their bloody campaign to drive the white man out of all of Africa." Later articles called the Mau Mau a "small band of fanatic terrorists" and "cultists." A correspondent for the *Afro-American* wrote that the "fanatic" Mau Mau, who came largely from "the primitive Kikuyu tribe," showed "cold-blooded ruthlessness," and struck "mercilessly, sparing neither women nor children."¹⁶

Both the *Defender* and the *Atlanta Daily World* ran a series of articles called "Turmoil in Africa" by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Malcolm Johnson. Johnson described his trip into "dreaded Mau Mau areas" and to "primitive settlements where native tribesmen still buy their wives and sell their daughters in exchange for cattle." Johnson described the Mau Mau as a "secret native terrorist society sworn to drive out the whites or kill them to achieve black supremacy," and declared that the Mau Mau oath "expresses fanatical hatred of all whites and of the Christian religion."¹⁷

National Negro Publishers Association (NNPA) reports called the Mau Mau "an anti-white cult," while the Associated Negro Press (ANP) referred to "terrorist members of the anti-white Mau Mau cult." The similarity in these depictions suggests that these press agencies merely culled and repackaged wire service reports, but even so, they kept the descriptions, as did the newspapers when they ran the stories.¹⁸

African Americans writing their own pieces also created unflattering images. Bayard Rustin depicted the Mau Mau as combining voodoo with modern political strategy. James Hicks, an *Afro-American* correspondent, found it ironic that "while the world statesmen have been battling for years to avoid an open clash of the white against the black in

more civilized areas of the world, the clash has suddenly come in an area where it was least expected—an uncivilized area of darkest Africa.”¹⁹

Images of savage and primitive Mau Mau “terrorists” and “anti-white cultists” killing fellow Africans made it difficult for many African Americans to support the Mau Mau and its tactics. The use of violence in and of itself gave black Americans pause; violence against other blacks caused even greater doubt. The historian Rayford Logan commented at the time that African Americans “have not approved of the excesses committed by some of the Mau Mau.”²⁰

The use of violence as a means to an end became a central issue for African Americans as they responded to the revolt. Images associated with the Mau Mau, images propagated by the British and white settlers yet absorbed by black Americans, raised concerns among many black Americans about supporting the Mau Mau. At the same time, however, the overarching goal of the Mau Mau—to end white minority rule—appealed to African Americans. Black Americans favored any erosion of white supremacy around the world, but the question arose, at what price.

Much of the prominent liberal civil rights leadership of the day sympathized with and advocated that the just grievances of the Kikuyu be redressed. Yet they would not condone the use of violence. A. Philip Randolph wrote at length to President Eisenhower in support of African liberation. Leading concerns were “the outrages perpetrated upon African natives, especially in South Africa and Kenya” and that the British military forces “immediately cease dropping bombs upon the peoples of the Kikuyu tribe of Kenya.” At the same time, Randolph felt compelled to distance himself from Mau Mau violence, noting that “the leaders of the African natives must be prevailed upon to see that violence and bloodshed cannot constitute a solution of their social, economic, and political problems.”²¹

Following its initial 1953 resolution, the BSCP would modify its position to make clearer its dissociation from Mau Mau tactics. While declaring that “it views with great horror and righteous indignation the ruthless, disgraceful and murderous bombing of the Mau Maus” in the British effort to subjugate Africans “who are in revolt against the un-democratic and un-Christian expropriation of their choice land by white settlers,” the BSCP also pointed out that it did not approve of the policy of violence as an instrument of liberation on the part of native Africans in Kenya.²²

Other leaders and organizations more sharply distanced themselves

from Mau Mau actions. Lester Granger, head of the National Urban League, criticized Mau Mau violence as “an unforgivable orgy of bloody killings,” and stated his preference for boycotts and civil disobedience. Walter White, secretary of the NAACP, characterized Mau Mauism as a “ghastly evil.”²³

The 1953 NAACP Annual Convention passed a resolution on Kenya which stated, “We condemn the terrorist methods used against the Mau Mau and others who fight to abolish colonialism and racism.” At the same time, it affirmed that “We view with alarm the terrorist methods of the Mau Mau in Kenya.” Calling upon the United States delegation to the United Nations to initiate a thorough and unbiased study of the struggle for equality in Africa and for the United Nations to formulate a program of action that would be vigorously and speedily implemented, the resolution warned that “the grim alternative to such action is either terrorism or surrender in despair to communism—either of which would be disastrous.”²⁴

The NAACP leadership did champion the cause of a Kenyan student, Mugo Gatheru, studying at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. The Gatheru case is illustrative of what would become a frequent response by the liberal civil rights leadership to the situation in Kenya. Faced with Mau Mau violence against whites as well as blacks who allegedly “collaborated” with the white government, the American civil rights leadership sought alternative avenues to espouse in Kenya. Support for higher education opportunities, to develop a broader African leadership class, was one choice; backing of labor leaders such as Tom Mboya would be another. Through such mechanisms, the African American civil rights leadership demonstrated their interest in and commitment to Kenyans without allying themselves with Mau Mau.

Lincoln University had a long history of educating African students, with illustrious graduates including Kwame Nkrumah and Nnamdi Azikiwe. On 23 September 1952, an immigration official came to the campus to interrogate Mugo Gatheru for more than two hours. On 5 November Gatheru received official orders to leave the country within thirty days or face arrest and deportation. At the time, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) provided no reason for this action; Gatheru and his supporters believed it was because of pressure from British officials. When Gatheru fought the deportation, the INS claimed that Gatheru had fraudulently obtained a visa in London by declaring that he never had been denied one previously.

Gatheru argued that he never had been denied a visa, but rather had

been denied a "certificate of good conduct" needed in order to obtain a visa in Kenya. Although he did not know for certain, Gatheru believed this certificate was denied because he had written letters to Kenyan papers advocating rights for Africans and because he had been assistant editor for the Kenya African Union paper. After being denied the certificate, he had then traveled to India, and from there to London, where he applied for and received the now-questioned visa. Since April 1950 he had lived and studied in America.²⁵

After Gatheru received the deportation order, a committee formed to help him fight it. Leading members included Horace Mann Bond, the president of Lincoln University, and St. Clair Drake, then a professor at Roosevelt University. The Philadelphia Branch of the NAACP received approval from the Board of Directors to participate in efforts to prevent the deportation. Lawyers filed for an injunction restraining the INS from deporting Gatheru. With the case in the courts, in February 1953 the Justice Department rescinded its deportation order, allowing Gatheru to stay until his visa expired on 30 April 1953.²⁶

A background report on the case for the NAACP concluded that Gatheru had denounced the activities of the Mau Mau and had no hint of communist affiliation. His sole motivating desire seemed to be receiving an education. Gatheru thus appeared safe for association by the NAACP. NAACP Youth Secretary Herbert Wright traveled to Pennsylvania to meet with Gatheru; the NAACP then asked the Gatheru defense committee for permission for the NAACP Youth Division to take over his defense. Horace Mann Bond declined on the grounds that prior commitments had been made. Still, the NAACP remained involved. Wright solicited all youth councils, college chapters and affiliated organizations to send funds to aid Gatheru's defense. He also wrote the INS in an effort to gain permission for Gatheru's visa to be extended long enough for him to complete his education.²⁷

Efforts by the Gatheru defense committee and the NAACP enabled Gatheru to receive permission to stay in the United States until the end of July 1954, allowing him to complete his studies at Lincoln. When Gatheru then wanted to continue his studies and arranged to enroll in graduate school at New York University, the NAACP maintained its support for his case. White wrote to the INS on behalf of Gatheru and also discussed the issue with Attorney General Herbert Brownell.²⁸

In agreeing to take these actions, White also revealed the pervasive impact of the era's anti-communism. He believed the Gatheru case to be one on which the NAACP could "move with assurance in view of the

number of first-rate non-Communist people like St. Clair Drake and Horace Mann Bond who vouch for him.”²⁹ In the anti-communist hysteria of the early 1950s, the conflation of racial reform and subversion made many African American civil rights leaders feel more vulnerable and cautious. This attitude certainly held true in regards to United States foreign policy, as Cold War pressures helped move the NAACP and others to support to a broad extent the Truman, and then Eisenhower, foreign policy agenda.³⁰

American officials’ overarching worldwide objective in the early 1950s was to prevent any communist gains. Policy makers did not differentiate Africa from the rest of the world in this. Africans, however, had much different objectives, the most important of which was removing colonial rule. The question for Washington became how to incorporate African aspirations for independence into their own efforts at maintaining the strongest possible worldwide front against communist advances. Some officials argued that a rapid end of white rule would lead to weak, unstable indigenous governments which would be susceptible to Soviet or Chinese control. These officials accordingly advocated a very gradual transition to majority rule. Others, however, argued that continued white supremacy would drive Africans to communism as their only means for liberation. In this view, long-term United States interests lay in strongly supporting majority rule. The tension between these approaches, along with balancing traditional American ideals of freedom and equality with anti-communist and security concerns, channeled Washington onto what has been termed a “middle path” in its African policy during the late 1940s and early 1950s.³¹

In practice, though, officials generally supported continued white rule in Africa as necessary to maintain the strength of Western European allies and to enable these allies to guard against communist gains. Brenda Gayle Plummer, in her recent work on black Americans and United States foreign affairs, notes that “the State Department during the Truman and first Eisenhower administrations maintained a Cold War hard line that placed it in the colonialist camp.” Further, in specific regards to Kenya, Washington “accepted Britain’s interpretation and actions on the Mau Mau rebellion.”³²

The Gatheru case held the potential to be broadly symbolic in an effort to reshape the conduct of United States policy toward Africa. The deportation efforts could have helped expose the tight relationship of American officials with European colonial powers and highlighted how that relationship, and colonialism, undermined American ideals of ac-

cess to education and equality and freedom.³³ The Gatheru case, however, never reached that level. Much of the reason rests with United States officials wanting no damaging exposure of their essentially pro-colonialism policies. But further, while the black American civil rights leadership wanted colonialism brought to an end, they did not boldly assert their position and challenge United States officials' priorities. Certainly, neither the Gatheru case nor the Mau Mau rebellion resulted in a widespread or intense effort to influence American policy toward Africa.

The concern over the use of violence combined with other factors to mute black American responses to the Mau Mau crisis. African Americans faced Cold War pressures to support United States policy, even if that policy tended to favor colonial powers over African freedom. They also feared being tied to stereotyped images of bloodthirsty African savages. And for many black Americans, Africans and events on the continent remained remote and unimportant. Universalist thinking and an emphasis on the domestic struggle meant emphasizing one's Americanness, not one's Africanness, when seeking equality in the United States, especially given the negative stereotyped images of Africa to be found in the United States.³⁴

The *Amsterdam News* offers an illustrative case. A reader, signing off as "A Black Harlemit," criticized the paper for supporting a war fund to help Koreans while it altogether ignored Kenyans. Acknowledging that this letter conveyed the sentiments of other letters received by the paper, the *Amsterdam News* responded by defining its position on Kenya in an editorial. The paper pointed out that not all of the people in Kenya were black, and that innocent black and white men, women, and children were being butchered by Mau Mau and British armies alike. The paper recognized the plight of Mau Mau supporters, who had been stripped of the choicest land and left in a state of economic slavery, but it also sympathized with the white settlers' argument that they had developed the land. The paper ultimately declared its support for a speedy end to colonialism, but excused itself from doing much because "we don't kid ourselves into thinking that we can shout loudly enough in Harlem to change these conditions overnight." Moreover, the paper emphasized that although it felt deep concern about human misery everywhere, "we are more concerned about the immediate problems that meet us at every turn right here in New York City. . . . It's difficult to become carried away with citizenship problems that exist 7,000 miles away until those at home have been solved."³⁵

The *Amsterdam News*' emphasis on the domestic struggle reflected the fact that for most black Americans, Africa remained remote. Further, its concern for the position of whites as well as blacks in Kenya displayed a universalist and integrationist outlook, and protected it from any uncritical support for and association with Mau Mau actions. Interest in Africa was growing at this time, and soon would be booming; still, on the whole, most black Americans remained focused on the domestic struggle for full citizenship.

Yet, the "Black Harlemit" and the other readers who wrote to the *Amsterdam News* reflected a more pan-African perspective in black America. They showed clearly that parts of the black community adopted a more militant and nationalist position than did its leadership. They perceived the established African American civil rights leadership as too cautious and too supportive of United States Cold War foreign policy, and advocated stronger ties to Africa and support for Africans. Their pan-African voices, often left submerged at this time, spoke for a more militant vein, which would grow in subsequent years.

Supportive of the Mau Mau, these African Americans emphasized the culpability of colonial rule, the justice of redressing wrongs, and the worthy objectives of the cause. They believed that oppressive colonial government actions had left the Kikuyu with little recourse, and lauded Mau Mau actions. "Seldom have determined men so poorly armed—and apparently so loosely organized—accomplished so much by violence in so short a period," declared George McCray, a labor organizer for the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. McCray described the Mau Mau revolt as "one of the most cleverly devised rebellions of the twentieth century."³⁶

Readers sent letters to African American papers urging that aid be sent to help Kenyans. B.D. Davis wrote the *Afro-American* to urge African Americans to start "organizing aid to the Kenya Africans. Their cause is a beginning which can be more effective toward winning independence than the Gold Coast, Nigeria, or any other African area." Lambert Browne went a step further and wrote the *Defender* asking it to start a "Native Relief Fund" to help those in Kenya and South Africa, and contributed five dollars to launch the fund.³⁷

Some who tried to aid the Kenyans were leftist African Americans. The Council on African Affairs (CAA) had been established in the late 1930s, in large part to support African liberation and to build a stronger relationship between African Americans and Africa. Now headed by Paul Robeson, Alphaeus Hunton, and W.E.B. Du Bois, it was in the

midst of a debilitating battle with the federal government over whether or not it had communist ties.³⁸ Despite suffering from Cold War persecution, the CAA tried to rally support. On 24 April 1954 it sponsored a Conference in Support of African Liberation at the Friendship Baptist Church in New York City. Just over one hundred delegates and observers attended the day-long event. The meeting clearly linked African Americans, Africans and their struggles:

The time has come when we in America must speak out and give support to our brothers who struggle for freedom in Africa. . . . Africa is our concern because our own security, our own democratic rights and the prospect of our preventing the use of American means and men in shedding the blood of Africans, depend on what happens in Africa today and tomorrow. . . .

Black Americans, struggling to wipe out the humiliation and degradation of second-class citizenship, know that racist doctrines of white supremacy are grounded in the lies which continue to be taught and disseminated concerning the "backwardness" of the African people. The Africans' advance to freedom means a death-blow to the myth of African inferiority and a tremendous impetus to the advance of black Americans toward the achievement of their full rights.³⁹

Du Bois gave the conference's keynote address, in which he urged more support for African liberation struggles. In seeking to aid African struggles, the conference largely focused on the continuing Mau Mau revolt in Kenya. The conference adopted resolutions that voiced "its strongest protest against the crimes committed by the British in Kenya," and called on the United Nations to take action to protect the people of Kenya against genocide. In addition, the delegates formed an organizing committee to conduct a campaign of direct assistance to "the heroic peoples" of Kenya. It established a goal of raising \$5,000 by the end of August to send to the freedom fighters in Kenya, along with quantities of dried milk, vitamin pills, and first aid supplies.⁴⁰ But by the 1950s, the CAA's leftist ties and persecution by the government had weakened its ability to generate support on African issues, and little aid actually reached the Kenyans.⁴¹

To Mau Mau supporters in black America, Mau Mau actions were necessary and proper. The author and sociologist Horace Cayton, in exploring the Mau Mau uprising, contended that people critical of the Mau Mau should reserve judgment on the effectiveness of the Mau Mau program of terror as a political weapon. Cayton then described the Mau

Mau killing of an African nominated for the Nairobi City Council as the execution of a spy working to aid white exploiters, and stated that while he did not believe in violence, "one must admit that Mbgetla [Tom Mbotela] had it coming."⁴² The acceptance that the Mau Mau had the right to use violent means to fight white supremacy and oppression in Kenya held the potential to grow into an acceptance that ultimately violence could be necessary in the face of white intransigence in the United States.

Further, many African Americans had a sophisticated enough understanding of the Mau Mau to pick up the issue of the Mau Mau using violence against the Kikuyu elders and elites. Wrapped in the Mau Mau goal of ending white supremacy was the issue of who would have power and leadership within the Kikuyu society. For African Americans, this became transmitted to who would lead the civil rights struggle, the shape the struggle would take, and what attendant changes within black America might result.

The African American civil rights leadership found themselves under attack for their lack of action in regards to Kenya. For instance, after a meeting at Harlem's Hotel Theresa at which black labor leaders A. Philip Randolph and Frank Crosswaith led a protest against the treatment of Soviet Jews, letters to the African American press questioned the priority of these men. "Have these men done as much for the Africans of Kenya and South Africa even though they are members of that race?" queried William Clarke of New York City. "One must question the mentality of men who ignore the suffering of their own people to rush to the assistance of others."⁴³

Rev. Ivan Harrison of Sneads, Florida, wrote to the *Afro-American* that the South needed a strong Mau Mau society to deal with "Uncle Toms." A self-described "Constant Reader" of the *Amsterdam News* wrote that African Americans needed a Mau Mau in order to get rid of all the crooked African American leaders and politicians.⁴⁴

The words of Ivan Harrison, William Clarke, and other similar writers could not have settled lightly on the African American leadership. These writers reflected a more militant, pan-African perspective in black America, and show clearly that parts of the black community adopted a more militant and nationalist position than did its leadership. They bring to the fore the growing debate within black America over the traditional leadership, and the disgruntlement many in the community felt with it.

IN THE AFTERMATH OF MAU MAU

The recent history of the African American relationship with Africa before the Mau Mau insurgency had seen limits on African American connections to African struggles. "The wartime experiences of most Afro-Americans sharpened their anticolonial sensibilities but at the same time brought them in greater direct contact with Asians and Europeans than with Africans," writes Brenda Gayle Plummer. "Under the circumstances, the Afro-American mainstream in the late 1940s retained its anticolonialism but perceived black nationalist emphases on repatriation and African identity as eccentric, cultic, utopian, and old-fashioned."⁴⁵ African Americans had maintained a broad anticolonialism, yet one that was not tied to black nationalism and Africa.

In his address to the CAA conference on African liberation in April 1954, W.E.B. Du Bois worried about the state of the African American relationship with Africa. He warned that the fight to restore and maintain colonialism had shifted from Asia to Africa, where, according to Du Bois, Europe and the United States had organized a determined last stand to perpetuate the color line in the world. He lamented the lack of support African Americans provided Africa, and felt the reason for this to be clear:

Africa and its problems have never been popular in America. On the contrary, America for the most part has conceived her best interest lays in actions and policies which involved disaster and repression for Africa and her children. Consequently we American Negroes whose frantic endeavor has long been to be Americans in every right, thought, and action, have usually hastened to follow every wind of American opinion with regard to Africa.

He urged African Americans to be interested in the African situation, "for if colonial serfdom is maintained in Africa, the color line will not disappear in Afro-America."⁴⁶

Yet, while Du Bois lamented the state of the African American relationship with Africa, he underplayed the impact that African struggles were having throughout black America and the fundamental shift that was taking place. In the mid-1950s, as African Americans heard and saw more about African liberation struggles, they increasingly oriented themselves toward Africa. The confluence of the Mau Mau rebellion, the South African Defiance Campaign, and the rise to power of Kwame

Nkrumah in Ghana, caused African Americans to see the entire continent as "afame" in revolt against white supremacy.

People opened their papers and read front page headlines such as "Africa Teeters Near Brink of Revolution; Violence Continuing," and "Racial Fires Flare as Africans Stiffen," and newspapers ran series on insurgent Africa. In its editorial "Africa Awakes," *The Crisis* wrote that behind the headlines about the Defiance Campaign and the Mau Mau lay the story of an awakening Africa. Political and economic conditions had caused the Africans to rebel, and *The Crisis* concluded that African hostility in these countries was a time bomb which would eventually blast Europeans out of Africa.⁴⁷

The Mau Mau heightened African Americans' awareness of the situation for blacks in Kenya, and that country became an area of special interest. Even though by the end of 1954 the war had turned desperately bad for the Mau Mau, and by 1956 the fight had been reduced to mopping up operations, the impact of Mau Mau continued to resonate through both Kenya and black America.

While the Mau Mau did not "win" the military war, broader black America saw the Mau Mau as forcing change. African Americans lauded the Mau Mau for halting the immigration of more "land-grabbing" white settlers, for forcing the British to discuss the future of Kenya with Africans, for making the British bring Africans into the Kenyan government, for changing the perception of Africans as passive and docile, for helping inspire other uprisings, and for upholding the right of Africans to determine their own way of life. The Mau Mau helped foster the belief that colonialism stood on shaky ground and that Africa might soon overthrow political discrimination, economic injustice, social deprivation and white racism.⁴⁸

The importance of Mau Mau would continue even after its defeat on the battlefield, but its influence would be different for various parts of black America. The liberal civil rights leadership, faced with attacks within black America, found that they needed to take a stronger stand on African issues in general, and Kenya in particular. In doing so, they sought agreeable alternatives to support, specifically those that eschewed violence and attacks on established black leaders. On the other hand, a more militant, nationalist African America found inspiration for shaping and conducting the black struggle.

The liberal civil rights leadership's growing interest in Kenya became concretely manifested in one form through support for Kenyan leaders

not linked to Mau Mau, such as Tom Mboya. Mboya, not incidentally, also found backers in the United States government. He had risen steadily to prominence in Kenya, first becoming active in labor organizing during the early 1950s, and then moving into politics by becoming the director of information and then the treasurer of the Kenya African Union (KAU) after the mass arrests of the KAU leadership at the start of the state of emergency. When the KAU was banned shortly thereafter, Mboya continued his upward movement by becoming the general secretary of the Kenya Federation of Registered Trade Unions (KFRTU) in October 1953, from which he continued as a labor and nationalist leader.

The American Committee on Africa (ACOA), a liberal organization that advocated an independent Africa, sponsored a speaking tour for Mboya in the Fall of 1956. On this tour Mboya promoted, among other things, trade union support for Kenyan labor and educational opportunities in the United States for Kenyan students. Mboya met with George Meany, Walter Reuther, David Dubinsky, and A. Philip Randolph, among others. These meetings led to Mboya's striking success of securing an AFL-CIO grant for \$35,000 toward the building of a trade union center in Kenya. He also laid the groundwork for procuring donations toward scholarships and travel expenses for Kenyan students wanting to study in the United States. Mboya's first trip to the United States started donations trickling in; his second trip in the spring of 1959 opened the spigot and support flowed from whites and blacks.⁴⁹

While the civil rights leadership may not have felt comfortable backing the Mau Mau, there were few such reservations over supporting Kenyan educational opportunities, and the African American elite increasingly promoted and funded African education. Embarking on this burgeoning path of contacts, in 1959 Harry Belafonte, Sydney Poitier and Jackie Robinson appealed for contributions to aid Kenyan students trying to reach the United States to study. They noted that a visit by the "brilliant African leader" Mboya had dramatized the urgent need for higher education for promising young Africans, for whom opportunities were virtually non-existent in their own lands. In response to Mboya's appeals for aid for Kenyan students, more than forty American colleges had granted scholarships to eighty-one men and women. The letter from Belafonte, Poitier, and Robinson, sent under the auspices of the African-American Students Foundation, appealed for funds to help cover the travel expenses and educational costs of these and additional students.⁵⁰ Other African Americans helped sponsor individual African students.

Lester Granger, head of the Urban League, helped support two Kenyan brothers. P.L. Prattis, editor of the *Courier* helped secure a scholarship for a Kenyan to attend the University of Pittsburgh.⁵¹

Martin Luther King maintained an extensive correspondence with both Mboya and Dr. Julius Gikonyo Kiano, an economist, professor and later government minister, about sponsoring students from Kenya. When Kiano and Mboya visited the United States in 1959, Kiano met with King in Montgomery. In June 1959, Mboya informed King that Tuskegee had accepted a Kenyan student named Nicholas Rabala. Rabala had secured funds for travel, but could not raise the balance of nearly \$1,000 for his costs at the school. King responded that he would be happy to provide some money, and wrote William Scheinman, president of the African-American Students Foundation, that he would financially assist Rabala for up to \$1,000. Half of the money was to come from the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, and half from the SCLC.

King also wrote to Kiano that he had made definite arrangements to provide twenty dollars a month for two Kenyan students' expenses, and that he was talking to other ministers to assess what commitments they could offer. Three months later King wrote Kiano with the good news that support had been secured for five Kenyan students to study at Alabama State College. The Montgomery Improvement Association would provide for two students, the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church and Ralph Abernathy's First Baptist Church for one each, and a local club for one more. King believed that contracts to support three more students could be made with other local groups.⁵²

The frequent requests from Africans for educational assistance that crossed King's desk caused enormous frustration over the fact that he could not give more. King's response to one petitioner reveals some of his motivations for providing what he could. "I am deeply sympathetic to what is happening in Central Africa and indeed all over Africa," King wrote. "I have had a long interest in the problems of Africa and consider them a part of our problems because we in a real sense are a part of the world-wide struggle for freedom and human dignity."⁵³

Growing interest in Africa certainly helped fuel the support for Kenyan education. So did the desire to develop alternatives to Mau Mau and all it implied. Accordingly, the civil rights community supported Tom Mboya, promoted the development of an American-educated Kenyan leadership class, and backed Thurgood Marshall's participation in the Kenyan constitutional talks in the early 1960s.⁵⁴

For a more militant black America, the Mau Mau seemed not the

expression of a path to avoid, but instead provided an example and a symbol to tap in one's own efforts. They lauded the Mau Mau for pushing for dramatic, wholesale change, and for standing up to traditional Kikuyu leadership and elites. The Mau Mau provided a sounding board that helped sharpen the mass versus elite tensions in black America. What made the Mau Mau abhorrent and dangerous to the African American civil rights leadership is exactly what appealed to a more militant swath of black America. The Mau Mau rebellion embedded itself in the consciousness of black America and became a potent symbol of black resistance—against both white supremacy and the established civil rights leadership.

The Mau Mau insurgency presented an analogy that would become a stronger beacon for socially and politically militant African Americans in years to come. The meaning and symbolism of Mau Mau, both in terms of being more militant as well as being willing to overturn the traditional black leadership, would be echoed in following years by people such as Malcolm X. "When the nations of Africa are truly independent—and they will be truly independent because they are going about it the right way—the historians will give Prime Minister, or rather, President Kenyatta and the Mau Mau their rightful role in African history," proclaimed Malcolm X at a Harlem rally in late December 1964. "They'll go down as the greatest African patriots and freedom fighters that that continent ever knew, and they will be given credit for bringing about the independence of many of the existing independent states on that continent right now."

Malcolm X understood and used the layered meanings of Mau Mau for African Americans. He linked the Mau Mau to his audience, exhorting them to realize that "you and I can best learn how to get real freedom by studying how Kenyatta brought it to his people in Kenya. . . . In fact, that's what we need in Mississippi. In Mississippi we need a Mau Mau. In Alabama we need a Mau Mau. In Georgia we need a Mau Mau. Right here in Harlem, in New York City, we need a Mau Mau."⁵⁵

NOTES

While I owe debts to numerous people, I would like to single out and thank in particular Robert Hill for his helpful suggestions and comments.

1. Joel Rogers, "Rogers Says," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 9 May 1953, p. 7.
2. John Lonsdale, "Mau Maus of the Mind: Making Mau Mau and Remaking Kenya," *Journal of African History*, 31 (1990): 398. Bruce Berman cites slightly

different figures: 1,920 "loyal" Africans killed, of which 1,819 were civilians; 95 Europeans killed, of which 35 were civilians. Bruce Berman, *Control & Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination* (London, 1990), p. 352.

3. Robert B. Edgerton, *Mau Mau: An African Crucible* (New York, 1989), pp. 1–41; Wunyabari O. Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya: An Analysis of a Peasant Revolt* (Bloomington, Ind., 1993), pp. 24–29; David Throup, *Economic and Social Origins of Mau Mau 1945–1953* (London, 1987), pp. 4–9.

4. Throup, *Economic and Social Origins*, pp. 4–9; Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya*, pp. 27–44.

5. Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya*, pp. 40–59; Throup, *Economic & Social Origins of Mau Mau*, pp. 3–11; Bethwell A. Ogot and Tiyaamba Zeleza, "Kenya: The Road to Independence and After," in *Decolonization and African Independence: The Transfer of Power, 1960–1980*, ed. Prosser Gifford and William Roger Louis (New Haven, 1988), p. 404. The Mau Mau left no written manifesto or list of objectives, and knowledge about the movement remains murky. Indeed, even the origin, meaning, and use of the name "Mau Mau" generates mystery and debate. There also is disagreement over its exact nature—whether it was atavistic or progressive, tribalist or nationalist, successful or not. However, an analysis of the specific origins and characteristics of Mau Mau are not of concern here as much as the context within which contemporary African Americans viewed the Mau Mau.

For more on the Mau Mau, see Lonsdale, "Mau Maus of the Mind," pp. 393–421; Berman, *Control & Crisis in Colonial Africa*; Edgerton, *Mau Mau*; Frank Furedi, *The Mau Mau War in Perspective* (London, 1989); Rob Buijtenhuijs, *Essays on Mau Mau: Contributions to Mau Mau Historiography* (Leiden, 1982).

6. Lonsdale, "Mau Maus of the Mind," p. 399. Some estimates claim that as many as 90 percent of the Kikuyu took a version of the oath. Edgerton, *Mau Mau*, pp. 49–61.

7. The British believed Jomo Kenyatta to be the principle head of the Mau Mau, although far more militant men than Kenyatta were the driving force. But because Kenyatta was the most public figure in regards to Kenyan nationalism, the British assumed that he led the Mau Mau. Edgerton, *Mau Mau*, pp. 41–68; Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya*, pp. 70–77; Throup, *Economic & Social Origins of Mau Mau*, pp. 11–12.

8. Edgerton, *Mau Mau*, pp. 67–68 and 85–87.

9. Lonsdale cites the following casualty figures: 12,590 Mau Mau (or Africans so described) killed in action or by hanging; 164 troops or police killed, most of them African; 1,880 civilians killed by Mau Mau, all but 58 of them black. Lonsdale, "Mau Maus of the Mind," p. 398. For more on British and Mau Mau actions during the war, see Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya*, pp. 81–133.

10. "The Truth about Kenya," Editorial, *Baltimore Afro-American*, 20 Dec. 1952, p. 4; "Kenyatta Sentence Reversed," Editorial, *Pittsburgh Courier*, 25 July 1953, p. 6; "Tougher Policy in Kenya," Editorial, *Pittsburgh Courier*, 20 June 1953, p. 6. See also "New Hope for Kenya," Editorial, *Chicago Defender*, 16 May 1953, p. 11.

11. Joel Rogers, "Rogers Says," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 8 Nov. 1952, p. 7; "Looking & Listening," *The Crisis*, December 1952, p. 651, and February 1953, p. 106; George Shepherd, "Mau Mau and Agricultural Development," *The Crisis*, January 1954, pp. 13–18; George Padmore, "British Parliamentary Delegation Reports on Kenya," *The Crisis*, May 1954, pp. 273ff.

12. Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya*, pp. 91–97; Edgerton, *Mau Mau*, pp. 142–201.

13. "Red Puppet or Black Patriot?" Editorial, *New York Amsterdam News*, 11 July 1953, p. 14; "The Mau Mau Grows," Editorial, *Baltimore Afro-American*, 18

April 1953, p. 4; "The Truth about Kenya," Editorial, *Baltimore Afro-American*, 20 December 1952, p. 4. See also "New Hope for Kenya," Editorial, *Chicago Defender*, 16 May 1953, p. 11; "Two Reports on Mau Mau," Editorial, *New York Amsterdam News*, 7 May 1955, p. 16.

14. "Mass Meeting to Protest Africa Racism," *New York Amsterdam News*, 27 June 1953, p. 1; Resolution Submitted by BSCP Delegates to the AFL Convention, September 1953, Records of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (hereafter BSCP Records), Box 123, Folder "Resolutions 1940-1953," Library of Congress.

15. Furedi, *Mau Mau War in Perspective*, p. 4.

16. "Africans in Bloody Revolt against Whites," *Chicago Defender*, 1 November 1952, p. 2; "Peace can Come Now to Africa with More Reason," *Chicago Defender*, 20 December 1952, p. 3; "British Send Brigade to Fight Mau Mau," and "Experts See Climax of Cult Terror," *Chicago Defender*, 11 April 1953, pp. 2 and 6; "Fear Grips African Colony in Wake of Mau Mau Group's Mass Murders," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 18 October 1952, p. 5.

17. Concern over the imagery in Johnson's depictions did prompt the *Defender* to write an editorial encouraging its readers to read the series in order to examine issues from different perspectives, but warned that Johnson's reliance on what whites in Africa told him had caused him to make unspecified mistakes. Malcolm Johnson, "Turmoil in Africa," *Chicago Defender*, 17 January 1953, p. 1, and 24 January 1953, p. 15, and following weeks; "Turmoil in Africa," Editorial, *Chicago Defender*, 24 January 1953, p. 10. *The Atlanta Daily World* ran the series starting 5 February 1953.

18. "British Arrest More Africans," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 22 November 1952, p. 22; "Police in Kenya Seize 300 More Natives in Purge," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 20 December 1952, p. 3.

19. "All Africa is Aflame," *Baltimore Afro-American*, *Afro Magazine*, 22 November 1952, p. 5; "Hottest Spot in the World," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 20 December 1952, p. 9.

20. Rayford Logan, "The American Negro's View of Africa," in *Africa Seen by American Negroes*, ed. John A. Davis (Paris, 1958), p. 225.

21. International President, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (Randolph) to President Eisenhower, 17 June 1953, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington, D.C., 1983) 1952-54, 11: 43-46.

22. Resolution Submitted by the BSCP Delegates to the AFL Convention, December 1955, BSCP Records, Box 124, Folder "Resolutions 1954-56."

23. Lester Granger, "Manhattan and Beyond," *New York Amsterdam News*, 16 April 1955, p. 16, and 28 May 1955, p. 18; Walter White, "A Major Report on Africa Today," *New York Herald Tribune Book Review*, 26 September 1954, sect. 6, pp. 1ff. Two of the leading papers of the day, the *Amsterdam News* and the *Defender*, both voiced their disagreement with using violence to bring about social change. "Let's Look at Africa," Editorial, *Chicago Defender*, 29 November 1952, p. 10; "Red Puppet or Black Patriot?" Editorial, *New York Amsterdam News*, 11 July 1953, p. 14.

24. Resolutions, NAACP Papers, Supplement to Part 1: Meetings of the Board of Directors, Records of Annual Conferences, Major Speeches, and Special Reports, 1951-55, reel 8, frame 233; reel 12, frames 239-40.

25. Martin Kilson, "Mugo-Son-of-Gatheru," *The Crisis*, April 1953, p. 140, Background Report "The Case of Mugo Gatheru," 2 December 1962, NAACP Papers, (microfilm edition) part 14, reel 2, frames 861; R. Mugo Gatheru, *Child of Two Worlds* (London, 1964), pp. 172-80.

26. "Kenya's Whites Seeking Return of Lincoln University Student," *Pittsburgh*

Courier, 15 November 1952, p. 1; Board of Directors Minutes, 8 December 1952, NAACP Papers, part 14, reel 2, frame 857; "Sue to Prevent Ouster of Mugo," *Chicago Defender*, 6 December 1952, p. 1, "Rap Gatheru Ouster Order," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 28 February 1953, p. 9; Gatheru, *Child of Two Worlds*, pp. 180–81.

27. Background Report "The Case of Mugo Gatheru," 2 December 1952, NAACP Papers, part 14, reel 2, frame 861; Herbert L. Wright to Gloster Current, 29 December 1952, frame 862; Wright to NAACP Youth Councils, College Chapters, and Affiliated Organizations, n.d., frames 863–68; Wright to Walter White, 13 January 1953, frames 872–73; Horace Mann Bond to Wright, 23 January 1953, frame 880; Wright to Bond, 27 January 1953, frame 879; Wright to U.S. Immigration and Naturalization, 17 February 1953, frame 895.

28. St. Clair Drake to Walter White, 2 July 1954, NAACP Papers, part 14, reel 2, frames 928–32; White to Drake, 23 July 1954, frame 927; White to Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, 23 July 1954, frames 934–35; Gatheru, *Child of Two Worlds*, pp. 181–84.

29. Walter White to Clarence Mitchell, 23 July 1954, NAACP Papers, part 14, reel 2, frame 926.

30. See Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1996), esp. ch. 5 and 6. On efforts by U.S. officials to suppress African-American leftist internationalism during this period, see Penny Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1997).

31. Historians Thomas Noer and Thomas Borstelmann have traced the evolution of some of these efforts by U.S. officials, particularly toward South Africa. See Noer, "Truman, Eisenhower, and South Africa: The 'Middle Road' and Apartheid," *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 11, 1 (Spring 1983): 75–104; Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation: The United States and White Rule in Africa, 1948–1968* (Columbia, Mo. 1985), pp. 1–60; Borstelmann, *Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle: The United States and Southern Africa in the Early Cold War* (Oxford, 1993), esp. pp. 139–44, 177–79.

32. Plummer, *Rising Wind*, p. 255.

33. There is a limited, although expanding, literature on both the role of race in international relations and the connections between domestic race politics and U.S. foreign relations. See Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven, 1977); Paul G. Lauren, *Power and Prejudice: The Politics and Diplomacy of Racial Discrimination* (Boulder, Colo., 1988); Alexander DeConde, *Ethnicity, Race, and American Foreign Policy: A History* (Boston, 1992); Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1963* (Albany, N.Y., 1986); Thomas Borstelmann, *Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle: The United States and Southern Africa in the Early Cold War* (Oxford, 1993); Mary Dudziak, "Josephine Baker, Racial Protest, and the Cold War," *Journal of American History*, 81, 2 (September 1994): 543–70; Plummer, *Rising Wind*; Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*.

34. For more on the racist images of Africa, see Michael McCarthy, *Dark Continent: Africa as Seen by Americans* (Westport, Conn., 1983); Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture* (New Haven, 1992); Dennis Hickey and Kenneth C. Wylie, *An Enchanting Darkness: The American Vision of Africa in the Twentieth Century* (East Lansing, Mich., 1993).

A number of persons over the years have argued that the overwhelming nature of the primitive images of Africa caused many black Americans to react negatively to the continent. See, for example, McCarthy, *Dark Continent*, pp. 146–47; George

Houser, "Freedom's Struggles Crosses Oceans and Mountains: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Liberation Struggles in Africa and America," in *We Shall Overcome: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Black Freedom Struggle*, ed. Peter Albert and Ronald Hoffman (New York, 1990), p. 171; George Shepherd, *Racial Influences in American Foreign Policy* (New York, 1970), p. 169; Rupert Emerson, *Africa and United States Policy* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967), p. 53; Rupert Emerson and Martin Kilson, "The American Dilemma in a Changing World: The Rise of Africa and the Negro American," *Daedalus*, 94 (Fall 1965): 1061; James Farmer, "An American Leader's View of African Unity," *African Forum* 1, 1 (Summer 1965): 71.

35. A Black Harlemitte to the Editor, *New York Amsterdam News*, 15 May 1954, p. 16; "What Can We do about Kenya?" Editorial, *New York Amsterdam News*, 15 May 1954, p. 16.

36. "Late UNIA Leader the Patron Saint of Restless Africa," *Chicago Defender*, 6 June 1953, p. 1.

37. B.D. Davis to the Editor, *Baltimore Afro-American*, 27 March 1954, p. 4; Lambert Browne to the Editor, *Chicago Defender*, 10 January 1953, p. 6.

38. For more on the CAA in general, see: Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*; Hollis Lynch, *Black American Radicals and the Liberation of Africa: The Council on African Affairs, 1937-1955* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1978); Hollis Lynch, "Pan-African Responses in the United States to British Colonial Rule in Africa in the 1940s," in *The Transfer of Power in Africa: Decolonization, 1940-1960*, ed. Prosser Gifford and William Roger Louis (New Haven, 1982). On the CAA and Kenya, see Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, pp. 133-41, and Gerald Horne, *Black & Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944-1963* (Albany, N.Y., 1986), pp. 189-90.

39. "A Call from the Heroic People of Africa to Negro and White Americans," 24 April 1954, Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois (hereafter Du Bois Papers) (Sanford, N.C., 1980) (microfilm), reel 70, frames 536-38.

40. W.E.B. Du Bois, "Africa and Afro-America," Du Bois Papers, reel 81, frame 840. Alphaeus Hunton to W.E.B. Du Bois, 1 April 1954, Du Bois Papers, reel 70, frame 532; "A Call from the Heroic People of Africa to Negro and White Americans," 24 April 1954, frames 536-38; "Declaration in Support of African Liberation," 24 April 1954, NAACP Papers, part 14, reel 11, frame 392; "Proposals for a Kenya Aid Program," 24 April 1954, frame 391.

41. In a measure of the strength of the leftists' appeal, by early September the Kenya Aid Committee had been able to collect and forward only \$500. "For the Defense of Kenya's Heroes," *Spotlight on Africa*, 15 September 1954, p. 1. Hollis Lynch says that all told, the CAA could only send \$100 to the KAU and \$500 to the Kenyatta Defense Fund. Lynch, *Black American Radicals and the Liberation of Africa*, p. 45.

42. Horace Cayton, "Cayton," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 1 November 1952, p. 7, and 6 December 1952, p. 7. Throughout the war, Cayton provided coverage sympathetic to the Mau Mau and the general African struggle for freedom.

43. William Clarke to the Editor, *Pittsburgh Courier*, 7 March 1953, p. 17.

44. Rev. Ivan Harrison, Sneads, Fl, to the Editor, *New York Amsterdam News*, 24 January 1953, p. 4; A Constant Reader to the Editor, *New York Amsterdam News*, 1 November 1952, p. 20.

45. Plummer, *Rising Wind*, p. 159.

46. W.E.B. Du Bois, "Africa and Afro-America," 24 April 1954, Du Bois Papers, reel 81, frames 840-42.

47. "Africa Teeters Near Brink of Revolution; Violence Continuing," *Pitts-*

burgh Courier, 22 November 1952, p. 1; "Racial Fires Flare as Africans Stiffen," *New York Amsterdam News*, 25 October 1952, p. 1; Horace Cayton, "Africa Series," 22 November 1952 and following weeks, *Pittsburgh Courier*, p. 1; "Africa Awakes," Editorial, *The Crisis*, November 1952, p. 578.

48. "British Concede Mau Mau Victory, Try to Save Face," *Chicago Defender*, 16 May 1953, p. 1; "New Hope for Kenya," Editorial, *Chicago Defender*, 16 May 1953, p. 11; Horace Cayton, "Cayton," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 3 April 1954, p. 7; Horace Cayton, "Cayton," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 8 August 1953, p. 7; "Tougher Policy in Kenya," Editorial *Pittsburgh Courier*, 20 June 1953, p. 6; "Red Puppet or Black Patriot?" Editorial, *New York Amsterdam News*, 11 July 1953, p. 14; George Schuyler, "The World Today," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 20 March 1954, p. 1, and 1 May 1954, p. 4.

49. For more on Tom Mboya see David Goldsworthy, *Tom Mboya: The Man Kenya Wanted to Forget* (London, 1982). For Mboya and his links to the ACOA, see Houser, *No One Can Stop the Rain*, esp. pp. 81–90.

50. Harry Belafonte, Jackie Robinson, Sidney Poitier to Roy Wilkins, 17 December 1959, NAACP Papers, General Office File, 1956–65, Series A, Box 34, Folder "Africa, General, 1956–59," Library of Congress.

51. On Granger's efforts, see the National Urban League Papers, Part II, Series 1, Box 83, Folder "Africans," Library of Congress. On Prattis's efforts, see the Percival Leroy Prattis Papers, Box 144–9, Folders 14 and 15, "Correspondence: Mboya, Tom and Kenyatta Students, 1957–1959," Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

52. King's support for African education extended beyond his efforts to secure institutional funding for African students. A bill from Tuskegee noted that for Rabala's expenses in the second semester of the school year, the SCLC contributed \$200, the Dexter Avenue church \$100, and King himself the balance of \$127.30. Tom Mboya to Martin Luther King, 16 June 1959, Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Boston University (hereafter MLK/BU), Box 26A, Folder 33b; King to Mboya, 8 July 1959, Box 26A, Folder 33b; King to William Scheinman, 18 August 1959, Box 32, Folder 20; Martin Luther King to Julius G. Kiano, 19 August 1959, Box 26A, Folder 33b; King to Kiano, 30 November 1959, Box 29, Folder 9; Tuskegee Financial Statement, June 1960, Box 35, Folder 42.

53. Martin Luther King to Cephas Munanairi, Nairobi, 7 April 1960, MLK/BU, Box 26, Folder 32-2a.

54. Mboya invited Marshall to participate in the Lancaster House constitutional talks held in early 1960. For information on Marshall and these talks, see Goldsworthy, *Tom Mboya*, pp. 133–34.

55. George Breitman, ed. *Malcolm X Speaks—Selected Speeches and Statements* (New York, 1990), pp. 106–07.