FROM COLONIAL ELITISM TO MOI'S POPULISM: THE POLICIES AND POLITICS OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN KENYA, 1949-2002

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ABSTRACT

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This study explores the evolution of policies on access to university education in Kenya between 1949 and 2002. The process of democratizing access during the period under study proceeded unevenly due to the changing economic and political dynamics that conversely affected the university policies. The first twenty years of university experience in East Africa, between 1949 and 1969, witnessed very modest gains in access to university. During this period, the colonial inter-territorial policy severely limited access to university. The inter-territorial university policy was initiated by the British as part of the colonial reform efforts aimed at creating a new kind of imperial partnership with the subject people in the post-Second World War world. The implementation of the inter-territorial policy in East Africa led to the establishment of the University of East Africa with three university colleges of Makerere in Uganda, Dar-es-Salaam in Tanganyika and Nairobi in Kenya. Britain insisted on the inter-territorial policy in the late 1950s and early 1960s even when it was apparent that it planned to grant independence to its East African colonies territorially. This study shows that the inter-territorial policy was a mechanism to ensure the continuation of British influence in East Africa in the post independence period.

The realities of independence, however, conflicted with the inter-territorial policy. The increasing demand for more university opportunities by East Africans put pressure on their governments towards expansion of institutional facilities. Consequently, the East
African governments responded by discontinuing the inter-territorial policy in 1969, allowing for the creation of national universities. The Kenyan government established the University of Nairobi and its constituent, Kenyatta University College in 1970. For the next two years, Kenya witnessed tremendous expansion of university enrollment. But beginning in 1973, the Kenyatta government suspended the expansion process on claims of scarcity of finances. Despite the prevailing high demand, the Kenyatta government retained the colonial elitist mentality that limited university access to only the cream of the Kenyan society. All this changed with the coming to power of President Moi in 1978. When Moi succeeded Kenyatta in 1978, the entire education system was reviewed and reformed. Policies that were intended to democratize access to university education were introduced. The reform strategy involved changing the education structure from the British model that promoted elitism and severely restricted access to the more egalitarian American model. By the time he left office in 2002, the number of universities and students enrolments had increased tremendously.

This study is not merely a history of the foundation of universities in East Africa or in Kenya. Rather, it utilizes historical research methods to investigate the reaction of the successive governments in Kenya to the protracted demands for university access. In doing so, it explores the connections between university access and lingering controversies on East African regional integration, quality and relevance, university autonomy, academic freedom, brain drain, university financing and funding, student activism, university diversification and privatization.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my grandparents:

Samuel Anampiu
Jennifer Anampiu
Maritha M’Inoti
Hezekiah M’Inoti (Late)

Through your narratives about the past and dedication to education, you inspired me to pursue knowledge unrelentingly even when the going seemed tough and uncertain.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASO: Agikuyu Student Organization
A- Level: Advanced Level
ACCCAST: Advisory Committee for Colonial Colleges of Arts, Science, and Technology
ACEC: Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies
ACNETA: Advisory Committee on Native Education in Tropical Africa
B.ED: Bachelor of Education
BESS: British Expatriate Supplementation Scheme
CDWA: Colonial Development and Welfare Act
CHE: Commission for Higher Education
COCAST: Council for Overseas Colleges of Arts, Science and Technology
CO: Colonial Office
CUGAC: Colonial University Grants Advisory Committee
EACSO: East African Common Services Organization
GMAS: Gandhi Memorial Academy Society
HELB: Higher Education Loans Board
IUC: Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies
IMF: International Monetary Fund
JKUCAT: Jomo Kenyatta University College of Agriculture and Technology
JKUAT: Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology
KACE: Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education
KAU: Kenya African Union
KADU: Kenya African Democratic Union
KANU: Kenya African National Union
KASU: Kenya African Students Association
KCSE: Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination
KPU: Kenya Peoples Party
KUC: Kenyatta University College
KCA: Kikuyu Central Association
KNA: Kenya National Archives
MIME: Mombasa Institute of Muslim Education
NARC: National Rainbow Coalition
NCEOP: National Commission on Education Objectives and Policies
NUKS: National Union of Kenya Students
NUSO: Nairobi University Students Organization
PAYE: Pay As You Eat
RTC: Royal Technical College
SDA: Seventh Day Adventist
SAP: Structural Adjustment Programs
SONU: Student Organization of Nairobi Union
UEA: University of East Africa
UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Culture Organization
USAID: United States Agency for International Development
U.K: United Kingdom
U.S.S.R: Union of Soviet Sociality Republic
USA: United States of America
USAEA: University Students Association of East Africa
UON: University of Nairobi
UONA: University of Nairobi Archives
UGC: University Grants Committee
UHRI: University Halls of Residence Institute
USIU: United States International University
UASU: University Academic Staff Union
USAB: University Students Accommodation Board
UEAB: University of Eastern Africa at Baraton

7-4-2-3: Kenya’s former education system of seven years in primary school, four years in secondary school, two years of high school and three years of university
8-4-4: Kenya’s education system of eight years of Primary Education, four years of High School and four years of University
INTRODUCTION

This study explores the evolution of national policies on expansion of access and the social, economic and political forces that shaped the development of universities in Kenya between 1949 and 2002. The year 1949 marked the founding of Makerere University College in Uganda as the first degree granting institution in East Africa while 2002 coincided with the retirement of President Moi from office and the loss of power of his party the Kenya African National Union (KANU) following an electoral defeat. KANU had ruled Kenya since independence in 1963. The momentous political and economic changes in East Africa that characterized the period between the founding of Makerere in 1949 and Kenya’s independence in 1963, set the basis for future development of university education in the country.

The establishment of Makerere University College in 1949 was part of Britain’s colonial reform efforts in response to persistent demands by African nationalists and reform minded liberals in Europe to address the social welfare of the colonial peoples.¹ The social welfare plans included provision of universities, which were lacking in the whole of British colonial Africa except in Sierra Leone where the Church Missionary Society had founded the Fourah Bay University in 1827.² To tackle the university question in Africa, the Colonial Office appointed the Royal Commission on Higher Education in the Colonies under Lord Cyril Asquith in 1943 and charged it with the responsibility of advising the Secretary of State on the development of universities in the colonies. The Commission, popularly known as the Asquith Commission, released its report in 1945 that recommended the establishment of university colleges in Africa

¹For more on the issues surrounding the post-Second World War colonial reforms see Robert Pierce, “The Colonial Office and Planned Decolonization in Africa” African Affairs, Vol. 83 No. 330, (Jan 1984) 77-93
² For a history of university development in colonial British East and West Africa see Apollos Nwauwa, Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism: Britain and University Education for Africans, (London: F. Cass, 1997)
affiliated with universities in Britain under a special relationship scheme.\(^3\) In East Africa, the Asquith Commission recommended the development of Makerere College into an inter-territorial University College to serve Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika.\(^4\) The Colonial Development and Welfare Funds set aside by an act of parliament in 1945 to finance the social welfare programs in the colonies would fund Makerere’s development. To oversee the development of universities in the colonies, the British colonial government set up the Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies (IUC) largely composed of liberal British academics.\(^5\) The establishment of the IUC to oversee the administration of new universities marked a departure from the indirect rule policy that empowered the colonial “men on the spot” administrators to run the colonies without interference from London. Certainly, the appointment of the IUC as the overseer of the inter-territorial Makerere University College sowed the seeds of discord between the administrators and students of the new college on the one hand and the dominant European settlers and colonial officials in Kenya on the other. The subsequent period was characterized by intense agitation by the settlers, supported by the colonial officials in Kenya, to regain powers over higher education policy that they were steadily losing to the Colonial Office in London. This period also witnessed the blossoming of African nationalism as reflected in the outbreak of the Mau Mau rebellion in 1952.

The transformation of the political environment in the early 1950s provided the Colonial Office with an opportunity for direct involvement and control in Kenya and subsequently gained an upper hand over the settlers in influencing the course of colonial policies. The Colonial Office


\(^4\) The Asquith Commission advised that the new university colleges in Africa should enter into Special Relationship with a metropolitan university. Makerere, like the University College of Ibadan in Nigeria and Gold Coast in present day Ghana became associated with the University of London.

was now in a stronger position to assert its influence and implement its university education plan, centered on the concept of inter-territoriality as envisaged by the Asquith Commission. How did the Colonial Office implement the inter-territorial university plan in the East African colonies of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika? What was the rationale for the inter-territorial university policy and what challenges confronted this policy in both the colonial and the postcolonial period? What was the impact of the inter-territorial university policy in the postcolonial era? How was President Kenyatta’s government policy on access to university education different from that of his successor, President Moi? How did regional, ethnic and class interests influence policies on access to university education in the post-colonial period? How did internal and external factors shape President Moi’s policy of university expansion and increased access?

The British colonial university policy developed by the Asquith Commission sought the inter-territorial provision of university education in East Africa even as it faced severe opposition from the settlers who loathed their loss of control over the colony’s higher education policy. Moreover, the Colonial Office through the IUC forced the Asian community in East Africa to modify its plans for the establishment of a university in Kenya in order to conform to the inter-territorial university policy.

The Asquith Commission’s inter-territorial university policy was upheld by the two Working Parties on higher education that were subsequently appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in the 1950s. The Working Parties were charged with the responsibility of planning the future of higher education in East Africa in response to the changing political

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6 The Asquith Commission plan for inter-territorial provision of university education in the British West African colonies of Nigeria and Ghana faced severe opposition from Africans in the region due to the high levels of territorial consciousness. In East Africa, however the Africans supported the inter-territorial higher education plan. East Africans had a long history of inter-territorial cooperation stretching back to the pre-colonial period, which made the Asquith Commission plan easy to implement. The settlers however were not supportive of the inter-territorial plan because it eroded their influence.

7 The Asians were planning to establish a university in Kenya in honor of Mahatma Gandhi, the assassinated India’s anti-imperial icon.
situation following the intensification of nationalistic activities and the decolonization process that was sweeping across Africa in the 1950s. The first Working Party, led by Alexander Carr-Saunders, visited East Africa in 1955 while the second Working Party, led by J. F. Lockwood, visited in 1958.\(^8\) While the Carr-Saunders Working Party revealed the need for additional university opportunities in East Africa, the task of developing a plan on how additional universities would be established fell on the Lockwood Working Party. Like the Carr-Saunders report, the Lockwood report supported the inter-territorial provision of university opportunities in East Africa and planned for the establishment of additional colleges in Kenya and Tanganyika which together with the existing Makerere College, would become the constituent colleges of the envisaged University of East Africa. The plan that would see the establishment of the University of East Africa as anticipated by the Lockwood Working Party was implemented as the decolonization process gathered pace in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Interestingly, African nationalists supported the colonial inter-territorial university policy that led to the creation of the University of East Africa (UEA) in June 1963. By this time both Uganda and Tanganyika had already achieved their independence while Kenya was set to achieve its freedom in December 1963.\(^9\)

Kenya became independent on December 12, 1963, with Jomo Kenyatta as the first president. President Kenyatta’s political party, the Kenya African National Union, ruled for the next forty years before losing power in 2002 to the new National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) led by Mwai Kibaki. During the long KANU era, Kenya was ruled by only two presidents. The first,\(^8\) Report of the Working Party on Higher Education in East Africa, July-August, 1955; Report of the Working Party on Higher Education in East Africa, July-August 1958; While the Carr-Saunders Working Party was specifically appointed to review the higher education needs in East Africa, the Lockwood Working Party planned how the need for more university opportunities in East Africa as revealed by the Carr-Saunders report would be achieved.\(^9\) Tanganyika was the first East African nation to become independent in December 1961 followed by Uganda in October 1962, lastly Kenya, and the island of Zanzibar became independent in December 1963. Zanzibar and Tanganyika united in 1964 to form a new nation-state called Tanzania.
President Jomo Kenyatta, ruled for 15 years and died while in office in August 1978. Kenyatta was succeeded by his Vice President, Daniel Arap Moi, who ruled for 24 years leaving office in December 2002. The long period of KANU rule was characterized by major institutional policy choices and changes at both regional and national levels as well as momentous socio-economic and political developments that ultimately affected access to university education in Kenya. The immediate post-independence period, for instance, did not witness any radical transformation of university policies as the East African nations continued providing university opportunities through the inter-territorial University of East Africa. But with independence, the new nations faced the realities of territorial nationalism and competing national interests, which, in principle and practice, adversely affected the University of East Africa. Subsequently, the University of East Africa collapsed in 1970, shifting the responsibility for the formulation and implementation of university policy from the regional to the national level. The disintegration of the University of East Africa paved way for the elevation of the University College, Nairobi, a constituent college of the UEA, to a full fledged University– the University of Nairobi. In addition, Kenyatta’s government converted the Kenyatta Teachers College in Nairobi to a constituent college of the University of Nairobi. The establishment of a national university and a constituent college created room for the increased expansion of university opportunities in Kenya than was the case when the University of East Africa served as the only university for the entire region. The dramatic increase in student enrolment demonstrates that the University of East Africa limited access to university opportunities for Kenyans. The number of Kenyans pursuing their university education in East Africa at independence was only 635. By 1970 when the University of East Africa disintegrated this number had risen to about 1,500. With the creation of new
university institutions in Kenya, the number of university students expanded from 1,500 in 1970 to about 7,000 in 1978.10

The elitist policy of the University of East Africa, which only admitted the cream of high school graduates, clearly limited access to university education as the tremendous expansion of university enrolment after the dissolution of the UEA demonstrates. The main reason for the increase in student enrolment after the disintegration of the UEA is that the newly established University of Nairobi and the Kenyatta University College were free to expand and create additional programs without violating the policy of non-duplication of programs that characterized the inter-territorial UEA arrangement. Despite their expansion, the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University College were unable to satisfy the high demand for university education in Kenya. As the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (NCEOP) stated in its 1976 report, “the University of Nairobi was no longer able to take all form 6 candidates with minimum entry requirements despite the fact that these students had studied at the A- levels with the sole aim of going to University.”11 The statement by the NCEOP demonstrated the failure of the University of Nairobi and its constituent Kenyatta University College to admit the students who qualified for university education after the end of their high school education. While university administrators of the day tried as much as possible to increase student enrolment, their efforts were hindered by scarcity of resources as the government through the Ministry of Finance failed to provide adequate funding to the university.12 Consequently, the

11 Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies,(Nairobi: Government Printer 1976) 77; The NCEOP that was led by P. J. Gachathi the Permanent Secretary of Education was appointed in 1976 by President Kenyatta to to redefine Kenya’s educational policies and objectives.
12 In the early 1970s the Ministry of Finance was also facing demands by the international lending institutions led by the World Bank to reduce its budgetary allocation to university education as a precondition to qualify for aid.
Ministry of Education forced the university to reduce its pace of expansion thus affecting its ability to expand enrolment to meet the increasing demand.

The failure by Kenyatta’s government to respond adequately to the growing public demand for university education demonstrates the level to which Kenyan leaders were influenced by the colonial elitist ideology that sought to limit access to university education. From the outset of colonialism to 1978, policies on access to university education were elitist and restrictive. Thus, the expansion capacity of universities was very slow and perpetually behind the high demand for university education. Restricted access to university education was achieved through an efficient screening and sorting mechanism at lower levels of education that drastically reduced the number of students eligible for admission to university. The elitist policy of restricting access to university education in the colonial and early postcolonial period of President Kenyatta achieved a pragmatic political and economic end that justified the government’s failure to establish additional universities or expand existing ones. Daniel Arap Moi’s presidency changed all that.

When Moi succeeded Kenyatta in 1978, the entire education system was reviewed and reformed. Policies that were intended at democratizing access to university education were introduced. The reform strategy involved changing the education structure from the British model that promoted elitism and severely restricted access to the more egalitarian North American model. The adoption of the American education model was intended to ensure easier progression through the basic levels of education and democratize access to university education. The initial step towards President Moi’s reform strategy was the appointment of a Presidential Working Party, the Mackay Commission. The Commission was charged with the responsibility of looking into the possibilities of establishing a second university and recommending a
philosophical framework, concept and objectives within which the university could best serve the interests of Kenya.\(^{13}\)

Upon completion of its work, the Mackay Commission issued a report recommending the creation of a second university and change of the entire educational structure from the British 7-4-2-3 model to the North American 8-4-4 model.\(^{14}\) The shift from the British to the American education model was designed to enhance access and orient the education system towards more practical training. The proposed second university was to be technically and scientifically oriented to address the increasing social demand for university education as well as shortage of highly skilled personnel in the technological and scientific fields. The government adopted the Mackay Commission recommendations and founded the Moi University in President Moi’s Rift Valley Province in 1984. This was to be the beginning of a concerted effort by the Moi government to increase the number of universities in Kenya.

The founding of more universities gathered momentum in 1985 after the Kenyan parliament enacted the Higher Education Bill that created the legal framework for the establishment and accreditation of private universities. In the same year, Kenyatta University College, a constituent college of the University of Nairobi was elevated to full university status. In 1987, Egerton University College, another constituent college of the University of Nairobi was also elevated to full university status. The momentum for university expansion continued until 2002 when Moi’s government was defeated in general elections.

Ironically, the expansion of access to university education did not occur when Kenya’s economy was vibrant under both colonial and President Kenyatta’s rule; rather it was during the


\(^{14}\) In the 7-4-2-3 British model students spent 7 years at primary level, 4 years at secondary level, 2 years at A-levels also called high school, and 3 years at university level. In the new 8-4-4 American model students spend 8 years at primary level, 4 years at secondary level and 4 years at university level. The A-level was scrapped.
recessionary years under Moi. Due to the economic downturn of the 1980s, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) imposed Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) on Kenya, which called for drastic reduction in spending on social services including university education. Yet, the severe resource constraints aggravated by the implementation of the SAPs did not slow down the expansion of universities during President Moi’s tenure in office.

The divergence in policies on access to university education under Presidents Kenyatta and Moi are evident in the enrolment rates and the number of universities established. During Kenyatta’s fifteen-year presidency, the university student population increased modestly from about 600 at independence in 1963 to about 7,000 in 1978. In terms of institutional expansion, Kenyatta’s major achievement was the conversion of the University College, Nairobi, which had been a constituent college of the University of East Africa, into a full university and the conversion of Kenyatta Teachers College into a constituent college of the University of Nairobi charged with training secondary school teachers. In contrast, during Moi’s twenty-four year tenure, the number of public universities increased from one in 1978 to six by 2002 while the university student population grew from 7,000 to over 55,000 in the same period. Despite this phenomenal expansion of access to university education, demand for university training continued to outrun the capacity of existing institutions. By 2002, less than 10% of total qualified students obtained admission into the six public universities. Currently, only the top 3.8 per cent of the high school graduates still get admission into public universities. However, what remains intriguing and yet obscure is how and why successive Kenyan governments pursued different policy choices and decisions on access to university education that were sometimes not based on the social, economic and political realities of the time.

No comprehensive study on the development and the evolution of university policies and its impact on university access in Kenya have yet emerged. There are however several works focusing on other aspects of higher education that I will draw from to inform and enrich this study. *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism British and University Education for Africans*, (1997) by Apollos Nwauwa, provides a comprehensive historical study of the demand for, and eventual establishment of universities in British East and West Africa between 1860 and 1960. Although this work does not deal with post-colonial education policies, it provides a valuable historical background for this study. Henry D’Souza’s “External Influences on the Development of Educational Policy in British Tropical Africa from 1923 to 1939,” (1975) is the other main work focusing on African education during the colonial period. D’ Souza’s focus is on the origins of some colonial education policies designed to keep Africans in a subservient and subjugated status. One of these policies was the promotion of manual and industrial training instead of higher education. The European settlers in Kenya seized upon this policy as a basis for sabotaging the development of Makerere University College. In a volume entitled *The Challenges of History and Leadership in Africa: the essays of Bethwell Ogot* (2002), Ogot offers a historical account of the emergence and development of university education in colonial and immediate postcolonial Kenya. The author examines the political and economic logic behind the inter-territorial university plan. According to Ogot, university cooperation was justified by the colonial and immediate post-colonial government as a rational economic strategy of utilizing the scarce higher education resources in East Africa. As independence approached African students and politicians viewed the inter-territorial university arrangement as an integral part of the East Africa Federation movement and an essential instrument for promoting a pan-East African consciousness. On their part, the academics mostly foreign, saw the inter-territoriality as a
guarantor of international standards without which they argued the university could not receive worldwide recognition. Ogot’s work is important because it captures the political and economic contestations between various interest groups that characterized the inter-territorial University of East Africa in both the colonial and immediate post-colonial period.

The other important historical work dealing with higher education in Kenya is Jim Harper’s *Western-Educated Elites in Kenya: the African American Factor, 1900-1963* (2006), which investigates the contribution of African-Americans in the creation of Kenya's educated class in the late colonial and immediate postcolonial period. Focusing on the 'American airlifts' of the late 1950s and early 1960s, when hundreds of Kenyans were awarded scholarships to study in the United States, this book vividly captures the demand and need for educated people in both the colonial and postcolonial periods. Furthermore, it depicts how the colonial and immediate postcolonial policy of restricted access to university education contributed to the massive flight of students seeking university education abroad. Carol Sicherman makes an important contribution to the history of higher education in East Africa with her *Becoming an African University: Makerere, 1922-2000* (2005). This book focuses on the development of Makerere University, the oldest higher education institution in East Africa, from 1922 to the present. Sicherman recounts the colonial beginnings of Makerere University, its efflorescence during the 1950s and 1960s, its calamitous decline during the postcolonial period of political chaos in Uganda, and its resurgence following the restoration of peace and relative stability from the mid-1980s onwards. Sichermans’ work provides a useful analysis of the colonial foundations of university education in East Africa. Sorobeo Bogonko’s “The Development of University Education in Kenya, 1960-89” (1991) is a historical study of the development of university education in post-colonial Kenya. Bogonko examines the rise and fall of the University of East
Africa and the subsequent tremendous expansion of university education in Kenya in comparison to other East African countries. Bogonko attributes the disintegration of the University of East Africa to the economic and political competition between the three East African countries.

In reaction to the economic downturn of the 1980s and 1990s and the subsequent imposition of the SAPs, several scholars understandably became critical of the ongoing university expansion. For instance, Daniel Sifuna in *The Governance of Kenyan Public Universities* (1997) attributes the proliferation of universities during Moi’s rule to a quest by the ruling politicians to satisfy group and community interests without regard to availability of adequate facilities and resources. While Sifuna saw little benefits in university expansion, Hughes and Mwiria viewed it differently. In an article entitled: “An essay on the implications of University Expansion” (1991), Hughes and Mwiria observed that the university expansion of the 1980s and 1990s had contributed to the reduction of regional and class inequalities. In addition, university expansion had the economic benefit of reducing the foreign exchange losses that formerly resulted from sending Kenyan students to overseas universities. Nevertheless, Hughes and Mwiria also observed that this university expansion contributed to the erosion of program quality due to the resource constraints it imposed on the universities. Moreover, the increase in university graduates exacerbated the problem of unemployment, especially among the highly educated.

By the late 1990s, however, higher education studies in Kenya focused on the response to the increased social demand for university education and how quality would be guaranteed in the face of increased expansion. Okwach Abagi’s *Resource Utilization in Public Universities in Kenya: Enhancing Efficiency and Cost Recovery Measures* (1999) examined how both Nairobi and Kenyatta Universities were utilizing their human and physical resources. According to
Abagi, Kenyan universities faced the challenge of ensuring efficient and effective utilization of existing resources on the one hand and intensified demand for more and better education on the other. Due to this challenge, a policy was required to anticipate efficient future resource utilization to meet the increased demand for university education. Abagi’s work is crucial because it illustrates how scholars and policy makers were coming to terms with the fact that university expansion was an inevitable consequence of increased demand and not merely a factor of ethnicity and politics of regionalism and ethnicity.

As the existing literature demonstrates, there is a large body of scholarly work from different disciplines on university education in Africa. This study seeks to draw from these works to enrich the exploration of the development of universities in Kenya during the colonial and postcolonial period and, by so doing, unravel the impact of the policy choices on access to university opportunities. More importantly, this study depicts the response of a newly independent nation to the need to develop a modern university education system amidst the difficulties wrought by scarcity of resources and other pressing and competing needs.

This study has resulted from review and analysis of primary and secondary sources obtained from several locations in Kenya and the USA. The primary sources include proceedings of conferences on education, government decrees and edicts, official gazettes, education digests, annual education reports, national development plans, official speeches, newspaper clips, minutes of meetings, UNESCO and World Bank documents, articles, and monographs. These were acquired from the Kenya National Archives, the University of Nairobi library archive, the Council for Higher Education (CHE) library, libraries of the Ministries of Education, Planning and Development, the Nation Newspaper library and the Government Printer, Nairobi. It also relies on secondary sources acquired in some of the sites mentioned.
above, the Bowling Green State University’s Jerome Library and the OhioLink Library system of Ohio.

This research is based on two theoretical frameworks. The first is the path dependency hypothesis, which emphasizes the historical transformation of institutions over time. It posits that actions taken in the initial stages of development of an institution or state have significant impact on future development of these institutions. In many cases, these initial historical events seem to be insignificant but their lock-in effect has significant bearing on the future historical trajectory of these institutions.\textsuperscript{16} Path dependency uses institutions as a subject of study in order to find, measure, and trace patterns and sequences of social, political, and economic behavior and change across time and space. In this study, path dependency theory is crucial in explaining the persistent of colonial university policies such as the concept of inter-territoriality in the post-independence period.

The second theoretical perspective used in this study is the sociological institutional theory, which stresses the dependence of local social organizations on wider environmental meanings, definitions, rules and models.\textsuperscript{17} This line of thought is exceptionally useful in analyzing higher education for two reasons. First, as John Meyer explains, “in contrast to particularizing views, an institutional perspective supports the realization that local higher-educational arrangements are heavily dependent on broader institutions— even more than most local work organizations.”\textsuperscript{18} This means, on the one hand, that it is difficult to create a university if the concept “university” is not available in the wider cultural and organizational environments.

On the other hand, it means that if the environment does contain a blueprint or model, then the whole founding process is easy.\textsuperscript{19} The sociological institutional theory, therefore, is important in explaining the massive proliferation of universities during President Moi’s rule. Upon coming to office, President Moi found a country with a university model, which made it easier for him to respond to prevailing demand, by founding additional universities.

The analytical approaches in this study account for the centrality of the socio-political and economic forces that influenced the transformation from colonial elitist to populist and expansionist university policies. The dynamics in play in this transformation include issues of human resource development, economic advancement, national building, academic quality, relevance, funding, governance, brain drain and unemployment. This investigation therefore is invaluable in informing policy makers, political leaders, educationists, the Kenyan public, and international agencies of the problems, weaknesses, strengths, challenges, and future directions of Kenya’s university system.

This study is thematically and chronologically organized in six chapters. Chapter one investigates the background to university education in Kenya from 1911, when the British colonial government set up an education department, to 1955 when the colonial government appointed the first Working Party on higher education in East Africa. This period laid the basis for the future growth of a university system in East Africa. Chapter two examines the growth of nationalism between 1953 and 1963 a period characterized by the crystallization of the inter-territorial higher education policy that led to the creation of the University of East Africa in 1963 with constituent colleges in Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika. This period also witnessed the coming of independence to the East African nations, which ironically adopted the colonial university policy bequeathed by the departing British colonial powers. Chapter three examines

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid
the difficulties that the independent East African nations confronted as they sought to implement
the university policies that were developed by the departing British colonial powers between
1962 and 1968. Due to the competing national interests and the need to respond to public
demand for more university opportunities, the period under investigation witnessed a gradual
weakening of the inter-territorial university policy that led to the disintegration of the University
of East Africa. Chapter four, covering the period between 1964 and 1978, explores the
challenges of manpower needs, financing, academic freedoms and student activism that
accompanied the birth of a new national university, the University of Nairobi. Chapter five
investigates the transformation of policies on access to university education with the coming of
President Moi into office in 1978. Unlike Kenyatta’s government that actively sought to limit
university opportunities, Moi overhauled the entire education system by creating the new 8-4-4
system of education that eliminated the A-levels thus reducing the barriers limiting access to
university education. By 1985, Moi had created two additional public universities with many
more slated for establishment in the subsequent period. Chapter six further examines the
expansion trends in university education focusing on the challenges of inadequate resources that
plagued universities as a result of massive growth in student enrolments in the late 1980s and the
early 1990s. The period under review saw the enactment and implementation of cost-sharing
measures in university education that were dictated by the World Bank and the International
Monetary Fund (IMF). The cost-sharing policies aimed at reducing the government budgetary
allocations to universities, causing students and their guardians to shoulder a much higher
portion of the cost of university education than was previously the case. During this period, the
prominence of private universities rose to unprecedented levels influencing the partial
privatization of public universities, which began to admit self-sponsored students in a program popularly referred to as parallel programs.
CHAPTER 1
THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OF POLICY: BACKGROUND TO UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN KENYA

This chapter focuses on the development of higher education policies since the inception of British colonial rule in Kenya until 1955 when the Crown government appointed the first Working Party under Alexander Carr-Saunders and charged it with the responsibility of reviewing higher education in East Africa. The chapter investigates the evolution of higher education policies within a polarized but rapidly changing political and economic framework. Generally, higher education policies during the period under review were a product of a reluctant consensus between the competing forces of change versus counterchange. The major protagonists during this period included the socio-politically and economically dispossessed Africans, the European settlers, the colonial administrators in Kenya, the Colonial Office in London, the Asian community in Kenya, the European missionaries, and the two East African territories of Uganda and Tanganyika.

From the onset, the main motive of European settlers in Kenya was economic exploitation of the land and peoples, which was soon followed by political and educational domination. The mode of the colonial economy played an important role in laying the broad foundations for educational policies in the initial period of colonialism; it continued influencing policy even as the transformation of the political environment mandated a change in strategy. Initially, the British viewed their East African Protectorate, which later became known as Kenya, as a geo-strategic possession that provided the hinterland of East Africa with access to the Indian Ocean. Kenya gained
added value to the British at the turn of the 20th century when Europeans discovered that
the temperate climate and fertile soils of the highland zones were very conducive for
settlement and farming.¹ From 1904 onwards a steady stream of European settlers began
to arrive in the highland zones of Kenya. The British colonial government facilitated
Europeans settlements in what later became known as the “white highlands”² by evicting
Africans from their land, and herding them into reserves on marginal lands where they
lived under squalid conditions and were forced to provide cheap labor for the Europeans.³

The plantation economy of coffee, tea, pyrethrum, and livestock farming in the
“white highlands” demanded ready supply of unskilled agricultural workers. The
colonists met their labor needs largely by exerting coercive means of state power. Not
only did the colonial government dispossess Africans of their land, it also introduced new
laws such as the “kipande” (pass) system and the requirement for the payment of taxes by
all adult males in order to compel them to work on European farms.⁴ Colonialism also
brought with it European style capitalism and money economy that now required
Africans to abandon their traditional ways of livelihood in order provide cheap labor to
the Europeans. The settler economic need for unskilled labor made the colonial
government to minimize investments in basic education and none in higher education. As
Sheldon Weeks observed in his comparison with the situation in the neighboring Uganda,

² The term “White Highlands” describes an area in the central uplands of Kenya where European
immigrants settled in large numbers due to the area’s good soils and climatic conditions during the period
of British colonial rule
History of Kenya 1895-1980 in honour of B. A Ogot,(Nairobi: Evans Brothers Limited, 1989) 6-29 also see
⁴ The Kipande was a card bearing fingerprints that adult males were compelled to carry under the new
system of African registration
the settlers in Kenya viewed education as dangerous due to its potential as a tool for mental liberation likely to make Africans question and challenge colonial exploitation. Thus, the settlers’ concern about the possible radicalization of Africans and the need for cheap labor in order to maximize profits was the cornerstone for the educational, political and social policies in colonial Kenya. 5

Despite the views of the settlers, Christian missionaries provided Africans with modest basic education opportunities. Missionaries had pioneered provision of western-style education among the coastal communities in the middle of the 19th century before spreading their activities to the hinterland following the European colonial control of East Africa. Education was part of the European-style social services integral in the missionary effort to convert Africans to Christianity; it was regarded as part of the missionary commitment to catering to the well-being of the Africans. According to J.L. Krapf, one of the pioneer missionaries in East Africa, “provision of extra-religious services was a temporal means of attracting Africans to the church and instructing them in the principles of inculcating European civilization.”6 Basically, missionary education, imparted Africans with rudimentary skills in reading, writing and arithmetic. The British government was generally favorably disposed towards the activities of the missions. The initial advantage of the missionary presence to the government was its contribution to the “softening” of traditional societies, which removed impediments to the extension of the colonial administration. Subsequently, the missionaries performed another essential service by “training interpreters and policemen… builders and joiners… messengers,

5 Sheldon Weeks, Divergence in educational development; the case of Kenya and Uganda, (New York: Teachers College Press, 1968), 11
orderlies and domestic servants.”

Thus, from the very beginning, missionaries specialized in the provision of educational services in the colonial society, a role that was welcomed by the government.

The realities of settler colonialism in Kenya however did not allow the colonial government to continue its laissez-faire education policy for long. To cater for the needs of the growing number of European settlers, the colonial government gradually became involved in education with the creation of an educational department in 1911, which officially institutionalized the racially separate education system of Europeans, Asians and Africans that came to characterize the rest of the colonial period. The hierarchical racial order that characterized the colonial education policy placed the Europeans at the top of the social ladder followed by the Asians while the indigenous Africans were at the bottom. Although at this early period the colonial government had not yet established higher education, the primary and high schools for the Europeans and Asians were better financed and equipped than that for the Africans. European education in particular, was government financed, free and compulsory and aimed at imparting academic education needed in the modern capitalist economy. On the other hand, African education was limited to basic levels with the colonial government requiring the missionaries to incorporate manual and vocational training in their curriculum. The vocational curriculum was aimed at imparting Africans with skills needed to execute manual tasks in the colonial economy.

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7 Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, (London: Longmans Green, 1952), 177
8 James Sheffield, *Education in Kenya: An Historical Study*, (New York: Teachers College Columbia), 10
The policy of racial separatism denied Africans a chance to benefit from a fully public funded education system like the Europeans and to a lesser extent the Asians. African education became the sole domain of the missionaries unlike the secular public education that equipped the Europeans with intellectual knowledge and skills required in a modern economy. African education was not only religious but also vocational and basic lasting at most for only four years, ensuring a steady supply of unskilled and semiskilled labor to the colonial economy. According to J.R. Orr, the first Director of Education in Kenya, missionaries were supposed to focus on “teaching Africans the twin values of industrial training to the individual and to the native community in the reserves.”

The technical and manual training of Africans received endorsement from the Phelps-Stoke Commission, which visited Kenya in 1923. Sponsored by the Phelps-Stokes Foundation of the United States, the Commission was charged with the responsibility of surveying the nature and quality of education in Africa. The Phelps-Stokes Foundation was initially concerned with ‘Negro’ education in the United States but, later, the North American Foreign Mission Conference persuaded it to sponsor the African enterprise. Between 1920 and 1924, the Phelps-Stokes Commission visited West, East, Southern and Central Africa and produced reports on the conditions and future prospects of African education. For East Africa, and specifically on Kenya, the Phelps Stoke Commission implored the missionaries to provide industrial education in reserves that would not

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interfere with the settler labor supply.\textsuperscript{12} This proposal echoed the existing colonial education policy that was opposed to the advancement of Africans to higher levels of learning. Consequently, the development of African education in Kenya remained stunted. It was not until 1926 that an alliance of protestant churches, including the Church of Scotland Mission, the Church Mission Society, the African Inland Mission and the Methodists established the first secondary school for Africans in Kenya, the Alliance High School. Still, the development of post-primary institutions in the subsequently period remained dismal. As Sheldon Weeks observed “the educational development especially at post-primary level was consciously limited by the influence of European settlers in Kenya.”\textsuperscript{13} The racist colonial education policy in Kenya had the effect of ensuring a steady labor supply for the settler farms at the educational expense of Africans who had very limited opportunities for basic education and none at higher levels of learning.

The neglect of African education in Kenya can also be partly explained by the nature of implementation of the indirect rule policy that in other British colonies allowed for Native Administrations that provided some employment opportunities to educated Africans. In Uganda especially, enamored by its monarchy and political centralization, the British assimilated the educated chiefly elite into the indirect rule system. Thus, increasing and diversifying educational facilities in Uganda did not threaten the very foundation of British colonial rule as elsewhere in East Africa.\textsuperscript{14} The situation in Kenya,

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\textsuperscript{12} Thomas Jesse Jones, \textit{Education in East Africa: a study of the East, Central, and South Africa education commission under the auspices of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, in cooperation with the International Education Board} (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1924),107
\textsuperscript{13} Sheldon Weeks, 36-37
\end{flushleft}
however, was different since as a settler colony Africans were denied opportunities for economic and political advancement, which in turn frustrated their educational opportunities. The only reputable employment opportunities available to Africans in the colonial administration in Kenya were the lowly ranked chiefly position, which did not require possession of any academic credentials. All middle and upper ranking positions in the colonial administration were only available to Asians and Europeans.

Demands for expansion and diversification of educational opportunities in Kenya, like in other parts of Africa, became a rallying cry for early African nationalists. One of the earliest political organizations in Kenya, the East African Association founded by Harry Thuku in 1921, and its successor the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) formed in 1925 were vocal in demanding for increased higher education opportunities. In a 1925 memorandum to Sir Edward Grigg, the then Governor of Kenya, the KCA petitioned the colonial government to provide Africans with opportunities to pursue secondary and higher education.\textsuperscript{15} Predictably, the colonial government did not accede to these demands. A colonial District Commissioner in the Central Province of Kenya reported in 1926 that, “although the Kikuyu Central Association’s educational demands were genuine, they had to wait until the Kikuyu tax payers could afford them.”\textsuperscript{16} The rejection of the African higher education demands by the colonial government only served to strengthen the resolve of the Kenyans to acquire more education. In 1929, Jomo Kenyatta, the Secretary General of the KCA, presented a petition to the Secretary of State in London requesting the provision of compulsory and free primary and secondary


\textsuperscript{16} Anne Beck, 128
education as well as the establishment of higher education institutions. The Secretary of State however did not respond to Kenyatta’s petition.

While the settler politics discouraged the educational advancement of Africans in Kenya, phenomenal education growth was occurring in the neighboring Uganda whose impact was felt in Kenya. The British colonial government had established Makerere Technical College in Uganda in 1922 to provide courses in carpentry, masonry and mechanics. In 1925, the colonial government transformed Makerere into a higher college offering preparatory courses in medicine, agriculture, surveying, and veterinary science, with advanced courses for sons of chiefs, schoolmasters, and high-grade clerks. In 1930s, the newly appointed governor of Uganda, Philip Mitchell, campaigned for the elevation of Makerere into a higher college. The Secretary of State for the Colonies William Ormsby-Gore responded to Governor Mitchell’s request in 1936 when he appointed Lord De La Warr, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, to head the Commission on Higher Education in East Africa that “would look into the future of Makerere and wider higher education policy in East Africa.” The De La Warr Commission completed its work in 1937 and submitted its report to the colonial government calling for the provision of university-like facilities in East Africa by converting Makerere to a higher college of East Africa. Further, the report proposed the setting up of a Makerere endowment fund to which Britain and all East African governments would contribute. After protracted deliberations, the East African governments and Britain raised over £600,000 for the Makerere endowment. Uganda

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17 Anne Beck, 129
18 Apollos Nwauwa, 50
contributed the highest amount of £437,550, Tanganyika £100,000, U.K £100,000 and Kenya £50,000.  

The settler-influenced Kenya Legislative Council was apathetic to the idea of funding an African college at Makerere Uganda as reflected in their measly vote to the College’s endowment fund when compared to the other East African territories. The response by the Kenyan colonial government was consistent with the settler ideology of continued European domination through denial of liberal and academic education for Africans especially at the higher levels. Reacting to Kenya’s paltry contribution to Makerere, O. W. Furley and T. Watson have noted that:

The colonial administrators in Kenya, influenced by the predominant settler outlook, adopted the same dilatory attitude toward higher education as they had done toward secondary education. Among the settlers themselves, there was much adverse comment in the press against sending Kenyan students to Makerere….When De La Warr Commission asked the Kenya government for estimates of the number of Makerere-trained men it could use in the next few years, the answers given were extremely guarded.  

The reactionary attitude by the settlers and the colonial officials in Kenya was contrary to the developments occurring in Britain where an ascendant liberal lobby had since the early 1930s stepped up calls for the imperial government to address the social welfare needs of the people in the Empire. In education, a powerful lobby of academics had gained control of the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies (ACEC) a successor of the Advisory Committee on Native Education in Tropical Africa (ACNETA), which had been established in 1923:

To advise the Secretary of State on any matter of Native Education in the British Colonies and Protectorates in Tropical Africa which may from

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21 O. W. Furley and T. Watson, 304
time to time refer to them; and to assist him in advancing the progress of
education in those Colonies and Protectorates.\footnote{22}

In 1929, the Advisory Committee on Native Education in Tropical Africa
(ACNETA) was reconstituted under a new name, the Advisory Committee on Education
in the Colonies (ACEC). Its functions were expanded to serve all the British colonies
rather than tropical Africa alone. The membership of the Committee was also enlarged to
include renowned British academics who took an interest in the development of higher
education in the colonies.\footnote{23} In its first decade since its reconstitution, the ACEC played a
significant role in pushing for the elevation of Makerere College to a higher college and
by so doing, laid the basis for the future growth of more university-colleges in Africa. In
Kenya, the fact that the government agreed to contribute to the Makerere endowment
fund albeit hesitantly, reflected the immense influence of the ACEC and other political
groups in London that advocated for social change. The changing global political
attitudes about colonialism and the growth of the African nationalism in the post-Second
World War period would later weaken the settler influence in higher education policy in
Kenya.

Meanwhile, the contribution of Kenya to Makerere affected the number of
Kenyan students admitted at the institution due to the quota system of admission
determined by the amounts contributed to the College’s endowment fund. In 1940, for
instance, the actual enrolment at Makerere was 113 students from Uganda, 31
Tanganyika, and 21 from Kenya reflecting the proportional financial contributions of the
three territories.\footnote{24} Kenya however benefited from the elevation of Makerere to a higher

\footnote{22} Quoted on Apollos Nwauwa, 48
\footnote{23} See Apollos Nwauwa, 34-63, for the politics behind the formation of both ACNETA and ACEC
\footnote{24} Sheldon Weeks, 4
college of East Africa with the 1938 establishment of a veterinary branch of Makerere at Kabete near Nairobi.25

The outbreak of the Second World War created an added urgency to address the social welfare needs of the colonies as advocated by the liberal wing of British politics. This culminated in a social welfare program that included the provision of higher education opportunities in the colonies.26 The Colonial Office in London began to tackle the higher education question with the 1943 appointment of the Royal Commission on Higher Education in the Colonies under Lord Asquith charged with the responsibility of advising the Secretary of State on the development of universities in the colonies. The Commission, popularly known as the Asquith Commission, released its report in 1945 that recommended the establishment of university colleges in Africa affiliated with universities in Britain under a special relationship scheme. In East Africa, the Asquith Commission recommended the development of Makerere College into an inter-territorial University College serving Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika. The Colonial Development and Welfare Funds set aside by an act of parliament in 1945 to finance the social welfare programs in the colonies would fund Makerere’s development. In 1946, following the report of the Asquith Commission, the British colonial government set up the Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies (IUC) that planned the development of universities in the colonies.27 The IUC was composed of largely liberal British academics.28

27 For further information on the Asquith Commission and the formation of the IUC see Apollos Nwauwa, 134-165; L. J. Lewis, “Higher Education in the Overseas Territories, 1948-58,” *British Journal of...*
The social welfare plans in the colonies that included provision of higher education demonstrated a change of approach in the colonial policy away from the indirect rule policy that empowered the “men on the spot” to run the colonies without interference from the Colonial Office in London. In Kenya, the indirect rule policy meant that the settlers who controlled the colonial legislative Council had greater leeway in policy formulation and implementation. The Asquith Report recommendations on transforming Makerere into a university college and the appointment of the IUC that planned the development of the College diminished the powers of settlers to influence higher education policy in Kenya. The settlers, however, did not lose their influence on higher education policy in Kenya quietly as subsequent developments would demonstrate.

Despite the post-War plans and increased role of the Colonial Office in the colonies, in Kenya, conversely, the War enhanced settler influence following the departure of over a third of the colonial administrators who left to serve in the British armed forces. During this period, the colonial government opened its doors to settlers to serve as senior officials in the colonial government. The appointment of Philip Mitchell as the governor of Kenya in December 1944 reinforced the dominant position of the settlers. Mitchell, a career colonial official who had earlier served in Tanganyika,
Uganda, and Fiji seemed to have perfected the art of compromising with the dominant groups in all the colonies in which he served. In Uganda, for instance, Mitchell had supported the dominant Baganda demand for better educational opportunities for their people, resulting in the progress achieved by Makerere in the 1930s. When he was posted to Kenya, Mitchell seemed wary of settlers who he described as “little, frightened, narrow, heathen men with nothing to offer but words, tricks, schemes and spite.”30 Soon, Mitchell modified his opinion about the Kenyan settlers noting that they were a vicious group of people. According to Mitchell, “not even the Secretary of State would ever force a row with settlers.”31 Mitchell went ahead in 1945 to accede to the long held settler demand for majority seats in the Legislative Council. Before then, career colonial officials dominated the Legislative Council.

However, Tiyambe Zeleza has defended Mitchell’s subsequent camaraderie with settlers, arguing that the colonial state cooperated with the settlers more than ever before during the Second World War because the colonial officials did not relish the prospect of a drawn-out confrontation with the settlers under the circumstances of a protracted war. As a result, the perennial feuds between the officials and settlers were subsumed under a heightened sense of racial solidarity and intense patriotism. Consequently, wartime constraints led to the decline of the Colonial Office control over Kenya while the settlers acquired greater power and influence. 32

The expansion of settler power gathered momentum after 1945 following the influx of new settlers, mostly British ex-servicemen, who were awarded large tracts of

30 Richard Frost, 194
31 Richard Frost, 184
land as compensation for their gallantry in the Second World War. This period also was characterized by increased industrialization with the flow of investments from British multinationals and Asian capitalists. According to Zeleza new investments were in areas such as:

- pharmaceuticals, leather and shoes, beer and light drinks, fertilizers, cement, boats and yachts, building materials, furniture and household requisites, gas, metal cans, canned goods, packaged biscuits, plastics and paper containers, textiles, sisal twine, paint, soaps and perfumery, and electrical machinery.33

Due to the new investments, the Kenya’s industrial output from 1948 to 1952 increased by nearly 70 percent helping the European settler community to grow and diversify economically.34 This industrial growth created a need for technically skilled workers unlike the settler farmers who were content with an illiterate or semi-illiterate workforce. This need for technically oriented workforce, however, conflicted with the developments that were taking place in Britain where the newly created IUC had embarked on implementing the recommendations of the Asquith Commission that included the elevation of Makerere to a university college, which would offer liberal education.

On another level, the Africans who were disillusioned with the lack of adequate basic educational opportunities had stepped up efforts to found independent schools in the post-War period. The independent school movement made forays into the higher education when the Kikuyu Independent Schools Association set up a teachers college at Githunguri in Kiambu, with Peter Koinange, the first Kenyan African to hold a Masters degree, as the Principal. With such efforts, one would expect that it was just a matter of

33 Tiyambe Zeleza, 161
time before Africans founded an independent university, though for the European community in Kenya, university education for the Africans was an undesirable indulgence. The threat that university educated Africans posed to the Europeans was articulated in the *East African Standard* in 1947 when it noted, “as the Africans advanced educationally and economically, their progress would require an ever increasing ratio of representation and at last the European community would become constitutionally a racial minority.”

Based on the economic needs of technical laborers and the political risks of academic education especially at the university level, the Europeans began to lay plans to control the course and direction of Kenya’s educational development that, to them, seemed to be getting out of hand.

In 1947, the settler-dominated Legislative Council appointed a Commission under L.J. Beecher, a European clergyman who also represented Africans in the Legislative Council, “to undertake a study that would recommend ways of bringing order in the growth of African education.” The Beecher Commission Report proposed the form that Kenyan African education would take over the next ten years. Specifically, the Commission limited to 40 percent the eligible age group gaining admission into elementary schools. Thereafter, only 30 percent of those admitted into elementary school for four years would have access to intermediate level education. At the end of intermediate education, which also lasted for four years, just a tiny 10 percent would be

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35 *East Africa Standard*, 4 April 1947
admitted into secondary schools.\textsuperscript{37} Under this plan, very few Africans would ever receive higher education.

In addition to the Beecher Commission, European representatives began to make plans for the establishment of a technical institute that would rival the academically inclined Makerere. In May 1947, the government appointed a Committee under G. P. Willoughby charged with “considering ways and means of establishing a technical and commercial institute in Nairobi.”\textsuperscript{38} The Committee produced a report in May 1948 recommending the establishment of the Kenya Technical and Commercial Institute. The technical college would provide both basic technical and higher technology programs. The basic technical work would include plumbing, joinery and cabinet making, building, fitting, electrical work and auto mechanics and repairs. The higher technology program would be in mechanical engineering enrolling students who had acquired some level of secondary education.\textsuperscript{39} The Technical Institute Committee plan was for a college that would be predominantly European but still attractive to the few Africans who had acquired some advanced primary or secondary education.

In 1948, another major development took place when Kenyan and Zanzibar Muslims and Asian communities, and with strong backing of Governor Mitchell, resolved to establish a technical college for Muslims in Mombasa Kenya. Governor Mitchell laid the foundation stone for the Mombasa Institute of Muslim Education (MIME) in June 1948. The initial capital to establish the College was offered by the

\textsuperscript{38} Kenya Technical Institute Committee, \textit{Report of the Technical Institute Committee} (Nairobi: Government Printer, 1949) 1; Willoughby was a former military officer of the Imperial Army who had settled in Kenya after the Second World War.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid, 3
Sultan of Zanzibar who donated £100,000 while the Asian communities in East Africa, which organized under the Aga Khan and Bohora religious organizations, donated £50,000.

Unlike the Muslim project in Mombasa, the settlers envisaged a much grander Kenya Technical and Commercial Institute in Nairobi, supported by Colonial Development and Welfare funds. Governor Mitchell, therefore, forwarded Willoughby’s Report to Arthur Creech Jones, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, for consideration. The arrival of Willoughby’s Report in London coincided with plans by the Colonial Office to establish a body that would oversee and regulate technical education in the colonies. These plans had emanated from the recommendations of the IUC, which upon assessing the higher educational needs of West Africa recognized the need for territorial technical colleges in the region. In a report sent to the Secretary of State in regard to higher education development in West Africa, the IUC had observed that:

> the educational structure of the colonies will be mis-shapened if the chief form of post-secondary education available locally is that provided by universities. The IUC regards the establishment of regional colleges, or something like them, as having the same importance and urgency as that of the university colleges.40

After consultation with experts, the Secretary of State accepted the IUC’s recommendation and appointed the Advisory Committee for Colonial Colleges of Arts, Science, and Technology (ACCCAST) in 1949, charged with the responsibility of “looking after the interest of non-university regional colleges, and to organize links for

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them with appropriate technical colleges in Britain.”  

41 Frederick Pedler, 267

42 KNA/ED/3/603, “Colony and Protectorate of Kenya,” file contains the 1947 Second Report on higher education in East Africa (14) by the Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies
and selection of architects during the early period of development, and involvement in staff recruitment.\textsuperscript{43} The IUC activities therefore relegated to the periphery the role of colonial administrators in Makerere affairs. This made the colonial officials hostile to the IUC. Nevertheless, the IUC was keen to create an image that Makerere was a truly progressive institution and not an appendage of the colonial government as demonstrated by its campaign for the inclusion of Africans in the Governing Council of Makerere. In its third report, the IUC delegation to East Africa stated:

\begin{quote}
We believe that the appointment of one or more Africans to the Council would enhance the interest of Africans in the College, would help to establish the fact that the college is an independent institution (a fact now widely doubted by Africans who tend to regard it as an organ of government) and would be to the general advantage of the college.\textsuperscript{44}
\end{quote}

In the same report the IUC suggested that Makerere should become an inter-racial institution open to members of all races residing in Kenya. Since its inception, Makerere only admitted African students. This policy had alienated the Indians and Arabs who could not afford higher education overseas like the Europeans. The major achievement of the IUC at this time was that its involvement in the early planning and development of Makerere insulated the institution from the parochial agendas of European settlers in Kenya. On the other hand, however, it alienated the institution from the settlers and colonial administrators especially those in Kenya who in the subsequent period tried to exploit every chance to frustrate the development of the institution.

Makerere attained university college status and was admitted to the privilege of special relationship with the University of London in November 1949. Under the special

\textsuperscript{43} KNA/ED/3/603, “Colony and Protectorate of Kenya,” file contains the 1947 Second Report on higher education in East Africa (10) by the Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies

\textsuperscript{44} KNA/AV/12/228, “Higher Education,” File contains the 1949 Third Report on higher education in East Africa (7) by the Inter-University Council Delegation to East Africa that visited between July-August, 1949
relationship scheme that was a brainchild of the Asquith Commission, the University of London assumed the responsibility of regulating the academic standards of colonial institutions, to foster their development into fully fledged, degree-awarding universities once they were established. In the case of Makerere, only the faculties of Arts and Science were brought under the special relationship scheme with the University of London. The College continued to provide diploma courses in Education, Medicine, Agriculture, and Veterinary programs that were gradually brought into the special relationship arrangement in subsequent years.45

Following the admission of Makerere into the Special Relationship scheme with the University of London, the Colonial University Grants Advisory Committee (CUGAC)46 that advised the Secretary of State on the allocation of funds to colonial universities, recommended the allocation of £1,100,000 from the Colonial Development and Welfare Funds to Makerere. This generous allocation demonstrated the significance that the Crown government attached to Makerere, and prompted the East African governments to increase their own contributions to the institution four fold in the 1951 to 1956, relative to the contributions in the 1946 to 1950 period. Other international bodies such as the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Institute, and the Fulbright Scheme also made varying contributions to Makerere upon its conversion to a university college.47

45 KNA/AV/12/228, “Higher Education,” File contains the 1949 Third Report on higher education in East Africa (7) by the Inter-University Council Delegation to East Africa that visited between July-August, 1949
46 Colonial University Grants Advisory Committee was formed in 1946 by the Secretary of State following the recommendation by the Asquith Commission for a body that would advise on the allocation of funds to the colonial university colleges
47 KNA/AV/12/228, “Higher Education,” File contains the 1949 Third Report on higher education in East Africa (7) by the Inter-University Council Delegation to East Africa that visited between July-August, 1949
Although the establishment of Makerere University College of East Africa was a major step towards providing Africans with higher education, the effort did not alleviate the educational needs of Africans in Kenya because the basic education system restricted the number of Kenyan Africans who qualified to join Makerere. In addition, the exam-based curricula at the basic education level, created an efficient sorting and selection mechanism that made it extremely difficult for Africans to advance and qualify for Makerere.

Despite the modest number of students who joined Makerere, the actions and pronouncements of different groups of Europeans in Kenya including the settlers, colonial officials and missionaries portrayed a convergence of opinion on their opposition to Makerere becoming a university college. It is also intriguing that the colonial officials who should have followed the leads coming from London chose to align with the settlers on the issue of Makerere. Either for racial solidarity or for proselytization purpose the missionaries also supported the settlers who were opposing secular and academic education for Africans. Thus when protestant missionaries testified to a visiting IUC delegation visiting East Africa in 1949 they made damaging claims regarding the moral and ethical standards of Makerere’s staff and students thus: “the staff and students engage in excessive drinking…the College is a center of African degeneration.”

When there is so much inevitable lack of sympathy and understanding, it is as unfortunate as it is deplorable that definite assertions for which there is no evidence and value insinuations, which cannot be tested, should be

48 KNA/AV/12/228, “Higher Education,” File contains the 1949 Third Report on higher education in East Africa (44) by the Inter-University Council Delegation to East Africa that visited between July-August, 1949
spread abroad by people whom more responsible conduct can properly be expected.49

Among the colonial officials in Kenya, the strongest voice against Makerere was Governor Mitchell. Governor Mitchell was an unusual critic considering the prominent role he played in late 1930s when, as governor of Uganda, he led the campaign to transform Makerere into a higher college of East Africa. The pace of political change after the Second World War was too fast for Mitchell who had become the leading supporter of the reactionary Europeans in East Africa. In a letter to Andrew Cohen, the Under-Secretary for African Affairs at the Colonial Office, in reaction to the IUC suggestion about the need to incorporate Africans in Makerere’s Governing Council, Mitchell argued that the proposal was premature since Africans did not possess qualities to participate in “the highly complex and technical discussions with which the Council is continuously occupied.”50 Mitchell was also against the admission of non-Africans, especially Indian students into Makerere paternalistically arguing that Africans were incapable of competing at the same level with Indians. According to Mitchell, “it takes two years to take an African where an Asian will easily go in one year… if admission to Makerere was open to all races on a competitive basis only the occasional brilliant African would get in at all.”51

Governor Mitchell was also critical of the establishment of a direct communication line between the College and the Colonial Office thus bypassing the colonial governments in East Africa. Mitchell and other Europeans in East Africa did not

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49 KNA/AV/12/228, “Higher Education,” File contains the 1949 Third Report on higher education in East Africa (44) by the Inter-University Council Delegation to East Africa that visited between July-August, 1949
50 KNA/AV/12/228, “Higher Education,” file contains a letter by Governor Phillip Mitchell letter to Andrew Cohen of the Colonial Office dated 23rd December 1949
51 Ibid
support measures put in place by the Secretary of State to safeguard Makerere’s autonomy from external interference. Mitchell reminded the Colonial Office that the colonial governments had a huge stake at Makerere because they funded most of the recurrent expenditure and in due course would shoulder the whole cost of the college. Mitchell cautioned that if the college’s autonomy made it a center for nurturing subversive elements, it would force the East African governments to withhold their funding. Mitchell succinctly warned that unless somebody made Makerere financially independent, it had to subsist on the votes provided by the East African legislative councils, “academically free or not, it must never lose sight of the fact, it may get itself into very serious difficulties.”

Mitchell’s insistence on the government’s right to control Makerere touched on the age-old question of university autonomy and academic freedom. In Kenya, it marked the beginning of the controversy over whether the state has the right to control universities.

Governor Mitchell’s position on Makerere reflected the general opinion of the European community in East Africa. In 1949, even before receiving the Colonial Office sanction, the colonial officials and settlers in Kenya began to raise money to establish the proposed Kenya Technical and Commercial Institute. Soon thereafter, Kenya was warning other East African territories that it would not honor its funding obligation to Makerere, if the College Council continued with its plans to increase the number of students at the institution. The Council had decided that the number of students at Makerere would by the end of the 1951-1955 period increase from the projected 450 to

52 KNA/AV/12/228, “Higher Education,” file contains a letter by Governor Phillip Mitchell letter to Andrew Cohen of the Colonial Office dated 23rd December 1949
The Council justified this increase on economies of scale since the administrative costs and the number of teaching staff required for a population of 630 was scarcely any greater than for 450 students. In addition, the Council noted that the Colonial Development and Welfare allocation financed a massive building program that could support 630 students. The Council, thus, considered that it would be unwise to adopt the 450 target, “both in view of the probable demand and in the interests of the more efficient use of staff, teaching facilities and capital grants.”

At the meeting of the Financial Secretaries of the East African colonies of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, Kenya’s acting Financial Secretary, E.A.Vasey opposed the suggestion to increase the number of students at Makerere from the planned 450 to 630 by 1955, arguing that such an increase would lead to escalation of costs. Vasey observed that any plans to increase enrollment at Makerere would compound the problems of overstaffing and the exorbitant air passage fees for the expatriate staff that, he argued, already overwhelmed the college. Vasey further noted that the expansion of intake at Makerere would be in conflict with the Kenyan government’s plan, as articulated in the Beecher Report, for a modest increase in the number of students seeking university education in the next ten years. The Beecher plan had projected that the number of Kenyan students at university level by 1960 would be 202. Moreover, according to Vasey, the pace of expansion as proposed by Makerere Council was too rapid and needed to be limited to the earlier plan of having 450 students at Makerere by 1955.

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55 Ibid
Soon however Vasey contradicted his arguments on the need to limit the number of students at Makerere on the basis of financial parsimony when he called for speedy establishment of the envisaged Kenya Technical Institute because of “the decreasing ability of Europeans to send their children overseas.” Vasey’s call was an indication that the colonial officials in Kenya were prepared to go ahead with the plans to establish the college even without the approval of the Colonial Office in London. At the same time, Vasey revealed that the economic difficulties facing Europeans had compelled the colonial government to establish a £100,000 loan scheme for Europeans seeking higher education opportunities abroad. It is intriguing that the colonial government in Kenya developed a sudden interest in higher education for Europeans around the same time that the Colonial Office was busy expanding opportunities for Africans at Makerere.

The settler plan for the establishment of a technical college coincided with a similar plan by the Asian community in Kenya. Although the Asians wanted to create an institution in honor of Mahatma Gandhi, the assassinated icon of the anti-colonial movement in India, the move was partly in reaction to the lack of higher educational opportunities in Kenya. Their plan was led by the Gandhi Memorial Academy Society (GMAS), an Asian philanthropic organization formed shortly after Gandhi’s death in 1948. The proposed institution would be open to members of all races and would offer a curriculum incorporating the humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, mathematics, commerce, and applied arts.  

The GMAS plans to establish a new higher education institution in Kenya received support from the newly independent government of India. In December 1949, India sent its educational advisor, Professor Humayun Kabir, and another Indian educator, Professor Kumar Sidhanta, to East Africa to advise on the nature of the envisaged Gandhi institution. Four months later, the two Indian educators reported in favor of establishing a Gandhi Memorial College that would include instruction in agriculture, engineering, medicine, arts and science and commerce. While the college would serve Africans, Europeans, and Asians, Kabir and Sidhanta advised that 50% of the enrollment slots be reserved for Asians. According to this plan, the GMAS would raise an initial capital of £250,000 and have the college affiliated with the University of London and not an Indian institution as some GMAS members had suggested. Affiliation with the University of London, they noted, was more prestigious and necessary since English was the medium of instruction in Kenya.59

The colonial government initially showed signs of embracing the GMAS plan when Governor Mitchell promised its president, Ambalal Bhailalbhai Patel, that the government would provide a site of 150 acres in Nairobi for the proposed college, grant it a charter to operate, and offer it assistance on a matching basis up to £100,000. Soon, however, the Kenyan colonial officials became apprehensive of the plan due to the involvement of the newly independent government of India that was opposed to British colonial rule. Leading the opposition against the envisaged College was Robert Scott, the administrator of the East African High Commission who argued that the formulation of the College “was a political attempt by the new India’s government to build-up a

59 Robert Gregory, 133
coloured front united against colonialism in Africa.” Even the cerebral British academics who supported the establishment of university colleges in Africa opposed the involvement of India in the Gandhi Memorial College scheme. Professor De Bunsen, the Principal of Makerere College, for instance, warned that the college “could not escape from being through its sponsor a racial college,” and Sir James F, Duff, the Vice-Chancellor of Durham University and member of the IUC informed the Colonial Office that he was “horrified by the proposal to establish Asian college in East Africa”

Although opposed to the involvement of India in the GMAC plan, colonial officials led by Governor Mitchell, the Assistant Undersecretary of State for the Colonies, Andrew Cohen, and Walter Adams, the secretary of the IUC were anxious not to lose potential monetary support from the Asians. These officials hatched a scheme to persuade GMAS to combine their GMC scheme with the proposed technical college in Nairobi. Governor Mitchell therefore, began to persuade the GMAS to abandon its plans for an Asian college in favor of joining forces with the government to create a higher technical institute, promising that the government would pump £150,000 into the project. The GMAS, however, rebuffed Governor Mitchell’s advances, arguing that their plan was to establish an academic college like Makerere and not a technical institute as envisaged by the colonial government.

In November 1950, the Colonial Office sent its advisor on technical education, Dr. Frederick J. Harlow, to East Africa to conduct further negotiations with the Asian

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61 Robert Gregory, 134
62 Robert Gregory, 134
63 F. J Harlow, 7 Feb. 1951 “Memo on the Proposal to Establish a Technical College in Nairobi,” in *GMAS, Souvenir Volume 1*, 48
community on the need to combine forces with the colonial government in the new technical college project. Dr. Harlow succeeded in striking a compromise with the GMAS that would see the establishment of a Royal Technical College offering diplomas in both academic and technical subjects. The Gandhi memorial would consist of the academic core with its precise nature dependent on how much money the Asians raised. Harlow anticipated a grant of £200,000 from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund and hoped that the Asians would be able to match it.64

Although the Colonial Office succeeded in arm-twisting the GMAS to compromise, it demonstrated that London was taking non-White or non-Settler voices in Kenya very seriously; a recognition of the onset of nationalist fervor. Further, the compromise brought to the fore the potentially devastating impact of India’s independence on British colonialism in Africa. It is no wonder, therefore, that the technical institute project that was originally conceived by the settlers to enhance the availability of a technical workforce and to check the development of Makerere, had by 1950 metamorphosed and changed significantly.

Nevertheless, the compromise that led to the creation of the Royal Technical College was a temporary victory for settlers in their determination to control higher education policy in colonial Kenya. The settlers soon got another potent threat in the form of the Colonial Office, with its increasing influence on the pace and direction of higher education development in the colonies albeit wary of giving too much power to the indigenous populations lest it loses control. The Colonial Office was clear that educational developments in the colonies had to proceed in a controlled manner with the evolution of higher education policy in East Africa being guided by the principles of

64 Robert Gregory, 135
inter-territoriality and affiliation with a reputable metropolitan university, as espoused by the Asquith Commission. For this reason, the Colonial Office felt relieved with the compromise struck with Asians since the initial GMAS plan to found a higher college in Kenya fell outside the Asquith plan. Nevertheless, it was uncomfortable with reality that the RTC would offer both technical and academic programs in arts and science. This situation was contrary to the Colonial Office plan that originated from a 1947 IUC delegation to West Africa, which recommended the need for technical institutions that would be “regional colleges complete in themselves and with functions not unlike those of an English polytechnic”\textsuperscript{65}

The emphasis on ‘complete in themselves’ meant that the colleges would not be feeders for universities and that they would be strictly technical colleges. This is the concept that the IUC elaborated upon when in 1949 it consulted the ACEC and the Secretary of State leading to the formation of the Advisory Committee on Colonial Colleges of Arts, Science and Technology (ACCCAST) that would oversee the establishment of technical colleges in the colonies. Kenya, however, presented an anomalous case that contravened the concept elaborated by the IUC with the RTC set to offer both technical and academic programs. In addition, the Colonial Office’s insistence on RTC becoming an inter-territorial college like Makerere contravened the IUC and ACCCAST concept of territorial technical colleges. The Colonial Office was ready to flout its own principles in order to assert control on both technical and university level education in East Africa thus weakening the settler influence on higher education policy. The May 1951 visit to East Africa by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Geoffrey Griffiths, to drum up support for the RTC as an East African project demonstrated the

\textsuperscript{65} Frederick Pedler, 266
importance that the Colonial Office attached to the inter-territoriality idea. By the end of his visit, Griffiths had succeeded in convincing Uganda and Tanzania to back the Royal Technical College project, thus, making it an inter-territorial initiative like Makerere. Uganda pledged to donate £100,000 to the RTC with Tanganyika contributing £50,000 while Kenya gave a five-acre site for the college in Nairobi and £120,000 contribution. With such contributions from the East African governments, Griffiths announced that the Colonial Office would also inject £150,000 into the project.

The RTC project was off to a good start even before receipt of the pledged contributions from the Asian community. Surprisingly, the settlers did not protest immediately the emerging Colonial Office control of the RTC. Later developments, however, show that this inaction by the settlers was a tactical retreat in the hope of reclaiming control of the RTC upon its receipt of enough financial support to get it off the ground.

In November 1951, following the successful Secretary of State visit, Governor Mitchell fully embarked on the RTC project, appointing G. P. Willoughby chair of the governing council. The appointment of Willoughby, a hardcore settler and leading proponent of technical education, to lead the RTC demonstrated continued settler influence on the proposed College’s affairs. Furthermore, it exposed Governor Mitchell’s desire to make RTC a purely technical college contrary to the compromise reached with the GMAS. During the ceremony to lay the foundation stone of the RTC held on April 25, 1952, Mitchell reiterated his “belief and hope that the College would grow to be a

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66 East African Standard, 23 May 1951,1 and 7 December 1951
67 Robert Gregory, 137
68 This appointment was quite telling on the nature of an institution that Mitchell wanted RTC to become. Willoughby who had earlier chaired the Kenya Technical Committee represented the European settler hardliners who believed that Kenya required a technical institute and not an academic college.
university institution of science and technology.” On the same occasion, Mr. Willoughby stated, “the purpose of the college is to satisfy the need in East Africa for technical education” Both Mitchell and Willoughby avoided mention of how the plan for a Gandhi Memorial Academy would be accommodated within the College in accordance with the terms of the compromise. It was clear that Governor Mitchell and Mr. Willoughby were not keen on having “academic” or liberal programs at the RTC.

The failure to articulate the place of the Gandhi Memorial Academy at the RTC reflected the settler’s general apprehension about the ‘corrupting’ influences of liberal education on the African population. These settler concerns were also influenced by developments at Makerere where students with a liberal education were growing increasingly assertive and politically active. The settlers were wary not to turn the RTC into another Makerere, which they accused of fostering political malcontents through its liberal arts curriculum. Aware of the negative settler sentiments about the kind of education offered by their institution, Makerere administrators tried to meet and allay the settlers’ concerns. In a meeting with members of Njoro Settlers Association, A. G. Macpherson, the Dean of Students at Makerere assured the European community that his institution was not a political hotbed noting that, “Makerere students are politically innocuous.” Macpherson’s assurances however did not serve the intended purpose since soon thereafter Makerere students participated in protests against the oppressive policies of the racist apartheid government of South Africa. The demonstration that took place on the anniversary of the landing of Jan Van Riebeeck at the Cape of Good Hope in

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70 Ibid
71 “Enormous Demand for Makerere Students” The East Africa Standard, 5 May 1950
Africa in 1652 denounced the ideology of racial discrimination represented by the South African apartheid policy. The students also condemned “any policy directed against denial of fundamental human rights on grounds of color and any policy, which aims at perpetual domination of Africans by suppressing and curtailing their political aspirations.”72 This was a direct affront to European colonialism in Africa in general and more specifically a condemnation of settler racial bigotry in Kenya.

In reaction to the Makerere students’ protests, the *East African Standard* editorial condemned the dangerous radicalization of Makerere students observing:

Politics had been given a disproportionate value and place in the institution at the expense of the enormous task of civilizing backward African peoples… there is surely much more to do at Makerere than to talk politics. Makerere was established and maintained by tax payers’ money of all races including substantial gift from the British taxpayers who do not want their useful investment put in a political curriculum at this very immature stage in the general progress of African society in these territories.”73

Student assertiveness at Makerere only served to perpetuate settler fear of liberal education for Africans and the apparent support of student activism by the European professors at Makerere further reinforced settler resentment of the institution. In a quick rejoinder to the *East African Standard* editorial, the Principle of Makerere, de Bunsen, refuted claims that his students aimed at inciting racial antagonism in East Africa. According to de Bunsen:

Makerere students enjoyed freedom of speech within the College…the demonstration was entirely an internal affair and not a public demonstration… the students had notified the administration of their intention to demonstrate beforehand and the meeting was an entirely orderly affair mostly conducted through the medium of silence.74

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72 “Politics and Makerere: South Africa Policy Denounced” The East Africa Standard, Editorial, 16 April 1952
73 Ibid
74 Bernard De Bunsen, “Politics at Makerere” The East Africa Standard, 19 April 1952
Dr. Bunsen’s support of his students demonstrated that the European intelligentsia, unlike the colonial officials and settlers in East Africa, believed that educated Africans should enjoy the same fundamental rights as Europeans. At the same time, the protest at Makerere manifested the potency of liberal academic education in fomenting political awareness, a possibility that haunted settlers and their sympathizers. A week after the Makerere demonstration, Kenyan students at the institution presented a memorandum to Reverend L. J. Beecher, a European missionary and a former member of the Legislative Council who represented African interests calling for “an end to racial segregation and discrimination in the country.”75 The Kenya students’ memorandum to the colonial government of Kenya was a very bold political move coming at a time of heightened political tensions between Africans and Europeans that culminated in the outbreak of the Mau Mau rebellion and the declaration of a state of emergency later that year.

The political assertiveness of the students at Makerere continued and in August 1952, the College experienced its first major student strike that began as a protest against bad food served at the cafeteria and eventually degenerated into sit-ins, hunger strikes and class boycotts. When the College expelled two students for allegedly preventing some students who did not join the protests from entering the dining hall, the entire student body in solidarity blockaded the office of the principal. The principal reacted by indefinitely closing the college on August 19, 1952, and sending all students home.76

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75 KNA/ED/3/110, “Higher Education” file contains Memorandum from the Kenyan students at Makerere to the government April 1952
76 KNA/ED/3/110, “Higher Education,” Principal De Bunsen Circular of 19/8/1952 to all Makerere Students informing them that the College has been closed indefinitely following their participation in an illegal strike.
The strike at Makerere did not escape the attention of Kenyan Europeans who all along were uncomfortable with the liberal education and the general atmosphere of freedom at the college. The voices of discontent with Makerere, however, were at this time few and far apart, partly due to the retirement of Governor Mitchell who had led the opposition against Makerere’s liberal credo and the outbreak of widespread African rebellion in Kenya around the same time. The significant person in Kenya who did not miss the opportunity to attack Makerere strike was Sir Edward Carey Francis, the powerful headmaster of Alliance High School, the pioneer African high school in Kenya. In a letter to the Director of Education, Carey Francis expressed disgust that students he had helped mold into responsible citizens at Alliance had turned into political malcontents upon their entry into Makerere. Francis blamed students’ “misbehavior” at Makerere on the Makerere staff, particularly the junior members who wanted to run the College on the same lines as a College at Oxford or Cambridge. He argued that since an African undergraduate is “more immature than his European counterpart,” he required “more guidance and firmer discipline”. He demanded the replacement of the Dean of the College “who was too much like an undergraduate” suggesting that “an older and more experienced man with mature outlook would be preferable.” Furthermore, Carey Francis argued that the students were given too much liberty at Makerere and that “the transition from the discipline of a school such as the Alliance or Mangu was so sudden that the students tend to lose their heads.”

77 Sir Edward Carey Francis was the second headmaster of Alliance High School the oldest high school for Africans in Kenya. Carey Francis was born in Britain but he later settled in Kenya where he headed Alliance until 1962 when he retired, he remained and died in Kenya.
79 Ibid
Governor Philip Mitchell should be sent to Makerere to head the College’s governing council because he was a firm person who would instill discipline in the students. Francis also lamented the usurpation of the Makerere Councils powers to run Makerere by the IUC and the University of London.80

Makerere, however, soon got a sudden reprieve from continued criticism by Kenyan settlers following the transformation of the political environment characterized by the rise of African nationalism and the outbreak of the Mau Mau rebellion as well as the departure of Governor Mitchell from the country. It is also important to note that both the Beecher Commission and the Kenya Technical Institute plans to grant the settlers control of education failed. The increased role of the Colonial Office in directing the pace of higher education policy and the increasing political assertiveness of Kenyan Africans and Asians converged to frustrate settler plans. Furthermore, the outbreak of the Mau Mau rebellion in 1952 marked the turning point in the socio-economic, political and educational development of Kenya. The rebellion was a culmination of the buildup of events since the Second World War when the colonial state in Kenya came under the virtual control of the settlers.

The settler policies that had come to dominate the colonial state increased the pace of the economic dispossession of the Africans in the post-War period. As Atieno Odhiambo has noted, the decision by the British imperial government to settle more Europeans in the highlands after the Second World War, followed by moves to protect this enclave through financial and agro-economic privileges that included mechanized

production in the farms threw out hundreds of thousands of squatter families.\textsuperscript{81} This class of aggrieved Africans became the militant core of the proscribed Kikuyu Central Association (KCA). When Jomo Kenyatta returned from exile in London in 1946, he turned the KCA into a national political organization changing its name to the Kenya African Union (KAU). Kenyatta’s charisma attracted massive support from Africans of all ethnic backgrounds turning KAU into a national African political party. The young and dispossessed members of KAU, however, were unwilling to continue with the non-violent moderate political canvassing that KAU leaders advocated and instead opted to take up arms to fight the colonial government.

The outbreak of the Mau Mau rebellion and the declaration of the state of emergency marked the beginning of the decline of settler power in Kenya. Just before the declaration of emergency, the colonial government retired Governor Mitchell who was a settler apologist. Soon after his retirement, Mitchell spoke at the East African dinner at the Connaught Rooms in London on July 1, 1952, where responding to the issue of the growing African discontent with the British colonialism he stated, “it was unspeakable nonsense to think that East Africa was seething with African unrest.”\textsuperscript{82} Mitchell certainly believed that Africans were incapable of organizing any significant challenge to the colonial government. This belief was soon shattered when Mau Mau rebels began their guerilla campaign of eliminating settlers and their African loyalists. The colonial forces in Kenya were incapable of checking the Mau Mau activities and soon the Colonial Office had to intercede by bringing in British forces to fight the Mau Mau. This was a demonstration that the settlers, who were the prime targets of the Mau Mau, were

\textsuperscript{82} \textit{The Times} 3 July 1952
incapable of defending themselves. Still, British forces won the war due to “active support from African loyalists who fought and defeated the Mau Mau at the level of the households and the ridges.”

As the Mau Mau war raged, the colonial government, which now operated under the increasing influence of the Colonial Office, promulgated the Lyttleton Constitution and the Swynnerton Plan aimed at appeasing the revolting Africans by providing for the election of Africans to the Legislative Council and increasing African agricultural productivity through land reform. Furthermore, the Swynnerton plan aimed at rewarding the African loyalists with land thus institutionalizing the landlessness of the Mau Mau elements who were ironically fighting for the same resource. It is for this reason that Adhiambo described the loyalists as the real winners of the Mau Mau war while the Mau Mau fighters and the settlers were the losers. According to Adhiambo:

the loyalists not only won the war against the Mau Mau; they had won allies in Britain—the army and the Colonial Office—in the course of the war. In this feat they did a political somersault over the settlers, who were the other losers in the war. The settlers lost the colonial state and lost the White Man’s Country. The future of everybody stood starkly at stake because of the Mau Mau. In this sense the rhetoric of Mau Mau-land and freedom-became the turning point around the future Kenya were to be built.

The shutting of the settler influence on the colonial state enabled the higher education agenda of the Colonial Office to be pursued with less hostility from the settlers. This time, however, colonial officials were keen on using higher education as a tool to de-radicalize the Africans who were bitter with the British colonialism. In addition, the colonial officials wanted to use higher education as an instrument of rewarding the African loyalists thereby conveying the message that radical politics were worthless.

83 E. S. Atieno-Adhiambo, 41
84 E. S. Atieno-Adhiambo, 42
Even the settlers who were increasingly sidelined on policy matters seem to have acknowledged the ‘positive’ role played by the loyalists in fighting the Mau Mau and the need to reward them. A statement issued by the settler European Elected Members’ Organization, in 1953 observed that:

the European community must accept the responsibility of guiding the development of the African people to a more mature way of life so that they may take their proper place in the general affairs of the country. In this regard, special consideration must be given to those who have actively supported the security forces during the Mau Mau rebellion, including those amongst the Kikuyu tribe. In this task the collaboration of all people in our country who have achieved a civilized way of life should be encouraged, and accepted.\(^{85}\)

In higher education, the children of the loyalists had an easier time getting scholarships and bursaries to pursue their education. For those whose background or political sympathies were unknown, they had to prove their loyalty to the colonial state. The test of loyalty to the colonial state extended the anti-Mau Mau war to the level of ideology. Only those possessing an ideological view favorable to the British presence in Africa would have the opportunity to pursue higher education. A case in point of how ideological warfare was pursued was Samson Nathan Mwathi, a brilliant African medical officer, who had graduated from Makerere with a diploma in medicine in 1943 and after practicing for ten years wanted to proceed to the United Kingdom in 1953 to advance his medical studies. Mwathi had to prove his loyalty to the colonial government by getting a recommendation letter from a notable European before he could be allowed to leave the country. Mwathi approached a fellow medical officer, D. H. Mackay, a European Medical Officer of Health in Masai and requested him to recommend him to the

\(^{85}\) KNA/DC/EBU/1/4/4, “The European Elected Members’ Organization,” A Policy Statement of November 13 1953
government. In the letter dated November 26, 1952, Mackay described Mwathi as “a good and loyal Kikuyu who was deeply distressed by the conduct of fellow Kikuyus,” then waging the Mau Mau war against the colonial government. Mackay noted to the colonial government that Mwathi was “a good example of loyal Kikuyus who should be looked upon and helped to build the shattered reputation of his tribe.”  

With such recommendation, the colonial government felt assured of Mwathi’s loyalty at a time when many of his fellow “tribes-people” were bitter fighting the oppressive system.

The ideological warfare was extended to Makerere when the Makerere College Council released a new schedule of fees in January 1954 that increased the students’ fees charged by the institution. The fees burden for first year Arts students increased to £187 while that of sciences was £191. This meant that the African District Councils had to bear a larger proportion of fees because most Africans could not afford the new costs. The fee increase had a major impact on Kenyans especially those of Central Province the epicenter of the Mau Mau war. The African district councils in the province decided that they would award scholarships and bursaries to students from loyal backgrounds.

According to the Nyeri African District Council Bursaries Sub-Committee, children of Kikuyu Guards and other loyalists would be given preference over the rest of the population. A student like Cyrus Muthiga from Nyeri who was studying medicine at Makerere was in 1954 required to pay tuition fee of £166 excluding living expenses estimated to be £20 per annum. Out of that, the government of Kenya had offered to pay £107 and the Nyeri ADC had given him a bursary of £35 for a total of £142 thus leaving

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him to pay £24, excluding his personal expenses, an amount that Muthiga could not afford. Muthiga had to seek the intervention of Mr. Scott Dickson, the Educational Advisor and Secretary of the Christian Council of Kenya who pleaded with the Nyeri ADC to increase his bursary allocation. Without the intervention of a senior and influential European, Muthiga was at risk of discontinuing his studies at Makerere due to lack of financial support. These two scenarios exemplify the difficulties that students from unprivileged classes, including those suspected of harboring subversive sympathies, experienced in their quest to attain higher education in the early 1950s.

What was more intriguing, however, was the manner in which settlers began to agitate for higher educational opportunities in 1950s in almost the same fashion as other dispossessed racial groups in Kenya. The leading voice for this was Michael Blundell, a member of the Legislative Council representing the Rift Valley and leader of the European elected members. Blundell had sponsored a bill in the Legislative Council seeking to establish a loans scheme to help lower income Europeans to access loans for overseas education. While moving the motion, Blundell observed that Kenyan Europeans “lacked the same level of educational opportunities as their British counterparts, which had made the Kenyan government and the private sector to continue relying on British expatriates.” The Legislative Council passed the Education Loans Fund Ordinance bill in a modified form to include Kenyans of all races and was assented to by Governor Mitchell in 1952. Although the new loans fund did not discriminate in terms of race, the strict eligibility conditions locked out most Africans who could not afford the property

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89 “Motion on Education Passed” East Africa Standard, 11 May 1950
collateral demanded to qualify for the loan. The self-reimbursing fund that was created following the enactment of the Education Loans Fund Ordinance bill ended up benefitting Europeans and a few Asians at the expense of majority Africans.

Following the enactment of his bill, Blundell focused his attention on the local institutions, notably the Royal Technical College (RTC) and the Mombasa Institute of Muslim Education (MIME), which he wanted turned into first class colleges that would serve the higher educational needs of Kenyan Europeans. This would involve converting these institutions to territorial colleges thus locking out students from other East African territories. Blundell exploited the privileges of his position as the leader of the Elected European Members to introduce his proposal at the Inter-territorial Conference on Higher Education held in Nairobi, on October 20, 1953. During the Conference, Blundell made a proposal that the RTC, which was then under construction:

… should become a higher college of arts, science, and technology preparing students for the external examinations of the United Kingdom bodies granting diplomas and degrees…. The Mombasa Institute of Muslim Education would provide technical education to the level required by the final City and Guilds examination in the United Kingdom thus producing technicians who would supervise artisans. The technicians produced by Mombasa Institute of Muslim Education would work under the direction of professional technologists produced by the RTC.90

Blundell justified his plans for local university facilities due to the stiff competition that East African Europeans faced in United Kingdom universities. At the same time, Blundell observed that due to “climatic and predominantly African atmosphere, Makerere did not provide the desired opportunity for the Europeans.”91

Furthermore, Blundell called for the development of the RTC in a manner that would

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90 KNA/AV/12/235, “Higher Education General Policy,” contains proceeds of the Inter-territorial Conference on Higher Education held in Nairobi on October 20 1953
attract Europeans by introducing “reputable programs in engineering leaving Makerere to
cater for courses such as agriculture, which would attract Africans.”

Blundell’s proposal was a clever way of reviving settler influence on higher education policy.

Implicit in Blundell’s proposal was not just a need to increase higher education opportunities for Europeans in Kenya but a much greater desire to introduce racial segregation in the provision of higher education, as was already the case in basic education. The basis of Blundell’s proposal was that since the Colonial Office had already created higher education opportunities for Africans at Makerere, the Europeans required the same, if not better. But Makerere was a multiracial institution open to all racial groups. Europeans, therefore, could seek admission at Makerere or go abroad for their higher education. Due to their racial arrogance, however, East African Europeans had rejected Makerere as providing substandard higher education. As Blundell put it, Makerere had an ‘African atmosphere’ that repelled the Europeans. Clearly, Blundell’s plan for a higher education institution in Kenya was one that would have ‘a European atmosphere.’

Blundell however seems to have been stuck in the glorious past when settlers could easily influence policy matters. With the Colonial Office in control of policy and African nationalism at its peak, there was little chance that Blundell’s proposal would be accepted. Blundell’s proposal however was not dismissed offhand since several attendees at the Conference sympathized with the view that there was a need to avail increased higher education opportunities to both whites and nonwhites in East Africa. This view was reinforced by the increasing competition among students from the East African

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territories for admission at Makerere. In addition, the growing African nationalism was taking a territorial as opposed to an inter-territorial form. The delegates therefore felt that there was a need to increase higher education facilities in order to deal with the complexities arising from Blundell’s proposal and to address the increasing demands of the different territories and interest groups. In order to reverse the growing territorialism the Conference recommended the creation of an Inter-territorial Higher Education Policy Committee to coordinate higher education policy in the region. The Conference also proposed the creation of a Higher Education Fund through an act of the Central Legislative Assembly to solicit grants or bequests from private individuals or bodies that would go into funding higher education in East Africa.\textsuperscript{93}

Soon after the Conference, a powerful delegation of the IUC visited East Africa to assist Makerere in developing a plan that would guide its growth during the upcoming quinquennium (five-year period) that would run from 1956-60. The IUC delegation was led by Dr. Eric Ashby, the Vice Chancellor of Queens University and included Professor A.P. Thomson, Vice Principal and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Birmingham; Dr. J. F. Lockwood, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of London and Master of Birkbeck College; and Mr. I.C.M. Maxwell, Assistant Secretary of the IUC.\textsuperscript{94} This was the first visit by a delegation of the IUC since the elevation of Makerere to a university college of the University of London; it coincided with the first graduation ceremony for students who had attained the University of London degrees.

\textsuperscript{93} KNA/AV/12/235, “Higher Education Policy,” file contains proceeds of the Inter-Territorial Conference on Higher Education of 23 October 1953

The delegation arrived in East Africa at a crucial period of growing demands for higher education opportunities. The IUC delegation was briefed of the developments of the just concluded Inter-territorial Conference on Higher Education and of the higher education challenges of East Africa. The delegation therefore did not confine itself to its mandate of helping Makerere to plan and prepare financial estimates for the coming 1956 to 1960 quinquennium but rather took on the additional responsibility of assessing the overall higher education situation in East Africa.

In its assessment, the Ashby’s team strove to strike a middle-ground that would address the settler needs as articulated by Blundell’s proposal as well as maintaining the Colonial Office’s control of higher education policy and its principle of inter-territorialism. The team was also keen on maintaining multiracialism as the cornerstone of higher education policy. In this regard, the team was full praise for Makerere where a largely white staff maintained cordial relations with a largely African student body at a time of immense political and social crisis. The team noted that the favorable situation at the institution existed “due to the inspiration of Principal Bunsen’s liberal understanding and moral force which brought about coherence and harmony.”\(^9^5\) The team however was concerned with the continued European self-segregation and the resulting lack of diversity among the student body at Makerere. The racial composition of students at Makerere in 1954 consisted of 1 European, 5 Asians and 442 Africans. The team partly attributed the lack of diversity to unfounded criticisms from the Europeans about the “moral degeneration of African students at Makerere.”\(^9^6\)

Consequently, the Ashby’s team developed a plan that they hoped would be accepted by the Colonial Office as the basis for future higher education policy in East Africa. Under this plan, Makerere would remain the main university college in East Africa with “feeder colleges” in both Tanganyika and Kenya. Unlike Makerere, which Blundell had described as having a “distinct African atmosphere” the “feeder colleges” would be substantially inter-racial and would prepare students to reach Intermediate standards in the arts and sciences. In the distant future, when these “feeder colleges” had reached their full capacity, they could aspire to university college status. According to the IUC delegation, this plan would emphasize cooperation rather than separation as some settlers wanted. The RTC would become the first “feeder” college under this plan. In their articulation of the plan, the delegation stated:

The RTC has to serve to strengthen Makerere during its period of consolidation instead of draining the thin trickle of students at Makerere. If Makerere ignores the RTC, students there will be forced to seek external degrees. If Makerere offers to cooperate with the College, students there in arts and science will aspire to complete their courses at Makerere under the advantages of special relationship. With time, Uganda students who wish to graduate as engineers might after completing two years at Makerere proceed to the RTC to finish their studies, also under the special relationship.  

The Ashby delegation’s plan was a repudiation of the Kenyan settler plan as enunciated by Blundell to elevate the RTC to an almost all white university college autonomous from Makerere. The Ashby’s plan, therefore, reinforced the evolving policy of providing both higher technical and university education in an inter-territorial manner. This policy further neutralized the influence that territorial governments had on higher education policy.

However, for the Ashby delegation’s ideas to be given serious consideration in London, the group recommended to the Secretary of State for the Colonies:

…the need for the formation of a small committee from the UK consisting of persons not involved in East African education that would reexamine the higher education policy in the region and draw a comprehensive plan for the future.”

In making their policy recommendations, delegation members were convinced that any team formed by the Secretary of State would draw its membership from the IUC and the ACCCAST, the two bodies composed of British academics that the Colonial Office had relied upon for its higher education policy in the colonies. The delegation, therefore, felt confident that the team that the Secretary of State would form would consider their preliminary policy proposals.

The IUC delegation recommendations on higher education in East Africa received mixed reaction. Whereas colonial officials in Uganda fully supported its recommendations, Kenya and Tanzania were not impressed. In Kenya, Michael Blundell who represented the settler interests opposed the plan for territorial “feeder colleges” instead calling “for the recognition of the RTC as a university-college independent of Makerere”

In Tanzania, the opinion was much more complicated. In a letter to the East Africa High Commission, Governor E. F Twining of Tanganyika expressed the growing sense of territorial nationalism and autonomy in Tanganyika manifested by growing African and Asian desire to establish a university in their territory. Tanganyikans also opposed their continued funding of institutions of higher education in other East African

territories without having one of their own. They were especially opposed to financing the establishment of the RTC in Kenya, having already contributed to the creation of Makerere. According to Twining:

Tanganyikans have doubts as to the capacity of Makerere to meet fully the growing demands of East Africa for Africans alone, and on the other, the question of the provision of higher education for Indians is becoming a matter of political importance. In addition, the Trusteeship Council for Tanganyika is antagonistic to administrative unions and they regard Makerere with suspicion as being part of the attempt to bring the three East African territories closer together. Africans also prefer to attend an institution in their territory.\textsuperscript{100}

The advance of nationalist movements in East Africa in the early 1950s resulted in differing opinions in Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika on the future of higher education policy in the region. The IUC delegation recommendations that favored Makerere and thus Uganda at the expense of both Tanzania and Kenya further complicated the situation. To address this, the East Africa High Commission held a meeting in November 1954 on the subject of higher education. The Commission endorsed the IUC Delegation recommendation for the formation of a committee of experts to look into the immediate future development of higher education and prepare a blue print for higher education policy in East Africa. Both the IUC delegation and the East African Commission recommendations were presented to the Secretary of State who immediately directed the IUC and the ACCCAST to appoint members of a Working Party on Higher Education that would examine higher education needs of East Africa and develop a blue print to guide its development.

\textsuperscript{100} KNA/AV/12/224, “Higher Education African Makerere College,” contains Governor Twining Letter to the East Africa High Commission August 1954
Accordingly, the two bodies appointed a Working Party led by Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders, then Director of the London School of Economics and Chairman of the Inter-University Council. Other members of the Working Party included Sir David Lindsay Keir, Master of Balliol College, Oxford and Chairman of the ACCCAST; and Professor E. Giffen, of Civil and Mechanical Engineering at Queen Mary College, London University, and a member of the London University Senate Committee on Special Relationships. The Working Party terms of reference were:

i. to bring under review the existing provision for all post-secondary education in East Africa taking note of the plans in view for the development of the existing higher education institutions.

ii. To bring under review the estimated requirements of higher education in East Africa for the next ten years

iii. Having regard to the probable financial resources of the next decade, to make recommendations arising out of paragraphs (i) and (ii) 101

Before the Working Party began its work, the RTC released its advanced prospectus in June 1955 that detailed the courses and programs that it would offer once it officially opened in a year’s time. In the prospectus, the College indicated that in addition to the basic technical courses, it would offer programs leading to the degree of B.Sc. (Econ.), degrees in engineering, and to the intermediate examination for the degrees of B.A. and B.Sc. of the University of London. 102 The prospectus implemented the proposal articulated by Blundell and it demonstrated that the settlers through the chair of the RTC governing council, Mr. Willoughby still commanded influence.

The content and release of the advance prospectus was a signal to London that the East African higher education question was yet to be settled. The responsibility of providing direction and reducing settler influence on higher education policy, therefore,

102 Royal Technical College Advance Prospectus, June 1955
fell on the Working Party, which visited East Africa for over a month between July and August 1955.

In 1955 when the Carr Saunders Working Party visited East Africa, the Colonial Office powers in Kenya were increasing as the British forces with support from African loyalists were winning the war against the Mau Mau, while on the other hand, the settler influence on the colonial state was on the wane. Without the impediments placed by the settlers, the Colonial Office was now at a better position to implement a higher education policy that would lead to the creation of what Governor Mitchell had once described as “an aristocratic of culture.”103 In East Africa, and especially Kenya, the formation of this important class had been delayed by the intransigence of settlers. The decline of the settler power after the outbreak of the Mau Mau war, however, created an opportunity for the Colonial Office to intervene and assert its influence in creating “an aristocratic of culture,” an important step in ensuring the continued influence of the British even after granting Kenya self-rule.104 The rise of the African nationalism as illustrated by the Mau Mau War, and the concerted efforts of the British academia represented by the IUC, the ACCCAST and the Working Party, had created conducive conditions for the Colonial Office to seize control and determine higher education policy in East Africa. The subsequent period, as the next chapter demonstrates, would witness a virtual eclipse of the settler influence by the Colonial Office which steered university policy in a more responsive manner to the local demands but still careful to safeguard the position and interests of the imperial government in a rapidly changing political environment of East Africa.

104 Apollos Nwauwa, 126
CHAPTER 2

COLONIAL POLICIES AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EAST AFRICA, 1953-1963

This chapter will investigate how the Colonial Office supplanted the settlers from the role of steering higher education policy leading to the crystallization of the inter-territorial higher education policy, which the British colonial government bequeathed to the newly independent nations of East Africa in the early 1960s. Before gaining an upper-hand in controlling higher education policy in East Africa, the Colonial Office had to contend with various interest groups that were vying for influence in university policy in the 1950s. The various interest groups included the settlers, Asians, and Africans with the Colonial Office playing the role of a non-partisan mediator. As the latter events would reveal, the Colonial Office also had an agenda of control just as the other interest groups in East Africa.

After mediating the deal that merged the settler and the Asian plans to create the RTC in the early 1950s, the Colonial Office left the responsibility of implementation to the colonial administration in Kenya, which led by Governor Mitchell was biased in supporting the settlers at the expense of other racial groups. Thus, when it came to appointing the top administrators of the RTC, Governor Mitchell did not consider the representatives of the GMAC despite the steering role they played in creating the institution. Mitchell gave the top positions in the college to prominent figures in the settler community, appointing G. P. Willoughby as Chair of the RTC governing council.
while Major-General Colin Bullard became the Principal.\textsuperscript{1} The Asians resented this snub by Governor Mitchell.

The departure of Governor Mitchell in 1952 and the subsequent decline of settler power following the outbreak of the Mau Mau war however changed the political environment in the country. Now considered as potential allies in the anti-Mau Mau war, the colonial government could not easily ignore the Asians. In addition, the colonial government still needed monetary support from the Asians to help in founding the RTC. Thus, in October 1953 the colonial government agreed to meet the GMAS to iron out the differences that emanated from the apparent disregard of the Asian community in the running of the RTC. The colonial government team that met the GMAC composed of R. G. Turnbull, acting minister of education, Michael Blundell, leader of the European Elected Members, and Willoughby, Chairman of the RTC council. This meeting granted the GMAS a role in selecting faculty and confirmed their place in the governance of the college.\textsuperscript{2}

Encouraged by the positive outcome of the meeting, the GMAS pressed for even more clout in the governance of the RTC. The GMAS pegged its expectations on the Royal Technical College of East Africa bill slated for debate in the Legislative Assembly of the East African High Commission. This bill intended to make the administration of RTC, until then undertaken by Kenya alone, an East African affair. Thus like Makerere the RTC would officially become an inter-territorial college of Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar. The outcome of the bill however did not impress the GMAS. The Royal Technical College of East Africa Act of 1954 vested the administration of the

\textsuperscript{1} KNA/BY/12/29, “Higher Education East Africa,” file contains The Royal Technical Institute Prospectus, June 1955
\textsuperscript{2} GMAS, \textit{Souvenir Volume, 1}, 50
College on an inter-territorial governing council of seventeen members of whom the GMAS would appoint only two. The passing of the act was a setback to the GMAS considering the £250,000 that they contributed to the RTC just before the enactment of bill. The Asians suffered further setback when the colonial government failed to provide a matching grant to their contribution as per an earlier agreement. According to the terms of the agreement reached when the GMAS agreed to combine their Gandhi Memorial plans with the settler technical college plans, the Colonial Office would provide a matching grant of up to the £250,000 raised by Asians for the RTC’s Gandhi Memorial Academy wing. When the GMAS submitted the amount, however, the imperial government did not honor its promise. Instead, it awarded a grant of £107,000 from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund directly to the RTC to complete the assembly hall and workshops, buildings that were not a part of the Gandhi Memorial academy.³ Although the Colonial Office failed to keep its word on the agreed contribution, the Secretary of State agreed to change the name Royal Technical College to read “the Royal Technical College of East Africa incorporating the Gandhi Memorial Academy.”⁴ The change of name was an acknowledgement by the Colonial Office of the role by the GMAS in the creation of the RTC.

Although the Europeans had managed to force the Asians into a compromise, the desire to honor Gandhi by founding an academic college persisted. The Asians had initially wanted an academic college similar to Makerere, not a technical college as desired by both the settlers and the Colonial Office. However, with their powers on the wane, following the intervention of the Colonial Office during the Mau Mau war, the

³ GMAS, *Souvenir Volume 1*, 54
⁴ Ibid
settlers began to change their original position in favor of the RTC to offer degrees. Leading the settlers on this issue was Blundell who agitated for the RTC to offer external degrees of the University of London. Now, settlers and Asians were for the first time on the same side in their vision for the RTC. The newfound unity between the Asians and the settlers was however ineffectual because the Colonial Office with its increased political influence could not allow the RTC to offer degrees.

The Mau Mau war had provided the Colonial Office with the opportunity to push through the post-war colonial reforms that had hitherto failed due to obduracy of the settlers. As Wunyabari Maloba observed, the outbreak of the Mau Mau war demonstrated that the settlers could not be relied upon to safeguard vital British economic interests in Kenya. Accordingly:

> the perennial fear of successive British governments that settlers would rebel if upset or ‘betrayed’, and thereby cause intolerable political problems in London, was now easily overcome by the fact that there was a resident British army that would have easily subdued such settler mischief.”

The political climate of the mid 1950s characterized by the growth in power of the Colonial Office therefore explains the relative ease with which the first Working Party overruled the settler backed RTC plans for degree programs. The decline of settler power after the outbreak of the Mau Mau war enabled the Colonial Office to control and impose its vision on the provision of higher education in East Africa. This responsibility fell squarely on the first Working Party of 1955 led by Alexander Carr-Saunders.

During their visit, the Working Party conducted extensive interviews with government officials, members of the academia, business people and the public in East Africa.

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Africa. In a report produced after the end of their trip, the Working Party noted the need for increased higher education facilities in the region due to the inordinate amount of resources spent in sending students abroad for higher education. Kenya was spending disproportionately more resources on overseas education, which between 1945 and 1955 amounted to over £400,000 compared to Uganda’s £110,000 and Tanganyika’s and Zanzibar’s combined amount of £100,000. The Working Party predicted that Kenya’s costs for overseas education would double by 1960. In 1955, there were 1600 Kenyan students pursuing higher education in the UK and many others in different parts of the world. There were many Kenyan Asians and Africans studying in India and Pakistan with the assistance of the Indian government. The Working Party further emphasized that the East African region was in great need of university graduates as indicated by the high absorption rate of Makerere graduates. This demand, they further noted, was likely to increase in the coming period.

Although the demand for increased higher education opportunities in East Africa was obvious, there was no convergence in opinion between the Colonial Office and the settlers on a common strategy to address the issue. Both parties’ interests lay in controlling policy. The settlers were interested in de-linking the RTC from Makerere thereby neutralizing the inter-territorial higher education policy of the Colonial Office. On the other hand, the Colonial Office wanted to gain full control of higher education policy in East Africa through the inter-territorial provision of higher education. The Working Party, appointed by the Colonial Office, therefore sought to limit the influence of the settlers by upholding the inter-territorial concept and halting plans by the RTC

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7 Ibid
governing council to offer external degrees of the University of London. In their report, the Working Party clearly noted that the College had to halt its plans to offer degrees since its founding act stated that the RTC would not duplicate programs offered by any other institution of higher education in East Africa. It was now obvious that the College intended to duplicate programs offered at Makerere. In addition, it was noted that the plans to offer degrees were in breach of the Royal Technical College of East Africa Act of 1954, which specified that the College “would only grant diplomas and certificates in higher technology training, professional training, and vocational training, either in conjunction with any other training institution or separately.”

It is regrettable that a college instituted by legislation in a British territory and supported in large part from public funds, proposes to undertake university work without previous consultation with the Inter-University Council and with the Advisory Committee on Colleges of Arts, Science and Technology.

Clearly, the Working Party was firm in ensuring that the Colonial Office had total control of higher education policy in East Africa. While appreciating the need for a new university college in Kenya, the Working Party insisted that the RTC had to adhere to its founding mandate of providing higher technical education. The Working Party, however, noted that Nairobi would be the ideal site for a new university college in East Africa due to the greater crystallization of territorial consciousness in Kenya and the striking

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8 *The Royal Technical College of East Africa Act, 1954*, Section 3
industrial, commercial and administrative developments in the city. The new college would specialize in engineering programs not offered by Makerere and have basic faculties of arts and science. Meanwhile, due to the urgent need for engineers, the Working Party recommended the setting up of a faculty of engineering at the RTC, which would become a department of Makerere College until the establishment of a new university college in Nairobi.

Although the Working Party recommendation that the RTC should not offer degree courses received a lot of opposition from Kenya, its views on the need to establish more university colleges guided future university policy in the region. In addition, the Working Party’s strong opinion about the need to maintain inter-territoriality as a guiding concept of university policy remained in effect for a long time to come. More importantly, however, the Working Party’s recommendations ensured that the Colonial Office gained full control of higher education policy in East Africa, which meant a diminished role for the settlers. In the subsequent period, African and Asian opinion would play a much more substantial role in influencing the Colonial Office’s policy decisions on higher education. Thus, the Working Party played an important role in setting the tone of debate on the future expansion and development of higher education in East Africa.

One of the Carr Saunders Working Party controversial recommendation that ignited a crisis that lasted for several years was its refusal to honor the agreement reached between the Asians and the colonial government articulating that the RTC would offer both technical and academic programs. The Working Party recommended that instead of

11 Ibid, 31
the earlier planned institution that would have a technical part and an ‘academic’ wing that was named the Gandhi Memorial College, the composition of the college would now include a lower technical and a higher technological sections. Under this plan, the higher technological work would include all professional and diploma level studies. On the other hand, the lower technical section would include all vocational work in different crafts. The Working Party went ahead to propose that all higher technological work would become an inter-territorial concern while the lower technical would be Kenya’s territorial responsibility.  

The Working Party’s redefinition of the RTC’s work violated the promises made to the GMAS that allowed the establishment of a Gandhi Memorial Academy within the RTC offering academic programs in arts, sciences and commerce. According to the new redefinition, the RTC would neither offer degrees of any kind nor engage in any sort of academic work in arts and sciences. The Working Party’s position was a heavy blow to the Asians who had made enormous financial contribution to the RTC that in 1955 amounted to over £400,000. By then the Asian community had made more financial contribution to the RTC than any of the East African territories or even Britain.  

In the meantime, the Working Party’s impetuous mission to reorganize and control higher education policy on behalf of the Colonial Office had to contend with various stakeholders in East Africa. In addition to the Kenya settlers and Asians, the Uganda Catholic Order of the Brothers of Christian Instruction desired to establish a university college. The Brothers of Christian Instruction ran the Mount St. Theresa Training College, a private junior secondary teacher training college at Kisubi near

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Kampala Uganda. In 1955, the Catholic Order began plans to establish a Roman Catholic University at the site of their college in association with Canada’s University of Montreal. According to their plan, the Brothers of Christian Instruction wanted the proposed university college to initially admit members of their Order. When they approached the colonial government with their proposal, they were referred to the Working Party then visiting East Africa.

In a proposal sent to the Working Party, the Order detailed that they intended to found a university known as the Mugwanya Catholic University College, offering “bachelors’ degree in arts, science, commerce, economics and education and Master’s degrees in many of the subjects taught for these degrees (sic). Courses for doctors’ degrees would be given in due course.”14 The degrees would be those of the University of Montreal and the arrangements for the examinations would be similar to those made by Makerere and the University of London under the scheme of Special Relationship. The University College would become an independent university at the end of ten years. The plan specified that the envisaged university college would not compete with Makerere College and would not seek financial assistance from governments.15

The assurances that the planned university college would not compete with Makerere for students since it would only admit members of the Brothers of Christian Instruction Order, and that it would be financially independent, did not satisfy the Working Party. The Working Party dismissed the plans to establish a Catholic university noting that:

The foundation of a university college or university is a matter of public interest, which cannot fail to affect existing institutions… In any event, an

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15 Ibid, 38-39
institution whose activities are planned on as wide a scale as the draft regulations suggest would be unable to restrict its membership indefinitely. Pressure to admit ordinary students would in the course of years arise in ways not yet predictable. No institution with the wise aims here set out and attached to the standards of the University of Montreal would be able indefinitely to avoid making some claims upon the general pool of public and quasi-public funds available for higher education. At the same time, the College would be drawing to some extent upon the general supply of candidates qualified for higher education.\textsuperscript{16}

The rejection of a Catholic university was intriguing considering that Catholics and other Christian mission groups were the pioneers in the provision of basic education in East Africa. In territories such as Kenya and Tanganyika, missionaries were almost the exclusive providers of basic education with minimal support from the government. The Working Party’s rejection of the plans by the Catholics to establish a university demonstrates the unwillingness of the Colonial Office to allow interference of other parties in higher education. The Colonial Office believed that the then ongoing higher education reforms had to be conducted within the careful confines of policy to avoid any radical shakeups of the existing socio-political and economic order. Although the Colonial Office had since the end of the Second World War assumed center-stage in addressing the welfare of the colonial people, it however believed that its policies required careful planning and implementation. By rejecting the establishment of a Catholic university, the Working Party signified that the Colonial Office would not countenance any plans that fell outside its higher education policy as articulated in the Asquith report.

Although the Working Party rejected the Catholic higher education proposal, its final report noted the need for increased access. In the Working Party’s view, however, Makerere College could adequately meet this demand in the short run if it increased its

capacity. Yet, the team expressed its disappointment because the College had yet to begin efforts towards increasing its capacity noting: “It is disappointing that the plans of the College do not make provision during the next decade for a larger supply of those whose services are so badly needed.”\textsuperscript{17} The Working Party therefore proposed how Makerere would expand its capacity: “The plans of the College forecast a student population of under 900 in 1961; we hope that the number might be between 1,000 and 1,100.”\textsuperscript{18} To demonstrate the need for expansion of university opportunities, the Working Party also noted:

Until the range of undergraduate studies available in East Africa is much wider than at present, it will be necessary for some students to proceed elsewhere for the kind of university work they want to do. There is yet for example no law school in East Africa; and no medical course leading to a qualification registrable by the General Medical Council\textsuperscript{19}

The Working Party’s views about expansion were similar to those of the East African Royal Commission established in 1952 to “examine all possible measures to achieve improved standards of living, having regard to possible increases in the population and to the present congestion of Africans population in certain areas.”\textsuperscript{20} The Royal Commission noted that the “one university college for East Africa at Makerere could not adequately supply persons of high educational attainment capable of rising to the highest positions in the public service and in commerce and industry.”\textsuperscript{21} Unlike the Royal Commission, however the Working Party contended that the expansion of Makerere alone was sufficient to meet the rising demand for university opportunities. As

\textsuperscript{17} Report of the Working Party on Higher Education in East Africa, July-August, 1955, 22
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 22
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid,50
\textsuperscript{20} East Africa Royal Commission 1953-55 Report, Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of Her Majesty June 1955, 1
\textsuperscript{21} East Africa Royal Commission 1953-55 Report, 185
subsequent events showed, the Working Party had underestimated the level of university demand and the rising territorial consciousness, which necessitated the establishment of additional universities in East Africa.

Meanwhile, the underlying principle for the Working Party’s recommendations was control of higher education policy through the provision of university and higher technology level education inter-territorially. Makerere would serve the university level needs while the RTC would provide the higher technological needs. This goal was summarized in the paragraph that noted:

On the future development of higher education in East Africa we would lay down the fundamental principle that higher education is indivisible, that it is in the truest sense inter-territorial, that it must be so planned as to meet the collective needs of the East African territories that neither on economic nor on educational grounds can there be any valid argument for separate and self-contained higher education systems.22

The Working Party however allowed for technical education to be undertaken territorially but only at “government institutions called technical institutes.”23 The insistence on ‘government institutions’ precluded non-governmental stakeholders such as missionary groups from entering into this field. By 1950s, East Africa had several government technical institutes in Uganda and Kenya. In Uganda, there had existed the Kampala Technical School, the Public Works Department Engineering for training engineering assistants, and the Muljibhai Madhvani Commercial School, which in 1953 combined under a unified institution known as the Kampala Technical Institute. In Kenya, there already existed the Mombasa Institute of Muslim Education (MIME), an inter-territorial institution serving Muslims in the coastal area of East Africa. The Working Party added another technical institution in Kenya after the suggestion that the

23 Ibid, 40
RTC needed to focus only on higher technological work and leave the lower technical work to a technical college that would be established in Nairobi. Tanganyika did not yet have an operational technical college although two were underway in Dar-es-Salaam and the Kilimanjaro Native Co-operative Union’s proposed institute for commercial education for Moshi. The Working Party, thus, articulated a plan that created a three-tiered higher education policy for East Africa composed of university level work at Makerere, higher technological work at the RTC, and lower technical work to be handled at various territorial institutions.

The Carr-Saunders led Working Party therefore laid the basis for the Colonial Office to wrestle higher education policy in East Africa from the settlers who had controlled it since the end of the Second World War and also guarded against private interference in the provision of higher education. Settlers were in no position to resist the Colonial Office’s influences since they depended on it and the colonial government for their economic and political security. Similarly, the Catholics resigned themselves to policies emanating from London because they were powerless against the colonial government.

The Colonial Office however faced a dilemma in dealing with the GMAS that represented the interests of the Asian community since GMAS had contributed generously to the proposed RTC on the understanding that the institution would offer academic programs in arts, science and commerce in addition to the technical courses favored by the Europeans. The Carr-Saunders Working Party seemed unnerved by the Asian contribution. It neither acknowledged the efforts of the Asians nor articulated a mechanism for honoring the gentleman’s agreement reached with them. The unfolding

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events however would soon force the colonial government to respond to the Asian question, prompting a radical reorganization of university policy in East Africa.

Meanwhile the RTC opened its doors for classes in April 1956 although the official opening ceremony took place on July 12, 1956 presided over by the Vice President of India, Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishan, and the governor of Kenya, Sir Evelyn Baring. The invitation of Dr. Radhakrishan to the opening ceremony was an acknowledgement of the role played by Asians and India in the founding of the RTC. It was proof that despite the reluctance by the Colonial Office to honor the agreement on offering academic programs at the RTC, Asians still commanded political and economic influence in East Africa that the colonial government could not ignore.

As soon as the College opened its doors, a controversy over the admission of Uganda’s students arose because of the lack of spaces for Ugandan students at the RTC’s hostels after Kenyan students had filled all the available accommodation spaces for 100 students. The RTC thus asked 29 students from Uganda to seek their own accommodation. In response, Uganda rejected its RTC admission quota and opted instead to send its students to the Kampala Technical Institute. A British colonial official in Uganda justified the action noting, “while the European and Asian students might have found it possible to get suitable accommodation in Nairobi that would not be the case with Africans and on welfare grounds we ought not let them go.” The incident touched

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25 *East Africa Standard* 23 July 1956, 1
a raw nerve among the Ugandans and soon calls to elevate the Kampala Technical Institute into a college of technology along the lines of the RTC began to surface.27

The accommodation controversy and the subsequent calls for the elevation of the Kampala Technical Institute to a status similar to the RTC demonstrated the difficulties of implementing an inter-territorial higher education policy as developed by the Working Party. Soon, the three East African territories could not even agree on the modalities of inter-territorial financing of the RTC. The main bone of contention was the dual nature and role of the RTC as both a territorial college providing lower technical courses for Kenya and an inter-territorial higher technological college for East Africa. The March 26, 1956 and May 29 1956 meetings of the Ministers and Directors of Education in East Africa deliberated the financing issue and agreed on “an equal inter-territorial financing of higher technological work provided such courses offer equal opportunity of admission to students from all the territories.”28 Unlike Makerere, the RTC would accept part-time students from Kenya. Thus, the East African officials agreed that:

Part time higher technological courses would be largely restricted to Nairobi students and the cost would be met by the Kenya government against a financial reimbursement from the governments of the other territories for those of their students enrolled in such courses, the amount of the reimbursement calculated on a capitation basis agreed upon by the governments in consultation with the college authorities.29

The officials also confirmed the Working Party’s proposal about making the lower technical work at the RTC a territorial concern. Accordingly:

27 KNA/ED/3/79, “Higher Education General” the file contains a confidential memo by Uganda’s Governor Sir Frederick Crawford to Kenya’s Evelyn Baring noting the feelings among Ugandans dated 4 December 1957
The lower technical institute courses including Ordinary and Advanced level in technological studies, and technical or craft level courses in building construction, elementary surveying, geometrical drawing, engineering, commerce and so on would be financed by the Kenya government with a reimbursement from the other territories for their students on an agreed capitation basis.30

Despite the agreement, controversy persisted over what courses were to be funded inter-territorially. One of the main issues concerned a four-year diploma course in mechanical engineering introduced at the RTC. In 1956 there were 56 students enrolled in the program 32 of whom were from the East African Railways and Harbors, 2 from the East African Airways and 1 from the Posts and Telecommunications Administration, which were all service branches of the East African High Commission. According to Kenyan officials, since two thirds of the students were employees of the High Commission, the program called for inter-territorial funding as opposed to just being the responsibility of the Kenyan government.31

Tanganyika, however, clearly stated that it would not fund the mechanical engineering program because the four-year program was a course at the technical institute level run by the RTC at the request of the government of Kenya pending the establishment of a technical institute in Kenya. According to a Tanganyikan official:

the fact that the course is attended largely by employees of the High Commission does not, in my opinion, alter the position in any way. If a large proportion of High Commission students attend any of the courses provided by the technical institute in Tanganyika, when it is opened there will be no question of applying to the Kenya and Uganda governments for a grant in respect of these courses, and I imagine that the same attitude will be, or is, adopted by Uganda in similar circumstances. My view, therefore, is that the Kenya government should meet the full cost of the

31 KNA/AV/12/79, “Royal Technical College” contains a letter by Willoughby addressed to Knox Johnston at the East High Commission dated October 2, 1956
course but should charge, and retain, such fees for attendance at the course as it considers appropriate.32

The recruitment and financing difficulties that the RTC faced were not merely teething problems likely to fade away with the passage of time. Rather, they were expressions of growing territorial nationalism, interestingly propagated by European colonial officials. Soon, the growing ambitions of the different territories to possess institutions of higher education became the driving force steering the direction and pace of change in policy.

The Working Party, which had just published its report, had foreseen the likely financing difficulties of the RTC and had therefore recommended the setting up of a committee to address the issue. The Secretary of State responded to the recommendation by reappointing E. Giffen and D. H. Alexander who had earlier served on the Working Party to return to East Africa and among other issues:

- to advise on the separation of technical institution work at the College from work at higher technology level and to make recommendations regarding methods of financing such work, and to make such other recommendations regarding the financial position of the RTC as may be considered necessary.33

Giffen and Alexander visited East Africa in November and December 1956 and thereafter produced a report in which they noted that:

- the drastic transformation of the RTC from its original conception as technical Institute for Kenya to a combined technical institute and technical college for East Africa and finally to a senior institution for the

32 KNA/AV/12/79, “Royal Technical College” contains a memo by J.P Attenborough, Member for Social Services, the Secretariat, Dar es Salaam October 13 1956 to Kenya, Uganda, and the East Africa High Commission
33 KNA/AV/12/79, “Royal Technical College,” Report By Professor E. Giffen and D. H. Alexander to the Chairman of the East Africa High Commission regarding their Visit to the Royal Technical College of East Africa in November and 1 December 1956, 1
East African territories had led to some degree of confusion regarding the present position of the College.\(^{34}\)

Unlike Makerere, the RTC faced a unique situation because it combined lower and technical courses with the inter-territorial concept only applied to higher technological level courses while the lower technical level courses mainly admitted Kenyan students. The dual role of the RTC had therefore created misunderstanding among the territories over who should bear the greater burden of its funding. The offering of part-time courses both at the lower technical and higher technological levels aggravated the differences. Uganda and Tanganyika viewed Kenya as benefiting disproportionately from the RTC due to its location in Nairobi, which made it possible for Kenyan students to enroll for the part-time courses unlike students from other territories. As the Giffen and Alexander committee observed, the disagreements over funding had created “uneasiness and uncertainty at the RTC due to the failure by the three territories to formulate a scheme for its financing.”\(^{35}\) In order to get out of the quagmire, Giffen and Alexander proposed a financing scheme that would encompass, “the equal sharing among the three territories of the basic costs composed of costs for maintaining the fabric and equipment of the College together with the minimum of staff needed to keep the various departments in a position to receive students.”\(^ {36}\)

The committee observed that by sharing these costs “each territory establishes its right to send its share of students to the College. The other costs of running the College would be allocated on a per capita basis according to the numbers of students sent from

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\(^{34}\) KNA/AV/12/79, “Royal Technical College,” Report By Professor E. Giffen and D. H. Alexander to the Chairman of the East Africa High Commission regarding their Visit to the Royal Technical College of East Africa in November and December 1956, 15

\(^{35}\) Ibid, 18

\(^{36}\) KNA/AV/12/79, “Royal Technical College,” Report By Professor E. Giffen and D. H. Alexander to the Chairman of the East Africa High Commission regarding their Visit to the Royal Technical College of East Africa in November and December 1956, 18
each territory.”  

On October 1, 1957, the Colonial Office convened a follow-up meeting in London to deliberate on the proposals made by the reports of the Working Party and Giffen and Alexander committee. At the meeting were representatives of the University of London, the IUC, the Council for Overseas Colleges of Arts, Science and Technology, COCAST (formerly ACCCAST) and the ministers of education from East Africa. This meeting reiterated most of the recommendations made by the Working Party and the Giffen and Alexander committee. In doing so, the meeting listened to and dismissed an appeal made by the governing council of the RTC that the college be allowed to prepare students for the external degrees of the University of London in economics. The meeting also heard and dismissed an appeal by the GMAS challenging the Working Party’s position that disallowed the establishment of an academic wing at the RTC. The meeting however noted that the obligation to the GMAS would be met “by building up as soon as possible in Kenya a university college which would provide degree courses in non-technological subjects and to which the Gandhi interest in the RTC could be transferred.”  

The Committee further proposed the formation of an Inter-territorial Advisory Committee on Technical Education, which would deal with financing, and other critical issues of technical colleges in East Africa. The proposal to form this committee of technocrats would protect the RTC from political bickering and interferences from politicians and colonial administrators who had hitherto made critical decisions on financing of the College.

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The meeting noted that since the establishment of university colleges in Kenya and

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37 KNA/AV/12/79, “Royal Technical College,” Report By Professor E. Giffen and D. H. Alexander to the Chairman of the East Africa High Commission regarding their Visit to the Royal Technical College of East Africa in November and December 1956, 18

38 KNA/ED/3/7, “Higher Education General, “Minutes of a Meeting held in the Colonial Office on the 1st October, 1957 to discuss Higher Education in East Africa"
Tanganyika was being considered, “serious examination should be made of the desirability of carrying out any such development within the scope of a single University College of East Africa, of which all colleges territorially situated would be constituent units.”³⁹ The meeting also suggested the appointment of a second Working Party that would consider the future pattern of university development in East Africa. The suggested Working Party:

Should be set up in 1959 in time for its report to be considered before the start of the new quinquennium in 1961 and of the next Colonial Development and Welfare period (if any) in 1960. This working party could include within its scope the desirability of fitting projected university development in Tanganyika into a general East Africa pattern and would supersede the working party, which had been tentatively envisaged for Tanganyika in 1958. It could also consider what the relationship should be between any degree teaching started in Kenya before a full university college could be established and the University of London and Makerere.⁴⁰

In reaction to the Colonial Office’s incessant attention to East African higher education, the East African governments issued a White Paper on higher education in March 1958. The White Paper rehashed most of the recommendations made by the earlier teams but also expressed urgency on the need to establish a second university college in Nairobi. The White Paper reiterated that any new institutions of higher education had to be “closely associated within the scope of a single University of East Africa, of which all present and future colleges territorially situated would be constituent units.”⁴¹ Clarifying how the inter-territorial concept would work, the White Paper noted, “… the preparation for engineering qualifications will, at least for many years to come remain in the hands of the RTC whereas the study of medicine and agriculture are likely to remain the

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³⁹ KNA/ED/3/7, “Higher Education General, “Minutes of a Meeting held in the Colonial Office on the 1st October, 1957 to discuss Higher Education in East Africa
⁴⁰ Ibid
⁴¹ White Paper, Higher Education in East Africa, 5
responsibility of Makerere.”42 The governments however justified the duplication of arts and sciences courses observing that, “the measure of duplication contemplated in arts and science is considered to be justifiable and not uneconomical due to the high demands in these areas and also because any University institution should have Arts and Science faculties as its core.”43

The publication of the White Paper demonstrated a radical shift in attitude of the colonial officials in East Africa especially those in Kenya who in the past had sided with the settlers in frustrating efforts to increase access to university level education. The assertion of political power by the Colonial Office in Kenya in response to the outbreak of the Mau Mau rebellion in 1952 had resulted in the alignment of attitudes between the colonial officials in East Africa and the colonial officials in London. Thus, the White Paper rejected the earlier settler plans where the RTC would have provided external degrees of the University of London noting: “degree work in the East African Colleges should be conducted only through the special relationship with the University of London as described in the Asquith Report and referred to by the Working Party.”44 In addition, the White Paper rejected agreements between the colonial government and the GMAS in which the RTC would provide both academic and technical courses. Accordingly, the White Paper noted that the RTC would not offer any “academic or degree work except possibly in technological subjects at a later stage.”45 Furthermore, as Kenya’s Council of Ministers whose members were involved in the drafting of the White Paper, noted, “the

42 White Paper, Higher Education in East Africa 12
43 Ibid 5
44 Ibid 10
45 Ibid 10
RTC should be the faculty of technology of the future Nairobi University College and be a constituent college in the future East African University”\textsuperscript{46}

On the question of the establishment of a Gandhi Memorial College, the East African governments affirmed that they would meet their obligation to the GMAS. This would be done by “starting the University College at Nairobi in a modest way rather earlier than had otherwise been intended and by starting it in the beginning with only a Faculty of Arts which would offer courses for the general B.A.”\textsuperscript{47} The Minister of Finance would later insist on the strict interpretation of the words “in a modest way” for the new university to receive budgetary support from his ministry.\textsuperscript{48}

The White Paper revisited the issue of the inter-territorial financing of the RTC earlier addressed by the Giffen and Alexander committee and reiterated that the RTC had “claim on all the contributing governments in respect of basic recurrent expenditure irrespective of the use which each territory makes of the College.”\textsuperscript{49} The solution to the squabbles over the financing system of the RTC would involve the separation of lower institute level work from higher technological work. The governments agreed that Kenya would have to found a new technical college that would take over the lower technical work of the RTC and leave the higher technological work as an inter-territorial concern. The White Paper also supported the formation of an Inter-territorial Advisory Committee on Technical Education to oversee technical education, and an Inter-territorial Grants Committee which:

\textsuperscript{46} KNA/ED/3/79, “Higher Education General,” contains proceedings of the Council of Ministers meeting in Nairobi December 18\textsuperscript{th} 1957 that discussed draft white paper on the report of the working party on higher education in east Africa
\textsuperscript{47} White Paper, \textit{Higher Education in East Africa}, 10
\textsuperscript{48} KNA/ED/3/79, “Higher Education General,” Council of Ministers meeting in Nairobi December 18\textsuperscript{th} 1957 that discussed draft white paper on the report of the working party on higher education in east Africa
\textsuperscript{49} White Paper, \textit{Higher Education in East Africa} 10
would examine the proposed higher education programme as a whole and in general make sure that the proposals are academically sound and that their priority, timing and cost, both capital and recurrent, have been correctly judged and are reasonable.\textsuperscript{50}

Finally, the White Paper proposed raising the College entry qualifications from School Certificate to Higher School Certificate. According to the White Paper:

Best results will not be obtained from the teaching available at Makerere College and to some extent at the RTC so long as the School Certificate continues to be accepted as a sufficient qualification for entry to these institutions. It is more suitable that students should be taught up to latter level as boys and girls of secondary schools, rather than as undergraduates at a university college. Up to this level they are not sufficiently advanced academically to be treated as undergraduates; and their general intellectual standard is such that they are likely to find difficulty in benefiting fully by instruction from professors or lecturers teaching large groups of perhaps 40 or more at a time.\textsuperscript{51}

Based on the White Paper’s recommendation, Makerere would discontinue the two years of Intermediate pre-degree work that prepared students for the final two years of degree work. The new reforms would require the adoption of the British A-Level system by the East African high schools. The A-levels constituted an addition of another level of education after the completion of the normal four years of secondary school education. In Britain, the A-levels lasted for two years and prepared qualified students for university work. At the end of their A-levels British students sat for the Higher School Certificate examination that qualified them for university admission. Similarly, East Africa would adopt the Higher School Certificate, which replaced the Cambridge School Certificate examination done after the end of four years of secondary education as the qualifying exam for university admission. The replacement of School Certificate with the Higher School Certificate as the entry requirement to university-colleges would bring the

\textsuperscript{50} White Paper, \textit{Higher Education in East Africa}, 14
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid 16
entire East African education system in conformity with that of the United Kingdom. This development was a major step towards academic imperialism that would characterize East Africa’s education system in the postcolonial period.

The White Paper by the East Africa governments requested the Secretary of State to appoint a second Working Party on higher education in East Africa, which would develop an implementation plan for the ideas and proposals suggested by the White Paper. The White Paper however called for the new Working Party to begin its work in 1958 instead of 1959 as the earlier meeting held in London had suggested. The Secretary of State, Allan Lenox-Boyd, soon responded to the request from East Africa and appointed the second Working Party on Higher Education in East Africa. The Working Party appointed in May 1958 was composed exclusively of British academics, a perplexing development considering the prevailing political environment of intensified African nationalism and decolonization. Already Ghana had become a trailblazer in Africa by achieving independence in 1957 and many other nations in the continent were set to join the club of free nations. The composition of the Working Party showed that the British colonial government had different designs for Kenya, at a time when Africans in other countries were gaining prominent positions in running their own affairs. Based on the actions of the Colonial Office it is clear that by the late 1950s the British government still saw Kenya remaining “a white man’s country” for a long time to come. Bethwell Ogot has noted that, “…when the back of Mau Mau had been broken after 1955, the colonial officials lulled themselves into the conviction that it would take another

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generation before Kenya could be considered for self-government.” Even as late as 1959, when the end of British colonialism in East Africa was apparent, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lennox-Boyd, and the East African Colonial Governors’ meeting in England agreed that Kenya would not achieve her self-government until after 1975, following Tanganyika and Uganda.

Dr. J. F. Lockwood, Master of Birkbeck College, and Vice Chancellor, University of London led the second Working Party on Higher Education in East Africa. The terms of reference for the Working Party were:

i) To examine and advise on the proposals for the creation of new institutions of higher education in East Africa and to advise on their desirability and scope and on the timing of their establishment.

ii) To examine and advise on the pattern of future development of higher education in East Africa and in this connection to examine the desirability and practicality of carrying out any such development within the scope of a single university college of East Africa of which all colleges territorially situated would be constituent units.

iii) To examine and advise on the additional facilities, if any, for higher technological and professional training which are required in East Africa.

The Lockwood led Working Party was formed in the backdrop of bitter protests by Asians over recommendations of the first Working Party and the White Paper about the creation of a new university college in Nairobi with the RTC remaining a purely technical institute. This recommendation went against the agreement reached between the Asians and the colonial government when they agreed to merge the ‘academic’ Gandhi

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54 Michael Blundell, So Rough a Wind, (London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1964) 261-262
55 Other members of the Working Party included Sir David Lindsay Keir, Master of Balliol College, Oxford; Dame Lillian Penson, Professor of History at Bedford College, University of London; Professor E. Giffen, Professor of Mechanical and Civil Engineering, Queen Mary College, University of London; Professor C. T. Ingold, Professor of Botany, University of London; and D. H Alexander, Principal of the Municipal College of Technology, Belfast.
Memorial Academy with the technical institute proposed by the settlers. Based on that agreement the Asians had gone ahead to contribute huge amounts of money to the founding of the RTC. The money-raising activities of the GMAS were still ongoing in 1958, when it became apparent that the colonial government did not intend to honor the agreement. This caused furor among the Asians with prominent philanthropists such Dr. Sheth and Indar Singh Gill, a Sikh industrialist, refusing to honor donation pledges that they had made to the RTC. 57 Another Asian political leader N. S. Mangat, expressed his disgust with the colonial government by demanding the disbandment of the RTC since it had failed to serve the interests of its founders. 58

In January 1958, the GMAS called for a consultative meeting with the Kenya minister for education, Walter F. Coutts. The Asians protested vigorously when Coutts informed them that the conclusions in the report of the first Working Party and in the White Paper had been affirmed in full-scale conferences in London, and that the University of London was insisting on the exclusion of the RTC. The meeting concluded with the Asians rejecting an offer by Coutts to permit the transfer of their Memorial academy to the envisaged university college in Nairobi. 59 The Asians felt betrayed by the colonial government for making alternative plans regarding the RTC without consultations. That went against the original spirit that founded the RTC. As a key founder, the Asians had made massive investments in the RTC that culminated in the 1956 invitation of the Vice President of India to come and preside over the opening of the institution. The Asians therefore regarded as disdainful the alternative plans proposed by the colonial government for the transfer of the Gandhi Memorial Academy to the

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57 Robert Gregory, 149
59 Robert Gregory, 150
envisaged university college in Nairobi. When the Lockwood Working Party arrived in East Africa later in May 1958, they met a deadlocked and contentious environment.

The higher education situation in East Africa and particularly in Kenya in the late 1950s was complicated. Not only were the Asians upset over what they considered a betrayal by the Colonial Office but also Africans were demanding more higher education opportunities. Since the late 1940s, increasing numbers of African and Asian students had been leaving Kenya for higher education abroad. The students’ efflux from Kenya had gathered momentum following the independence of India and the opening of scholarship opportunities in that country for students from Africa. By 1957, out of about 2,000 Kenyan students who were pursuing higher education abroad, 374 were in India and Pakistan. Although the majority of these students were of Asian descent, still, Africans constituted a substantial number. There were 58 Africans in India on Indian Government Cultural Scholarships and 5 Africans in Pakistan on government of Pakistan scholarships. The increasing number of African students going to India, a country critical of British imperialism, disturbed the colonial government. The colonial officials were especially concerned that African students in India would undergo communist indoctrination. A memo from the Colonial Office to the Kenya’s Chief Secretary noted with worry that “R. J. Ombere, a student from Central Nyanza had gained admission to a university in Kerala State of South India, which was a communist state.”

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Britain, too, felt the effect of increased demand by Kenyans for higher education opportunities. The number of students from Kenya in the United Kingdom had increased steadily over the three-year period with 588 students in 1955, 725 in 1956, and 880 in 1957, with proportionate increases in the number of each race represented there.\(^63\)

Despite this increase, however, Africans constituted a minority of Kenyan students pursuing higher education in Britain. In 1957, for instance, there were 214 Europeans, 566 Asians, 12 Arabs and 88 Africans. Most of the financial assistance schemes that supported Kenyan students studying in Britain such as the Kenya government bursaries, teachers’ scholarships, development scholarships, open scholarships, and the Kenya Farmers Association Bursaries, catered for European and Asian students. In 1957 for instance, there were 44 Europeans, 49 Asians, 16 Africans and 6 Arabs receiving Kenya government bursary assistance while 7 Europeans, 30 Asians, 2 Arabs and 2 Africans received Teachers’ Scholarship awards of £250 per annum towards the cost of education in the United Kingdom.\(^64\)

The Africans who could not gain admission in Makerere, the newly opened RTC, or Britain began to search for opportunities elsewhere. As shall be discussed later in the chapter, America in the late 1950s superseded Britain to become the leading destination for Africans seeking higher education overseas.

In the meantime, developments in higher education in the late 1950s became closely intertwined with rising African nationalism and militancy. In response, the colonial government began to institute reforms that led to African political and constitutional advances. In Kenya, the Lyttelton Constitution, introduced at the height of the British anti-Mau Mau crusade in 1954, ushered in a new central government structure

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\(^{64}\) Ibid
based on a ministerial system, which included African and Asian ministers and conceded the principle of multiracial representative parity between Europeans and non-Europeans. According to Bethwell Ogot, this system broke up the hitherto powerful centralized Secretariat controlled by the governor, undermined the powers of the provincial administrative officers, and opened up the state to professional politicians including vocal African nationalists.\(^{65}\) Ogot further notes that the colonial government had hoped that “middle-class” Africans would become part of a shared community of interests integrated into the colonial order. However, Africans had different perspectives. The new African “middle-classes” in both the urban and the rural areas, saw competition with the immigrant groups, Europeans and Asians, and ultimately with the colonial regime itself, as the way to ensure their continued upward mobility.\(^{66}\)

Consequently, in 1957, the colonial government allowed Africans to elect their representatives to the Legislative Council. The elections however did not allow Africans to gain a majority in the Council but only allowed them to “elect eight representatives on a qualified franchise that gave up to three votes to persons of income, education or active government service, while denying most Africans any franchise whatsoever.”\(^{67}\) Despite its limitations, the elections allowed the emergence of African politicians who would play a critical role in advocating for more and better higher education opportunities for their constituents. Some politicians such as G. Orinda Okun, a candidate in Nyanza South constituency, campaigned on the platform of the need to establish a Kenyan university.\(^{68}\)

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\(^{66}\) B. A. Ogot, “The Decisive years 1956-63,” 51


\(^{68}\) B. A. Ogot, “Decisive Years, 1956-63,” 55
Many candidates during these elections bemoaned the lack of higher education opportunities noting that it would hinder efforts at achieving meaningful self-government. Some candidates such as W. W. W. Awori, a nominated member of the Legislative Council who was vying for the Nyanza North constituency seat saw the scarcity of higher educated Africans as an impediment to self-rule. In his campaign manifesto, Awori took an unpopular stand arguing for the deferment of self-rule a critical mass of Africans achieves higher education and is in a position to manage public affairs. Without enough highly educated Africans in Kenya Awori feared that, an early attainment of self-rule would be an immature step that would lead the country to disaster. Because of his unpopular conservative stand, Awori lost in the 1957 elections. Nevertheless, his stand highlights the role of colonial policies in inhibiting the progress of Africans to higher levels of learning.

Crucially, however, was the fact that the elections of 1957 produced a new breed of politicians who came to play an important role in advancing the educational cause of the Africans. The most important politician in this regard was Tom Mboya who had his political roots in the fledging trade union movement and Oginga Odinga, a Makerere graduate and former teacher, who was president of the Luo Union and founder of the Luo Thrift and Trading Corporation. Tom Mboya vied and won the Nairobi seat and Oginga Odinga won the Central Nyanza seat. Winning the most important political positions available in the colonial government presented these politicians with an opportunity to agitate in a more effective manner for the interests of the Africans. These politicians recognized the nature of global politics during this period of heightened cold war politics between the USA and its allies on the one hand, and the U.S.S.R, and its supporters on

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the other. Mboya and Odinga moved swiftly and exploited the cold war politics to search for higher education opportunities abroad on behalf of African students. Through an initiative that came to be known as the “American airlifts,” Mboya negotiated scholarship opportunities for many Kenyan Africans to study in American universities. At the time, Mboya blamed the British colonial government for neglecting the higher educational needs of the Africans in Kenya noting in an interview with the Time Magazine:

that only 451 native Kenyans are pursuing higher education at both the Royal Technical College and Makerere, in a land with African population of 6,000,000, is an indictment of British attitudes toward African education.”

About 60 Kenyan students had earlier left for the USA in 1956 but after the 1957 elections and with the Mboya’s initiative underway this number increased dramatically. By 1960, there were about 440 Kenyan students in America and by 1963 that number had increased to 1011 students.

The colonial government however opposed Mboya’s efforts to send students to America. A statement released by the Colonial Office in 1958, warned that:

Africans returning to Kenya with American degrees are likely to face difficulties of employment as a result of non-recognition of many American qualifications. For instance, the British Engineering Institutes recognized American trained engineers whose qualifications are awarded by a select few American institutions while the American medical qualifications are not recognized in Kenya.

The statement by the Colonial Office, however, made an important observation about the emerging trends of regional inequalities whereby some regions had disproportionate number of students pursuing higher education abroad. According to the

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70 “Out of Africa” Time Magazine, Monday, Sep. 21, 1959
71 Godfrey Muriuki, United States Educational Influence on Kenya, (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 1995), 12
report, Kiambu District in Central Province provided the largest number of African students, with Central Nyanza in second place and North Nyanza third. The report noted, “there is little inclination on the part of coast Africans to proceed overseas. The one member of the Maasai is a woman student undergoing nursing training at the Edgware Hospital London.”

Meanwhile, Odinga like Mboya presented a challenge to the colonial government when he succeeded in negotiating with the USSR and other eastern block communist countries to award scholarships to African students. Although the colonial government placed restrictions on those seeking to study in eastern communist countries, by 1963, there were close to 1,000 Kenyan students there. Apart from the USA and the USSR there were many Kenyan students studying in other countries such as Canada, Britain, Germany, India and South Africa during the pre-independence period. This was a clear testimony that Kenyans yearned for university education but were thwarted by the limited opportunities available in East African institutions.

The campaigns of politicians such as Mboya for increased higher education opportunities for Africans, and the subsequent flight of African students abroad was a

74 Godfrey Muriuki, 13
source of concern for the British government. The situation was complicated by the political agitation of African students who were already in foreign countries. The colonial government was concerned that organizations such as the Kenya African Students Association (KASU) representing Kenyan students in the U.K “is probably more interested in African politics than anything else.”75 The growing cases of students who failed to return to Kenya after completion of their studies also concerned the colonial government. The student advisor at the Kenya Students’ Office, an office created by the colonial government in 1956 to oversee Kenyan students studying in the U.K, lamented the growing number of African students who failed to return to Kenya on completion of their studies, a problem more acute among those who had previously worked as teachers. The advisor noted “teachers who had completed their higher studies usually returned to universities to study law. In the last year or so an increased number of Kenya Africans are reading for the bar.”76 Among those who had failed to return at the time included Charles Njonjo, who later became the first African Attorney General of Kenya. To curb the trend the advisor suggested, “African scholars granted scholarships to pursue their studies overseas should be required to sign bonds with sureties from responsible people in Kenya to force them to return after their studies.”77

The late 1950s therefore were a period when Africans were asserting themselves to grab any higher education opportunities available to them overseas, a development that was resented by the British colonial government which wanted those Africans seeking higher education to do so locally. Makerere and the RTC however could not satisfy the

77 Ibid
East African demand and, further, both institutions offered a very narrow range of programs that did not meet the needs of all Africans. Both institutions for instance, did not offer degrees in Law and the colonial government did not grant any scholarships to Africans to study law abroad. In fact, the colonial government discouraged Africans from studying law. In 1958, Kenya’s Permanent Secretary for education advised African students not to pursue law due to scarcity of jobs in the legal field. According to the Permanent Secretary:

Law is not a suitable profession so far as private practice is concerned for anyone who has insufficient financial backing to enable him to support himself for some years after qualification without relying on income from his profession. So far as government service is concerned, the vacancies in the legal department are very limited in number.78

The arguments about the lack of employment opportunities for legal professions were untrue considering Dominic Oduor’s lamentation in a letter to the editor on September 4, 1958. According to Oduor, the colonial government had denied Africans a chance to pursue the legal profession despite the fact that the “African community is devoid of lawyers from its own community.”79 Oduor noted that by denying Africans opportunities to study Law the colonial government “locked them out of the many lucrative careers both in the public and private sectors that needed legal professionals.”80

Thus, when the second Working Party arrived in May 1958, the higher education scene in Kenya was undergoing radical transformation. This period was characterized by fervent nationalistic agitation for more and better higher education opportunities for Africans and Asians. The Lockwood Working Party, therefore, had to contend with the

78 KNA/AV/9/4, “Scholars, Colonial Studies in UK Requirements” contains a letter by the Permanent for Education, Labor and Lands to the Director of Establishment dated 8 September 1958
79 East Africa Standard, 4 September, 1958
80 Ibid
prevailing situation as it embarked on its work. Among the most powerful presentations made to the Working Party were those by Asians who, through the GMAS, protested against the government’s refusal to convert the RTC to a degree granting college.

According the GMAS:

if the government conclusions are put into effect it will result in a breach of the agreements between the government and the Gandhi Memorial Academy Society since the whole object of the union of the two institutions was to have professional as well as university education at one college….The society strongly urges the governments concerned to make immediately a declaration of policy with a view to reassuring the members and donors of this society that the conditions of the different donations, their purposes and objects, will be scrupulously carried out by the government, and that full degree general and honors courses of Arts, science and commerce will be established at the Royal Technical College without delay.81

The Lockwood Working Party faced a gargantuan task of constructing a higher education model acceptable to the various interest groups in East Africa and in London. The Lockwood Working Party spent two months in Kenya and produced its report in July 1958. Based on the reception of the report, the Lockwood Working Party seems to have succeeded since it was well received by most interest groups in East Africa even as it maintained the Colonial Office’s core concept of inter-territoriality. The Lockwood Working Party report was well received because it took the middle ground thus insulated itself from the kind of harsh criticisms leveled against earlier higher education plans and proposals. Ogot has noted that the success of the Lockwood Working Party’s report lay in its ability to reconcile political and economic rationality.82

One of the positive aspects of the Lockwood Working Party’s report was its views regarding the need to honor the pledge that the colonial government made to the GMAS

81 “Concern at Findings on Education: Society Plea”. East Africa Standard 22 July 1958
for the establishment of an academic Gandhi Memorial wing at the RTC. As the Working Party observed, the GMAS made substantial grants to assist the RTC based on the agreement that the Gandhi Memorial Academy would be incorporated into the College. Based on terms of the agreement, “the College incurred an obligation to provide courses in arts, science and commerce, which were no unnaturally (sic) understood by the members of the society to be courses leading to degrees.”83 Thus, the need to honor the obligation to the GMAS became the basis of the Working Party’s report.

The Lockwood Working Party produced a unique higher education model for East Africa that departed from the conventional form of colonial overseas university colleges. Accordingly, “the time seems to us to have come to contemplate an adventurous experiment,” to transform the RTC into “a College which will provide not only courses of training in technological and other professional subjects to the highest professional standards but also courses leading to university degrees.”84 Combining technological and university level work in the same university marked the fundamental difference that distinguished the Lockwood Working Party report from the reports of the previous committees. The Lockwood team did not see any reason for denying the RTC a chance to offer both technological education and university level education as the first Working Party and the White Paper had insisted, a view succinctly captured in the following statement:

In examining the pattern of educational development in Kenya we have concentrated our attention especially on the relationship of academic and higher professional studies. It is our considered view, which we wish to state as forcibly as we can that we see no valid reason why they should be dissociated as necessarily representing wholly different forms of higher

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84 Ibid, 6
education. In many universities of the world, they exist and flourish side by side.  

Clearly, the Lockwood Working Party report presented a framework that would guide the future development of higher education in East Africa. This would begin with the immediate transformation of the RTC into the second inter-territorial university college of East Africa. This transformation would involve changing the name of the College to the Royal College, Nairobi. The college thus renamed and reconstructed “should seek to enter into special relationship with the University of London, pending the establishment of a University of East Africa with the power to grant its own degrees.”

The report allowed the GMAS to continue having representation in the governing council of the new university college. The Report also sought to strengthen the influence of the Colonial Office on the College with the suggestion that the IUC should appoint an additional representative to the university college. This would add to the existing representative of the COCAST (formerly ACCCAST).

The Working Party added another bonus to higher education in East Africa with its proposal for “the need to undertake measures to make practicable the opening of a university college in Tanganyika in 1965/66 or as soon thereafter as possible.” As was the case with the first Working Party’s report and the White Paper, the Lockwood Working Party insisted on the need for the inter-territorial association of university colleges in East Africa in the immediate future; that is to say, “the next ten to fifteen years.” Although the first Working Party and the White Paper justified inter-

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86 Ibid, 7
87 Ibid, 13
88 Ibid,18; The Lockwood Working Party predicted that the Special Relationship between the East African university colleges and the University of London would last for at least another ten to fifteen years. After
territoriality as a measure that would guarantee quality at minimum costs, the Lockwood Working Party advanced an additional justification based on equity. According to the Lockwood Working Party, a strictly territorial university college idea in East Africa would be detrimental to the interests of both Kenya and Tanganyika since these countries were in the initial stages of establishing their institutions of higher learning. If Makerere reached full maturity and became a full university independent of other colleges in East Africa, Kenya and Tanganyika would be disadvantaged. The Working Party thus proposed, “the University of East Africa arrangement as a solution of the inequality of stature since it would bind the current and proposed East African colleges in a single regional university.”

Despite the largely progressive views of the Lockwood report, the desire for metropolitan control of the envisaged University of East Africa persisted. Contrary to the expectations that the creation of the University of East Africa would mark the end of the Special Relation with the University of London, the Working Party suggested that “a new form of special relationship should be established.” Under the new scheme, the University of London would approve syllabuses and nominate examiners who would draft the examination papers and assess the students’ performance in the examination. In addition, the IUC would continue to offer advice regarding the appointment of the academic staff.

The report of the Lockwood Working Party received support in East Africa and London. The report therefore became the basis for a new university policy. To some,
however, the recommendations of the report were too cautious and not in tune with the prevailing political realities of the day characterized by the advance of nationalism and growing calls for provision of more university opportunities. One such critic was the principal of Makerere, Bernard de Bunsen, who called for an early establishment of the University of East Africa as a response to the demands of nationalism. The Working Party report had proposed that the University of East Africa to be established in 1965/66 academic year. The *Time Magazine* quoted De Bunsen expressing the need for more higher education facilities in East Africa since: “We are running a race against time to produce at least a few Africans capable of occupying the key posts they are demanding.”

De Bunsen’s observations were apt considering the pace of political transformation even in a settler colony like Kenya. The 1957 elections had brought to the Legislative Council eight African representatives who were radical proponents of majority rule. The eight elected African politicians opposed the moderate ideology of multiracialism articulated by European politicians that would ensure long-term European dominance in the country. Multiracialism, therefore, became an ideology to counter the concept of majority rule propounded by radical African politicians. Some conservative African politicians such as Eliud Mathu, B. A. Ohanga and W. W. W. Awori supported multiracialism. These politicians however lost in the 1957 elections and a new generation of African politicians came to centre stage. These included Tom Mboya, Oginga Odinga, Masinde Muliro, R. G. Ngala and Daniel Arap Moi, among others. They immediately grouped together under the African Elected Members Organization (AEMO), rejected the Lyttelton Constitution and refused to accept any ministerial posts.

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91 Quoted in the *Time Magazine*, “Schooling in Africa” 11 January 1960
92 Bethwell Ogot, “The Decisive Years 1956-63,” 59
until Africans were granted fifteen more seats to give them a majority over the European and Asian elected members. Convinced that power now lay in London, not in Nairobi, they sent a delegation to London to press for a new constitution. Within months of their election, the Lyttelton Constitution was dead.93

In October 1957, the Lennox-Boyd Constitution was conceded raising African representation in the Legislative Council to fourteen, thereby giving Africans parity with the Europeans. In addition, African ministerial portfolios were increased to two. No more communal seats were to be created in the future and it was thought this constitution would last at least ten years. This was not to be. Increased representation gave the African nationalists the leverage to force the imperial government to cede more powers to the Africans. Soon, Africans Members began to call for the lifting of the State of Emergency that had been in place since the outbreak of the Mau Mau war and for the release of Jomo Kenyatta. Further, they began to demand a new constitution that would give full powers to the majority population. Ogot has noted that by 1958 “African nationalists clearly held the initiative while the imperial government was groping from one policy to another and the settlers were in disarray.”94

Pressure from the nationalists compelled the imperial government to lift the State of Emergency in 1960. In mid-January of the same year, the first Lancaster House Constitutional Conference was convened in London. This Conference began a series of constitutional negotiations that eventually led to Britain granting independence to Kenya in December 1963. The aspirations of the first Lancaster Conference however were modest. The talks aimed at settling the dispute between Europeans who were fearful of

94 Bethwell Ogot, “The Decisive Years 1956-63,” 60
granting powers to Africans and African nationalists who were calling for full majority rule. For the farsighted Bernard de Bunsen, the political transformations in Kenya and other East African territories demonstrated the need to accelerate the pace of higher education development. De Bunsen also believed that there was a need to involve the emerging African politicians in the planning of the envisaged University of East Africa noting that “it might be better to begin involving them gently now rather than let it come with political rush.”

The Ministers of Education for Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika supported De Bunsen’s proposal for an early establishment of the University of East Africa. Their joint memorandum after an inter-territorial meeting noted that the recent constitutional developments made the early establishment of the University of East Africa imperative. They then agreed on “an immediate formation of a University of East Africa Planning Council.” The Planning Council later became the Provisional Council of the envisaged University of East Africa composed of representatives from the three East African territories and the Colonial Office, the principals of Makerere and the RTC, and representatives of the IUC and the COCAST. The Chairman of Makerere Council, Donald MacGillivray, was appointed the Chair of the Provisional Council.

The January 1960 inter-territorial meeting of the Ministers of education was followed by an appointment of the Quinquennial Advisory Committee to “consider the proposals for and the estimated cost of Higher Education in East Africa in the five years

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95 KNA/ED/3/156, “University of East Africa,” Extract From Personal and Confidential Letter from B. De Bunsen, Principal of Makerere College to Minister for Education dated 22 January 1960
96 KNA/ED/3/156, “University of East Africa,” contains The E.A Ministers of Education Memorandum for the Establishment of the University of East Africa at the 6th Inter-territorial Meeting (Jan 20 1960)
97 KNA/ED/3/156, “University of East Africa” file contains Minutes of the Meeting of the Promotional Committee at Makerere on 1ST March 1961
from 1961 to 1966.”\(^98\) The Quinquennial Advisory Committee met and drew up its report in July 1960 in which they called for the immediate establishment of the Royal College, Nairobi, which like Makerere would become an affiliate of the University of London. The Committee received a strong petition from the Tanganyika Elected Members Organization who expressed their strong desire “for the setting up a university college as soon as possible.”\(^99\) In response to the petition, the Committee recommended the establishment of a university college in Tanganyika and “for the beginning of its academic work earlier than was contemplated in the Working Party’s report.”\(^100\) The Committee also called for an early establishment of the University of East Africa suggesting that the central university organization should become operational in 1961.\(^101\)

Further developments took place in 1960 with the appointment of Anthony Chitty, a London based architect to draw the development plan of the RTC as it prepared to convert to a university college. The Chitty plan increased the earlier projected capital costs for the 1961 to 1966 quinquennium from £904,000 to £1,882,000. The planned building program would enable the university college to accommodate 866 students by 1966.\(^102\) Other developments in preparation for the conversion of the RTC to a university college included the appointment of Dr. J. M. Hyslop, a professor of mathematics at the Witwatersrand University in South Africa, as Principal designate of the proposed Royal

\(^98\) KNA/ED/3/285, “Quinquennial Advisory Committee Report 1960”
\(^99\) Ibid
\(^100\) Ibid
\(^101\) Ibid
College, Nairobi. Dr. H. P Gale who had acted as Principal of the RTC since 1957 became the deputy to Dr. Hyslop.  

The Royal College Act enacted in December 1960 officially transformed “the Royal Technical College of East Africa into a University College to be called the Royal College, Nairobi.” The act provided for strong representation of the metropolitan institutions in the College’s governing council with the IUC and the COCAST each represented by 2 members. The Asians retained their 2 members in the council through GMAS while the East African territories of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika were allocated 3 members each. The governor of Kenya was conferred the powers to appoint the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer of the council.

The pace of events heralded a new era of urgency. Soon, Tanganyika began calling for an immediate establishment of a university college in Tanganyika. In a letter to the Colonial Office, the Tanganyika’s Minister for Education Oscar Kambona stressed “the need for very rapid development in setting up the University College.” The Colonial Office assented to Tanganyika’s demands and accelerated the opening of the University College Dar-es-Salaam, by starting a faculty of law in July 1961. The opening of a law faculty in Tanganyika and the elevation of the RTC to a degree granting institution brought closer the realization of the Lockwood Working Party proposal for a University of East Africa, which would bring together the three university institutions in the region under one umbrella university.

103 RTC Annual Report for 1959/60
104 The East Africa High Commission Act No. 4 of 1960, The Royal College, Nairobi, Act, 1960 Assented to by the East Africa High Commission in Her Majesty’s name and on Her Majesty’s behalf this day of December, 1960
105 KNA/ED/3/156, “University of East Africa,” contains a letter by Oscar Kambona, Tanganyika’s Minister for Education and Labour to Sir Christopher Cox Educational Advisor to the Colonial Office 3 November 1960
The dramatic changes in higher education taking place in the early 1960s created new challenges. The main borne of contention then centered on the nature of relationship between the envisaged University of East Africa and the university colleges. After its formation, the Provisional Council had modified the Lockwood Working Party recommendation for the continuation of the special relationship scheme between the new University of East Africa and the University of London. Under the new plan, all university colleges in East Africa would become affiliates of the University of East Africa thus ending the special relationship scheme with the University of London. This development however was unwelcome in Nairobi where the newly established Royal College was concerned that the University of East Africa would be dominated by the seasoned Makerere. According to the principal of the Royal College, allowing the lapse of the special relationship scheme with the University of London:

Would create problems with the professors who had been recruited on belief that they were joining a college in special relationship with London, which obviously has certain advantages for them… In addition, due to Makerere’s long relationship with the University of London it might try to be a dominant member in the new university of East Africa arrangement. Such development would do little to establish the Royal College and the new Tanganyika College in the eyes of the academic world and result into these two colleges being regarded as satellites of Makerere. If there is value in the idea of a university of East Africa the first requirement is that the standards of the colleges in Nairobi and Tanganyika must be guaranteed for at least five years by a British University and the second that it shall be clear to everybody that Makerere is no more than an equal partner in the university enterprise.106

Hyslop’s concerns pointed to the challenges that would face the envisaged inter-territorial University of East Africa. Addressing such concerns became the responsibility of the five-man international committee appointed by the Provisional Council of the

106 KNA/ED/3/156, “University of East Africa,” file contains a Memorandum of Conversation between the Minister of Education and Dr. Hyslop 11 November 1960
University of East Africa “to advise on the development of University education in East Africa.”

In June 1962, Tanganyika officially got its university college with the opening of the University College Dar-es-Salaam. This gave Dar-es-Salaam a chance to diversify its range of programs beyond the law program established in 1961.

The five-man advisory committee on the University of East Africa arrived in East Africa in September 1962. Dr. Davidson Nicol the Principal of the University College of Sierra Leone headed the committee. Among other issues, the committee was charged with developing a new financial plan for the three university colleges, which would soon be associated with the creation of the University of East Africa. A financial plan, which had been drawn in 1960 by the Quinquennial Advisory Committee, had become irrelevant following the accelerated pace of events. Events since 1960 included the elevation of the RTC to a degree granting institution called the Royal College and the subsequent transfer of the Veterinary department from Makerere to the Royal College and the opening of a law faculty at Dar-es-Salaam followed by its elevation to a university college. These developments had greatly increased costs.

In a report released after the end of its visit, the Nicol Committee noted that lack of finances inhibited the implementation of plans that would broaden the range of programs offered at the now three university colleges in East Africa. Thus, it recommended postponement of the introduction of the proposed department of religious studies at the three colleges and refused to grant funds for staffing and equipment for the proposed sub-departments of linguistics and phonetics within the department of English.

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107 *East Africa Standard* Monday, 23 July 1962

108 Other members of the Nicol’s Committee included Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders who had headed the first Working Party; Dr. N.A MacKenzie, President of the University of British Columbia Vancouver Canada; Mr. H. J Seddon the Director of the Institute of Orthopedics, Royal National Orthopedic Hospital London and Mr. A Pifer, an Executive Associate of the Carnegie Corporation of New York.
at the Royal College. The committee also noted that with the transfer of the Veterinary department to the Royal College, the East African governments would not fund the remaining veterinary work at Makerere, “unless substantial outside funding to cover recurrent as well as capital costs is available.”\textsuperscript{109} The committee also appealed for more grants from the Colonial Development and Welfare funds to finance the expansion of the new Royal College and the University College at Dar-es-Salaam.\textsuperscript{110} The Committee noted that financial allocations to Makerere until 1966 were enough although the other two colleges were in dire need of more funding. Thus, the committee designed a proposal that demanded Makerere to make sacrifices and effect cost saving measures that would release funds to finance recurrent costs at the Royal College and Dar-es-Salaam. The designed cost-saving formula for Makerere for the period 1963 to 1966 that would save £150,000 was as follows:

for the years 1963/64, 1964/65 and 1965/66 £50,000 annually might be cut from the grants to Makerere College and the total of £150,000 be redistributed over the new triennium, 1964/65 to 1966/67, in the following manner: to the Royal College £60,000; to Dar-es-Salaam £50,000 and to the Veterinary Faculty of the Royal College £40,000.\textsuperscript{111}

The Nicol Committee also called upon Makerere to reconsider some of its projected capital development projects. The savings made would go to help the University College Dar-es-Salaam, which did not have enough buildings to accommodate students. In this regard, the committee noted:

On the capital side, we have come to the conclusion that in the period up to the end of the new triennium no further construction of student residences is justified at Makerere. Out of the C.D.& W. grant of £1,000,000 to the College, £85,000 is held in suspense for a possible

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid
extension of Northcote Hall, and £250,000 has been allocated for a new Mitchell Hall. We recommend that the extension to Northcote Hall be abandoned; of the £85,000 so released we recommend that £45,000 be left to Makerere for the construction of African staff housing. We are not aware how much of the £250,000 allocated to the new Mitchell Hall has been committed, we would recommend that the work on the Hall be halted…. a considerable part of the £250,000 would be released and we recommend that the amount so released together with the £40,000 released by abandoning the Northcote Hall project be transferred to Dar-es-Salaam.\textsuperscript{112}

The committee hoped that Makerere’s council and the government of Uganda would accept to make the sacrifices in good spirit. Nevertheless, it was naïve to imagine that Makerere, which had hitherto enjoyed the sole university college status in East Africa, would welcome the new situation of competition for scarce resources with the new university colleges. Financial competition among the three colleges would in the coming years become a major flashpoint that would contribute to the demise of the University of East Africa.

The Nicol committee also addressed the concerns expressed by Dr. Hyslop regarding the early termination of the special relation with the University of London, when the University of East Africa comes into being. Sympathetic to Dr. Hyslop’s concerns, the Committee noted, “the Royal College might feel that it will enjoy something less than the fulfillment of its long cherished hopes if so soon in the early course of its development as a university college its students are to receive not London degrees but University of East Africa degrees.”\textsuperscript{113} To mitigate this situation the committee proposed:


\textsuperscript{113} Ibid
say 5 or 7 years provide a complete and absolute guarantee of the degree standards of the University of East Africa in the subjects which are at present covered by the Special Relationship scheme and as a result it can be clear that European and American universities and professional bodies will accord full recognition to these degrees.\footnote{KNA/ED/3/149, “University of East Africa,” “Report of the Academic Needs and Priorities Committee,” November 1962}{114}

The Nicol committee’s suggestion about the continuation of a special relationship scheme in the new University of East Africa as a means to ensure prestige and standards of its degrees was similar to that made by the Lockwood Working Party. The Lockwood Working Party had noted the need to continue with the special relationship with the University of London even after the establishment of the University of East Africa as a way to ensure maintenance of high standards. According to the Lockwood Working Party:

Even after the establishment of the University of East Africa, a new form of special relationship should be established. During this period, the University of London would continue to approve syllabuses… It would also be necessary that examiners should be nominated by the University of London to co-operate with those from the colleges in drafting the examination papers and in the assessment of the students’ performance in the examination. A number of other practices would follow. The colleges would continue to appoint members of their academic staff on the advice of committees constituted by the IUC.\footnote{Report of the Working Party on Higher Education in East Africa, July-August 1958, 21}{115}

The recommendations of the Lockwood and Nicol Committees on special relationship with metropolitan institutions managed to ingrain into the university discourse in East Africa the ideals of upholding university prestige and maintaining western standards perceived as high standards. As the next chapter demonstrates, university prestige and high standards would become a regional obsession that defined university policies in postcolonial East Africa.
The completion and release of the Nicol Committee report paved way for the October 1962 enactment of the Act to establish the University of East Africa by the East African legislative assembly. The official opening ceremony of the University of East Africa was scheduled for mid-1963. Those entering any one of the three university colleges in 1963 registered as candidates for the degrees of the University of East Africa and not those of the University of London. In 1962, the University’s Provisional Council made important announcements regarding curriculum changes at the new University of East Africa. While assuring that the new University’s degrees will be equivalent to those for which East African students have previously worked, the Provisional Council announced the discontinuation of the “‘General’, ‘Special’ or ‘Honours’ degrees on the University of London pattern, which has been the tradition in East Africa in the past.”

The curriculum changes were necessitated by the adoption of new university entrance standards from the School Certificate to Higher School Certificate. The new University of East Africa would offer:

- Only one first degree in each of the faculties of Arts and Science namely the Bachelor of Arts (B.A) and the Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.), each involving 3 years of study after entry at the Higher School Certificate level. Any candidate attaining the requisite standard, whatever the pattern of his B.A. or B.Sc. curriculum, may gain honours degree.

The University of East Africa (UEA) bringing together the university colleges of Nairobi, Dar-es-Salaam and Makerere was inaugurated in Nairobi on June 28, 1963. During this ceremony, President Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika was installed the

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116 KNA/ED/3/138, “University of East Africa,” Contains the Provisional Council of the University of East Africa Announcement Concerning Degree Structure in the Faculties of Arts and Science in the University of East Africa of 11 April 1962

117 KNA/ED/3/138, “University of East Africa,” the Provisional Council of the University of East Africa Announcement Concerning Degree Structure in the Faculties of Arts and Science in the University of East Africa of April 11 1962
Chancellor of the new University with the Principal of Makerere, Dr. Bernard de Bunsen, as the Vice Chancellor. The Chancellor and Vice Chancellor would serve for a term of three years. The Vice Chancellor would be appointed by the Council from among the Principals of the constituent colleges, with the order of rotation being the Principal of Makerere College, the Principal of the Royal College, and the Principal of the University College of Dar-es-Salaam.118

The establishment of the University of East Africa was a culmination of a long concerted effort by the Colonial Office to assert its control on university education in East Africa. Interestingly, the Colonial Office continued with the plans to reorganize and control university education even when it became apparent that the British Empire was crumbling and the East African nations were on the road to independence. It is noteworthy that the University of East Africa, conceptually a colonial institution, was established after the independence of both Uganda and Tanganyika. At its establishment, Kenya was also about to achieve independence. That the educated elites in East Africa uncritically acquiesced to a colonial idea at a time of deafening nationalistic rhetoric explains the real intellectual and psychological worldviews of the African nationalists. The academic socialization of the East African nationalists was fundamentally British and, therefore, colonial. The foremost East African nationalists of the 1950s and 1960s such as Milton Obote, Julius Nyerere and Jomo Kenyatta were either educated locally at Makerere or in Britain. Unlike West Africa, East Africa did not have prominent nationalists like Kwame Nkrumah or Nnamdi Azikiwe whose orientation and ideas about higher education did not correspond with those of the British due to their American

118 The Laws of Kenya, University of East Africa Act, 1963
education and socialization. Further, the East African elites had greatly benefited from the colonial university colleges such as Makerere and the Royal College from which they owed their elevated status. As Furley and Watson pointed out, Makerere produced an elite class of East Africans who “developed notions of superiority, holding themselves aloof from the struggles of their own communities, for they were assured of jobs.”

The educated elites in East Africa viewed themselves as a distinct class from the ordinary Africans and maintained social distance from the struggling masses just as the settlers had done. The attitudes and the intellectual disposition of the East African educated elites mirrored that of the departing Europeans. The African elites viewed possession of western academic credentials as a warrant to reclaim the exalted social positions hitherto occupied by the Europeans. This was a triumph for the British colonial officials who after the end of the Second World War had aspired for a reformed system of colonial control dominated by African educated elites. The educated elites in East Africa, majority of them produced at either Makerere or Britain, were at independence strategically positioned to replace the departing colonial officials and therefore gain access to social, political and economic privilege. As they departed from East Africa, the British handed the reigns of power to the educated elites who readily reciprocated the gesture by becoming agents of the western world under the new neocolonial ties.

It is however important to note the schizophrenic nature of the colonial university policy in East Africa. Fundamentally, the establishment of university colleges in East Africa and subsequently the foundation of the University of East Africa marked progress

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for Africans who had in the past lacked any opportunities to access university education. The conception of the colonial inter-territorial policy however severely limited the number of Africans who could access university education. The pursuit of the inter-territorial policy was justified on the basis of the need to maintain high standards. As Apollos Nwauwa has noted, the issue of high standards was elevated to a quasi-mystical concept leading to the enactment of policies that severely limited access to higher education. In East Africa, one of such limiting policies was the discontinuation of the School Certificate and the adoption of Higher School Certificate as the entrance standard of university colleges. The adoption of Higher School Certificate did not only increase the number of years spent in high school from 4 to 6 years but also it added another sorting and selecting barrier that worsened the chance of Africans accessing university. The few under-resourced African secondary schools had to bear the increased burden of preparing students for two more years than before. Interestingly, a few Europeans such as the incoming Principal of the Royal College J. M. Hyslop expressed his opposition to the introduction of the Higher School Certificate noting:

I view the Higher School Certificate or its equivalent for entry into the University as too high a standard for East African students and that an entrance qualification of a standard comparable with that in commonwealth countries would be more appropriate than which is peculiar to England. I envisage that entry might take place at a standard roughly equivalent to School Certificate plus one year, or to Ordinary level plus one year, and that General Degree courses should extend to 4 years and not 3.

Gay Hunter expressed similar sentiments in his government commissioned ‘manpower survey’. In his assessment Hunter noted that it ‘will take almost all

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122 KNA/ED/3/154, “University of East Africa” file contains J. M. Hyslop Memorandum to the Registrar of Makerere College of 10 June 1961
foreseeable African resources to “africanise” the senior ranks of the public service to
80% or 85% by 1965 leaving a very small number over for graduate secondary teachers
or for higher levels of industry and commerce.”\(^{123}\) Among the solutions that he proposed
to deal with this problem included “the possibility of allowing entry from form IV to the
university in some form.”\(^{124}\) However, no African nationalist protested the introduction
of Higher School Certificate when it was obvious that it would lead to the
disfranchisement of many poor African students wishing to access university education.

The conceptualization of the idea of a single inter-territorial University for East
Africa was not meant to serve the interests of independent African nations. Rather, it was
aimed at the cognitive control of the Africans to keep them ideologically, intellectually
and perceptually dependent on the West. The colonial government bequeathed to
independent African nations university policies that were elitist, ensuring only a small
class of Africans accessed university education. Even with independence, it was easy for
the British and the West to shower privileges on the small African elite class that they
had helped create and in return continue with indirect, neo-colonial control and
exploitation of the former colonies. As Wanyubari Maloba observed, independence of
African nations for the Europeans meant a new era of “exploitation without
responsibility.”\(^{125}\) Kwame Nkrumah the first president of Ghana characterized the
emerging neocolonial relations between the former colonial powers and the newly
independent nations in Africa, as “the worst form of imperialism.”\(^{126}\) According to

\(^{123}\) KNA/ED/3/139, “University of East Africa” contains “Educational Policy in Relation to High Level
Manpower Requirements” A Paper Prepared by Guy Hunter for the Provisional Council of the University
of East Africa

\(^{124}\) Ibid

\(^{125}\) Wunyabari Maloba, “Nationalism and Decolonization, 1947-1963,” 197

\(^{126}\) Kwame Nkrumah, Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism, (New York: International Publishers,
1965) 168
Nkrumah, the viciousness of neocolonialism emanated from the fact that “for those who practice it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress.”127 The new university arrangement in East Africa would serve to strengthen and perpetuate the neocolonial relations between the west and the newly independent East African nations.

CHAPTER 3
ELITIST POLICIES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF EAST AFRICA, 1962-1968

The early 1960s was an important period for Kenya and other East Africa nations due to the momentous political milestones characterized by self-rule and independence. Kenya gained independence on December 12, 1963, and was the last British East African territory to gain its freedom. Tanganyika, Uganda and Zanzibar had won their independence earlier.¹ Unlike other East African countries Kenya’s status as a settler colony meant that its decolonization process was more protracted. The magnitude and intensity of racial hostilities and vested political and economic interests complicated the decolonization process in the country. Kenya’s independence only came after sustained bargaining and negotiations between the African nationalists and the British colonial government that had become the virtual trustee of the interests of the immigrant communities especially the settlers since the outbreak of the Mau Mau war in 1952. At the center of this bargaining process were settler fears about their personal security and the security of their property once independence and majority rule was granted to Kenya.²

As articulated in chapter two, the process of Kenya’s decolonization accelerated in the 1950s with the political and economic reforms initiated by the British government in response to the Mau Mau rebellion. The Mau Mau rebellion had conveyed a crucial message to the colonial government that Africans were angry with their state of dispossession imposed by the discriminatory colonial policies. The colonial reforms, therefore, were belated efforts to appease the Africans while safeguarding the economic interests of the settlers and the British multinationals in Kenya. In addition to the economic and political

¹ Tanganyika gained its independence on December 9 1961, Uganda on October 9 1962 and Zanzibar on December 9 1963.
reforms, the colonial government made higher educational reforms a key strategy to ensure the intellectual and ideological socialization of an elite group of highly educated Africans. This elite group would be intellectually and ideologically inclined to the West. The creation of the African educated elite class involved careful control of the kind of education transmitted and of the numbers that accessed higher education. Whereas basic African education was largely Christian, university level education transmitted western liberal values that upheld the supremacy of capitalism and the sanctity of private property. These values were vital if the commercial interests of the western multinationals and European settlers were to be protected after independence. The British colonial government believed that if African elites possessed western capitalistic ethos, they would protect the remaining settlers and the western multinational corporations operating in Kenya. It was against this backdrop, that unlike many other parts of Africa, the newly independent government of Kenya maintained the capitalistic structures that protected foreign multinationals. In addition, the settlers who opted to leave the country were compensated at the market worth of their land. This demonstrated how deeply capitalistic ethos were ingrained among the African leaders who took over power after independence.

The British intellectual and ideological influences continued even in the postcolonial period with the founding of the University of East Africa (UEA) in June 1963. The founding of the UEA was a culmination of a long drawn plan by the colonial government for the provision of university education in East Africa under the banner of an inter-territorial

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university. As elaborated in chapter one and two, regional (inter-territorial) university was mainly justified on two grounds-first, the need to maintain high standards and second, for economic rationality by avoiding duplication of expensive professional programs. It is ironic how the British insisted on high standards for Africans despite the fact that they never used the same principles when admitting non-Africans at institutions of higher education in East Africa. Unlike the Africans, the Europeans and Asians who had not attained the required qualifying grades at the end of their high school education were assured of admission either locally or abroad if they so wished. A good example of this occurred in 1958 when a daughter of a Nakuru-based European doctor; Dr. Bunny, secured admission at the RTC without possessing requisite high school qualifying grades. In this case, the Director of Education in Kenya intervened and appealed to the RTC admissions committee to grant Dr. Bunny’s daughter admission because, “the Bunny family is of very good repute in Kenya…. I would advise support of this application, even giving it preference over that of other better qualified students.”\(^5\) This kind of violation of admission rules also extended to Asians, as was the case of Miss Sushma Sood the daughter of Mr. M. L. Sood, the Headmaster of Kisumu High School. In this case, the Provincial Education Officer of Nyanza intervened to have Mr. Sood’s daughter admitted at the Royal College in 1961 although she had not attained the 17-year age limit expected of all students wishing to join the College. According to the Nyanza Provincial Education Officer, the Royal College needed to bend its admission requirements in favor of Miss Sishma Sood because “the candidate’s family is well known in this department and you are aware how well it has served education in Kenya.”\(^6\)

\(^5\) KNA/AV/1/61, “Policy Technical Training,” a October 8\(^{th}\) 1958 letter by the Director of Education to the RTC
These examples of subversion of admissions standards by the dominant racial groups in Kenya demonstrate the insincerity of the British ‘high standards’ concerns. A regional university, therefore, was a mere justification for the continued control of university education by the British even after surrendering independence to the Africans. The federal university would enable the British to control the infiltration of communist ideology in the region while at the same time check against the Americanization of the educational landscape in East Africa as had happened in Nigeria and Ghana.\(^7\) The UEA presented the British with an easy mechanism for furthering the ideological and intellectual dependency on the African elites even after independence. Additionally, underlying the ‘high standards’ justification that called for the creation of the UEA were a deeper racist and patronizing mentality that saw Africans as immature and incapable of running their own affairs without the supervision of the Europeans. The UEA, whose staff was dominated by British staff presented Britain with an opportunity to assert control over its curriculum and also influenced the numbers and the kinds of students who accessed university education in East Africa.

The scheme for the imperial control was however not as smooth as the colonial government expected. The social engineering of the 1950s that produced some relatively prosperous Africans with bourgeois values resulted in the expansion of basic education facilities and, thus, increased demand for higher education. This demand was manifested locally with Africans solidifying their majority status at Makerere. Although the Asians were the majority racial group in the first few years after the opening of the RTC, Africans

\(^7\) See Eric Ashby, Universities: British, Indian African, (USA: Harvard University Press, 1966)

In Nigeria President Nnamdi Azikiwe rejected the elitist British university heritage by founding the University of Nigeria at Nsukka in 1960 modeled on the American land grant universities. It became the second university after the University of Ibadan, which had been established by the British colonial government in the 1940s. In Ghana President Kwame Nkrumah too rejected an elitist model by founding Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in 1961 which became the second university after the University of Ghana which had been established by the British.
steadily gained in numbers and soon overtook Asians. By 1960, when the RTC converted to the Royal College following its elevation to a university college in Special Relationship with the University of London, the number of African students was on its way to surpassing that of the Asians. Of the 201 Kenyan students at the Royal College in 1960, 106 were Asians, 82 Africans, and 13 Europeans. The Kenyan Africans eventually gained the majority status at the institution in 1961 with 122 students, against 87 Asians, 20 Europeans, and 3 Arabs.\(^8\)

The numerical shift at the RTC reflected progress in the number of Africans who completed basic education in the late 1950s. This progress resulted from the improvement in the political and economic conditions of the Africans following the colonial reforms initiated in response to the advance of African nationalism since the outbreak of the Mau Mau rebellion in 1952.

The demand for university opportunities by Africans extended abroad. As discussed in chapter two, increasing numbers of Kenyan Africans sought university education overseas in countries such as America, Britain, India, and USSR among others. The most successful scheme to send students overseas in the late 1950s and early 1960s was spearheaded by a rising politician and trade unionist, Tom Mboya, who secured many university places for Africans in America. In June 21, 1961, Kenyans in Britain with support from African nationalists founded the Kenya Students Scholarship Fund (KSSF), which sought more support from foreign benefactors to support Kenyans wishing to study abroad. The KSSF was registered as a charitable educational institution with the Ministry of Education in Britain and its Board of Trustees included prominent figures in Britain such as Arthur Creech Jones, Professor Kenneth Kirkwood and Mrs Elspeth Huxley.\(^9\)

Internationally, the organization secured support and patronage of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime

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\(^9\) KNA/MSS/29/88, “Kenya Students Scholarship Fund” (May 13 1961)
Minister of Nigeria, Kwame Nkrumah, the President of Ghana, Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India and Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt, the wife of the former US President Franklin D. Roosevelt.\(^{10}\) Thus, despite the scarcity of higher education opportunities domestically, Africans through their own initiatives and with support from international anti-imperial forces succeeded in furthering their education abroad. By 1962, the Kenya’s Ministry of Education reported that there were 3,690 full time Kenyan students overseas who included 1,576 were Africans.\(^{11}\) These numbers did not take account of “the more than 350 Africans in the Iron Curtain countries about whom details are not available.”\(^{12}\) It is safe to assume that there were over 2000 Kenyan Africans studying abroad in 1962. Majority of the Kenyan African students abroad were self-sponsored having secured admissions through their own initiatives.

Despite the decolonization mood of the late 1950s and early 1960s, the colonial government placed impediments to African students wishing to study overseas. As a Kenyan student, Isaac Amolo, noted during the ninth International Student Conference held at Klosters in Switzerland in August 1960, “the East African governments and the Kenya government in particular discriminate in issuing passports to African students.”\(^{13}\) Due to the discriminatory policies, many African students sneaked out of the country and the colonial government did not have any information about their whereabouts.

Most self-sponsored African students overseas faced serious financial and social problems. Although the decision to go overseas was entirely personal, many of them resented what they considered as favoritism whereby some Kenyan students especially those sent through Tom Mboya’s “American airlifts” received support from the Kenyan and

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\(^{10}\) KNA/MSS/29/69, “Kenya Students Scholarship Fund An Educational Charity Registered Under the Charities Act 1962”


\(^{12}\) Ibid

\(^{13}\) The East Africa Standard (Nairobi) Wednesday, 14 September 1960.
American governments and from international organizations. Julius Waiguchu, a student at Central College, Pella, Iowa articulated the frustrations of many self-sponsored Kenyan students abroad when he wrote to the Secretary of the Kenya Board of Management and Educational Loans in March 1963. In that letter, Waiguchu lamented the difficulties faced by Kenyan students in securing government loans to enable them study overseas. To qualify for government loans, one’s parents or guardians had to produce collateral. Waiguchu further decried the policy of favoritism whereby some students especially those brought by Mboya got preferential financial support from the government whereas the self-sponsored students languished in difficult financial position. According to Waiguchu:

> You can’t neglect your students so much as if you do not expect to look upon them in the future—you send guys here to be living like lords in big hotels while there are others equally deserving if not more going through nights with empty stomachs. What difference does it make whether one came here alone or was sent by Mr. Mboya…? Are we lesser Kenyans?\(^\text{14}\)

Waiguchu’s lamentations are understandable considering that awarding of Mboya’s American scholarships lacked transparency. The award of Mboya’s scholarships was not done in an open manner that would have given every deserving and qualified Kenyan a chance to compete equally. To complicate matters further, the collateral requirement to win government loans locked out many Africans who did not own property. Surprisingly, the loans policy had not been reformed despite the major political strides made by the Africans in the 1950s and early 1960s.

The large number of Kenyan students abroad at the dawn of independence contrasted sharply with those in East African institutions. While there were almost 3,700 Kenyans overseas out of whom about 2,000 were Africans, local East African university institutions

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\(^\text{14} \) KNA/ED/3/652, “Higher Education Loans Fund,” file contains a letter by Julius Waiguchu, a student at Central College, Pella, Iowa to the Secretary, The Board of Management and Educational Loans dated March 30th 1963
had only 635 Kenyans of whom 412 were Africans.\textsuperscript{15} The number of African students in East Africa was less than a quarter of those undertaking their studies in foreign institutions. This situation illustrates how the colonial higher education policy of restricted expansion through a single East African university affected access to higher education as Kenya entered a new era of independence. The need to address the increasing demand for access to higher education became a big challenge to the new independent government. It was apparent that a single university of East Africa was incapable of addressing the higher educational needs of the entire region. Despite claims that a single university would help maintain high university standards, it was clear that stiff competition for opportunities would lock out many eligible high school graduates from accessing university education.

Unfortunately, the nationalist political parties of the independence era did not have a coherent plan on higher education. The colonial ideas on restricted university education had percolated deeply among the nationalist leaders as illustrated by the independence manifesto of the Kenya’s most popular political party, the Kenya African national Union (KANU), which supported the “idea of an East African university with three constituent colleges.”\textsuperscript{16} In addition, the KANU manifesto “welcomed the introduction of the Higher School Certificate in Kenya.”\textsuperscript{17} The introduction of Higher School Certificate added another examination barrier that limited the number of students who accessed university education. The support of the colonial elitist policies contradicted the party’s call for “the abolition of the colonial exam-based education system which eliminated majority of students from the school process.”\textsuperscript{18} It also invalidated the party’s assertion that it would “accelerate at once the pace of establishing and expanding facilities for higher

\textsuperscript{15} KNA/ED/3/65-Statistics about Kenya Students Receiving Higher Education , 1956-1963 by the Ministry of Education
\textsuperscript{16} KANU, The KANU Manifesto for Independence, Social Democracy, and Stability: Duty to one’s country is duty to God, 1961, 24
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 25
education.” The KANU’s contradictory policy positions revealed that the party was not committed to undertaking radical reforms on higher education that would ensure access for majority of the eligible students.

Although the African nationalist leaders shared the same ideas on higher education with the colonial officials, the socio-political and economic environment in East Africa was headed for change once all the territories gained their independence. The nationalist leaders of East Africa failed to foresee the enormous challenges that awaited the federal UEA made up of constituent colleges located in three different countries. The UEA with constituent colleges in three different independent nations was a complex concept that “no one else had done in the history of education.” It was therefore likely that this concept would face unprecedented challenges. Abukuse Mbirika has described some of the challenges that awaited the new UEA including the fact that the constituent colleges were located in three different countries “each country desirous of shaping its own policies for higher education and having its own priorities in matters of development.” In addition, only Makerere had time to develop gradually while the Royal College, Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam College were in a stage of infancy. Makerere therefore “was both a senior partner and a domineering foster parent.”

The scenario depicted by Mbirika was compounded by a fragmented decolonization process that led the East African nations to gain their independence as separate national entities instead of cementing the regional union through a federation. Further, the new independent nations had competing priorities and national interests, which would make the sharing of a university, a vital institution for young developing nations difficult. The

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19 KANU, *The KANU Manifesto for Independence, Social Democracy, and Stability: Duty to one’s country is duty to God*, 1961, 25
20 Abukuse Mbirika, “An examination of the functions of the University of East Africa in relation to the needs of the people,” (PhD Dissertation: New York University, 1970) 129
21 Ibid
22 Ibid
territorial nationalism that had emerged in the 1950s when different territories began to demand for their own university institutions was bound to solidify now that the British government was granting independence to East Africa colonies on a territorial basis. Without a political union, university federation through the UEA was unlikely to succeed. As it will be demonstrated later in this chapter, territorial ambitions and attendant rivalries would come to haunt the UEA. Despite the obvious risks that hovered over a single university experiment, the East African leaders soldiered on with their plans.

The nationalist leaders in East Africa, however, were not totally deluded in their vision for a single university idea, which ironically, was a brainchild of the departing colonial regime. The long history of cooperation among the different territories of East Africa, which date back to the pre-colonial era, provided the hope for the viability of the new UEA. Prior to European colonization of the region, East Africans interacted and traded amongst themselves without the inconveniences placed by modern day nation-states boundaries. During the pre-colonial period, traders from the East African coastal region, in collaboration with local communities in the hinterland, participated in the flourishing long distance trade, which had led to the creation of powerful chiefdoms and kingdoms in the region. The pre-colonial contacts also led to the emergence of Kiswahili as a regional lingua franca that endured beyond the colonial era. The colonial conquests of the late nineteenth century and the subsequent partition of East Africa among the European powers, notably the British and the Germans, temporarily altered the form of the regional cooperation. This however changed following the end of the First World War and the transfer of Tanganyika from German to British authority as a mandated territory of the League of Nations in 1919, which created the opportunity for strengthening East African

cooperation in the colonial era. Subsequently, the British created common regional institutions that included the East African Currency Board, the Court of Appeal for East Africa, the East African Harbors and Railways Corporation, the Postal Union and a Customs Union. After the end of the Second World War, Britain created the East African High Commission and the East African Legislative Assembly, which supervised and facilitated the broad network of common services in the region. These institutions also played a major role in the establishment and expansion of the higher education system beginning with the conversion of Makerere College into the University College of East Africa and the creation of Royal Technical College of East Africa (RTC).  

Despite the efforts at strengthening cooperation, Britain failed to achieve a federated East African state as African nationalism proceeded along territorial lines that consolidated and sharpened national identities. In fact, Britain failed to support the suggestion made in 1960 by Julius Nyerere, the leading nationalist politician in Tanganyika, to slow down the pace of independence process for Tanganyika if it would lead to the creation of a federal state of East Africa. Instead of encouraging the political federation of East Africa, as suggested by Julius Nyerere, Britain hurried to consolidate economic cooperation by creating the East African Common Services Organization (EACSO) in 1961 that continued to oversee and coordinate the provision of common services in the region. Ultimately, Britain granted its East African colonies independence on an individual basis, without creating a framework that would lead to future political unity. This did not only complicate the achievement of a political unification in the post-independence period but also became a source of the many challenges that faced the UEA.

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25 Hannington Ochwada, 61
The obstacles that hindered the achievement of an East African federation reflected the challenges that the UEA would face. The different political experiences discouraged the harmonization of post-colonial institutions that would have eased the transition to a federation. Although some leaders in East Africa hoped to create a stronger political and economic entity grounded in a federation, the constitutional and institutional arrangements proved to be a major impediment in realizing this goal. Each of the three countries entered the era of independence with its own specifically defined goals that impacted the process of integration thereafter. It is therefore clear that the UEA faced an uncertain future even before it was officially inaugurated in June 1963.

The difficulties that confronted the UEA began to emerge even before the official inauguration of the University in 1963 over a proposal to open a medical college in Nairobi to provide undergraduate and postgraduate training in medicine. This plan conflicted with the non-duplication principle that justified the creation of the UEA since Makerere was the only university college designated to train doctors in East Africa. The Kenyan plan as contained in a 1961 memorandum by the Ministry of Health to the Provisional Council of the UEA asked for “the recognition of an institute of Health in Nairobi as an integral part of the University.” The health officials in Kenya considered the opening of a health institute to be “a matter of great urgency with regard to the maintenance and development of medical standards throughout the country.” The Memorandum justified the establishment of a health institute in Kenya on the basis that “Tanganyika is developing a second undergraduate medical school.” The memorandum considered the establishment of the institute in Kenya...

27 KNA/ED/3/140, “University of East Africa,” the file contains a Memorandum from the Kenya’s Ministry of Health to the Provisional Council of the University of East Africa on the creation of an Institute of Health dated October 1962
28 Ibid
29 Ibid
as an “urgent requirement to fulfill a national complimentary need in medical education.”

The memorandum further revealed that Kenya had already put in place plans that would see the provision of postgraduate degrees in medical programs in collaboration with British institutions:

…we have already established with the radiology department of Bristol University that a postgraduate course in Medical Radio-Diagnosis should be undertaken the first year in the UK, the second year after passing the intermediate examination at the radiology department, King George VI Hospital (Kenya) and the final examination at Bristol.

The Kenyan memorandum was the first indication that territorial competition would undermine the envisaged regional university. Already Kenya was clearly stating its intentions to duplicate the medical program in Nairobi citing the fact that Tanganyika, too, contemplated such a measure. Commenting on the Kenya’s plan for an Institute of Health, Davidson Nicol, Chair of the then visiting Academic Needs and Priorities Committee noted that the Kenyan ambitions to possess a medical school were influenced by political rather than economic considerations. Nicol observed that the King George VI hospital where the planned Kenyan institute for Health was to be based “lacked an obstetrics department and its department of pathology was inadequate.”

Despite the shortcomings at the King George VI hospital, Nicols recommended that Kenya be allowed to implement its plan to establish a health institute because “national sentiment will be affronted if Kenya is denied all participation in medical education.”

Following the endorsement of the Kenyan health plan by the visiting Academic Needs and Priorities Committee the Kenyan government went ahead to upgrade the scale of

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30 KNA/ED/3/140, “University of East Africa,” the file contains a Memorandum from the Kenya’s Ministry of Health to the Provisional Council of the University of East Africa on the creation of an Institute of Health dated October 1962.

31 Ibid

32 KNA/ED/3/140, “University of East Africa” file contains a letter by Davidson Nicol, Chairman of the Academic Needs and Priorities Committee, to the Principal of Makerere University College about Kenya’s intention of establishing a medical school, dated October 5 1962.

33 Ibid
the original plan. The earlier memorandum on the establishment of an Institute of Health in Nairobi had modest goals since the center was to provide postgraduate programs only. Soon, the modest plans by Kenya were elevated a notch higher to encompass the establishment of a full faculty of health providing both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. This grand goal was revealed when the Permanent Secretary of Health noted that his ministry was “to establish Nairobi as a centre of postgraduate medical and health education as a first step towards the long-term development of a complete medical undergraduate school.”

The Permanent Secretary, however, hurried to clarify that the scheme by the Kenyan government would not undermine the UEA. According to the Permanent Secretary, the envisaged “Institute of Health, the King George VI Hospital, and the Medical Research Laboratory would become an associated institute for learning with the University of East Africa.”

Although Kenya planned to establish a medical college under the banner of the UEA, still the plan was bound to generate competition from other East African countries. It was a move that went contrary to the ideal of non-duplication that justified the creation of the UEA.

The inauguration of the UEA in June 1963 however temporarily halted the plans to establish the Institute of Health in Nairobi as the focus now turned to sourcing development resources for the new University. The UEA was welcomed enthusiastically both in East Africa and by western nations especially Britain and the USA. Soon after its inauguration, the University administration formed a standing Development Committee that drew the development plan for the coming triennium (1964-1967). The Academic Needs and Priorities Committee, which had earlier on assessed the development needs of the three university colleges, had proposed that the new UEA should strive to achieve full parity between the three university colleges in the common basic faculties of Arts,

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34 KNA/ED/3/139, “University of East Africa” file contains a Letter by the Permanent Secretary of Health and Housing N.R.E. Fendall to the Permanent Secretary of Education dated 3rd December 1962 regarding the plans for a college of health in Nairobi

Science, and Education by 1967. To achieve this goal, however, would mean slowing or halting the pace of development at the mature Makerere College while privileging development of the new University Colleges of Dar-es-Salaam and Nairobi. This was a politically risky proposal likely to offend Ugandans. This fact was recognized by the UEA Development Committee, which decided to modify the earlier recommendation of the Academic Needs and Priorities Committee to ensure that the colleges at Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam developed without constricting progress at Makerere. The Development Committee thus sought to extend the timeframe beyond 1967 when parity in the levels of development at the common faculties of Arts and Science at the three university colleges would be achieved. The Committee clearly stated that it would be difficult to achieve parity in Arts and Science and Education by 1967; “to attempt that would, we feel, entail too severe a reduction in the rate of development at Makerere College.”36 The Committee thus articulated a more feasible plan, which would lead to achievement of rough parity in the development of core programs at the three university colleges by 1967. According to the Development Committee:

The “rough parity” towards which a major advance will be made in this triennium is between the faculties of arts, social sciences, science and education at Makerere college; the faculties of arts, commerce and science at the Royal College; and the Faculties of arts, social sciences and science at the University College, Dar es Salaam

The Development Committee expected the new plan to lead to “equality in teaching facilities, in numbers of student places in the basic faculties of arts, science and education common to all colleges, and in spread of intellectual quality.”38 The plan therefore envisaged fast development at the new colleges in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam

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36 KNA/KA/5/53, “University of East Africa” Contains a draft “University Development Plan for the Triennium 1964/67,” pg 4
37 Ibid
38 Ibid
without necessarily restricting the development of Makerere. The position taken by the Development Committee however was unfair to the University College, Dar-es-Salaam, which offered only one professional degree in Law. While the Committee planned an addition of the faculties of Arts and Science at Dar-es-Salaam, it neglected to expand its offering of the much-needed professional programs. On the other hand, the Royal College, Nairobi fared much better because the Development Committee planned the creation of the faculties of Arts and Science in addition to a wide range of professional degrees in Engineering and Commerce. The principle of equality in the development of the three colleges would therefore prove to be difficult to achieve in the initial years of the establishment of the UEA.

In the meantime, the Development Committee was confronted with a bigger challenge of securing resources for the UEA. The Development Committee whose membership included several British academics turned to the British government to provide the much-needed resources for developing the UEA. In any case, the UEA was a colonial idea that had been initiated by the British government. It therefore meant that the British government had to play a critical role in implementing their own idea of a single university for East Africa. As noted earlier, the single university idea was one way that Britain conceived as a means of effecting intellectual and ideological control of its former colonies. The Development Committee therefore had an easy time convincing Britain and other western nations that shared the same capitalistic liberal ideology to provide the needed resources. In response to requests by the Development Committee, the British government and the Rockefeller Foundation of America, agreed to organize a Conference that would bring together all potential donors who would support the UEA development plan for the coming triennium. The Rockefeller Foundation offered to host the Conference of donors at its premises of Villa Serbelloni, in Bellagio, Italy.
The Conference on the University of East Africa at Villa Serbelloni, in Bellagio, Italy opened on 21st to 25th October, 1963 and was well attended by representatives from the developed nations of western Europe, Canada and USA. Addressing the Conference, Tanganyika’s Minister for Finance, P. Bomani, noted that the East African countries were looking for support to enable the implementation of capital programs planned by the UEA Development Committee. According to Bomani, “the East African governments would be unable to make more than a small contribution on the capital side and would of necessity have to look to their friends abroad and to the great international institutions for large-scale assistance.” In order to present a strong case to the donors, the Development Committee came up with a report that justified the decision by East Africa to create a federal UEA. One of the main reasons advanced by the Development Committee involved the need to maintain high standards. The “high standards” justification was originally advanced by the colonial government in the 1950s and had now been adopted by the newly independent nations of East Africa. According to the Development Committee:

the degrees of the UEA will have behind them the reputation of the University and its constituent colleges. They will much more surely maintain and enhance their international reputation than would the degrees of three separate national universities.”

Interestingly, the Development Committee advanced a new justification that since the constituent colleges of the University would draw its students from all over East Africa, “the university will increase the awareness amongst East Africans of their underlying unity.” In addition, the Committee reiterated the economic advantages of a federal university stating that, “a careful and integrated planning of higher education on an East

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40 KNA/KA/5/53, “University of East Africa” file contains Draft University “Development Plan for the Triennium 1964/67” that was circulated during the donor conference of October 21-25 in Italy
41 Ibid
African basis will also bring major economic advantages.” 42 In order to save costs, the Committee noted that it would consider “only major and essential developments reflecting a real regard for the true priorities of training and education…we have set our face against prestige developments or attractive but low-priority projects.”43

The donor countries and organizations represented at the Conference did not disappoint as revealed by the pledges that they made. In the forefront was Britain, which announced an offer of £850,000 for capital assistance to the University consisting of £500,000 for the University College, Dar es Salaam, £300,000 for the Royal College, Nairobi and £50,000 for Makerere University College. The Director General of the British Department of Technical Co-operation, Sir Andrew Cohen, also announced that his government would meet some of the University’s recurrent expenditure during the triennium. This would include providing postgraduate scholarships to the University’s staff, meeting of overseas costs including passages of British staff appointed to new posts under the development plan, and contributions towards the cost of new British appointments to preexisting posts. The cost of recurrent assistance by Britain would total some £200,000 between 1964 and 1967.44

Other pledges came from the Rockefeller Foundation in support of the African studies programmes; economics and economic research; Africanisation; faculty of Agriculture at Makerere University College; and a continuation of existing support for the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the Royal College, Nairobi. The Rockefeller Foundation also offered to secure temporary services of an experienced American educator and administrator to strengthen the planning resources of the University. The Wolfson Foundation of the UK announced an offer of £72,000 for the building of a Women’s Hall of

42KNA/KA/5/53, “University of East Africa” file contains Draft University “Development Plan for the Triennium 1964/67” that was circulated during the donor conference of October 21-25 in Italy
43 Ibid
44 Report of a Conference on the University of East Africa, Villa Serbelloni, Bellagio, Italy, 21st to 25th October, 1963, 8
Residence at the University College, Dar es Salaam while the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Culture Organization (UNESCO) indicated it would continue to support the UNESCO/Special Fund Engineering project at the Royal College, Nairobi. UNESCO also indicated that it would create a Special Fund for assisting the Faculty of Science at the Dar-es-Salaam College. The Federal Republic of Germany promised financial and personnel support to the faculty of Veterinary Science, in Nairobi.45

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) stated that it would assist with the construction of major structures for classrooms, halls of residence and administration buildings. USAID also offered to provide indirect assistance to recurrent costs by supporting certain professors, as was being done by Cultural Affairs at Makerere and Dar-es-Salaam; contributing to the costs of scholarships within East Africa and support for students from other parts of Africa studying at the UEA; and “topping-off” salaries for a small number of academic staff. Other substantial pledges came from the Ford Foundation, The Carnegie Corporation, the Dulverton Trust, and Leverhulme Trust.46

The International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) was the only notable international organization that did not make any pledge at the Conference although it noted that it would consider funding capital projects.47 Soon however the Bank changed its mind and declined to support the University.48 Despite of the snub from the World Bank, the UEA emerged from the Conference in Italy with a lot of support from the western world. For a moment, it appeared as though the University had embarked on

45 Report of a Conference on the University of East Africa, Villa Serbelloni, Bellagio, Italy, 21st to 25th October, 1963, 14
46 Ibid
47 Ibid 8-10
48 KNA/ED/3/2918, “Higher Education, University of East Africa” file contains extract from a Letter by George D. Woods, Office of the President, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to Mr. R.C. Pratt of 20th February, 1964. According to Woods, the World Bank would not support the UEA because “the funds available for assisting education projects were limited and they had to confine their scope of activities to a few specific fields, and to proceed on a modest scale most preferably concentrating in basic education”.
unstoppable march to greatness. On the other hand, however, the Conference revealed that
despite their independence, the East African nations were still too dependent on the western
world in solving their higher education challenges.

Although the Conference in Italy brought together western donor representatives who
shared the same capitalistic liberal ideology, it however revealed the differences between the
Americans and the British in their conception of university education. During the
Conference, the American delegates criticized the stringent entry requirements to the UEA,
which discouraged access to university education in East Africa. Americans were especially
opposed to the introduction of the A levels which determined entrance to universities. The
British colonial government had changed the entry requirements to the university colleges in
1961 from the School Certificate which was the qualifying exam after four years of high
school to Higher School Certificate which was a national exam done at the end of the A
levels. The introduction of the A levels lengthened the period of high school education from
four to six years. The introduction of the Higher School Certificate aligned the East Africa’s
education system to that of Britain. At this time, East Africa especially Kenya and
Tanganyika had very few high schools. Even fewer were high schools with adequate
resources to establish the additional fifth and sixth levels of learning. 49 The high schools
that were unable to introduce the A-Levels therefore stopped supplying the university
colleges with students and instead became feeders for the rich high schools which were
established up to the A-Levels. Basically, the introduction of the Higher School Certificate
created another barrier that limited access to university. It is noteworthy that many of the
students who failed to qualify for the A-Levels gained admission to foreign universities and

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49 The fifth and sixth levels of high school education is what was known as the A-Levels
actually returned to teach in the same universities that they failed to gain entry in the first place.50

During the Conference, the American representatives clearly expressed their opposition to the rigid entry requirements to the UEA. To them, the strict entry standards made necessary by the nature of the curricula and the emphasis on the final examinations for the first degree, contrasted unfavorably with the broad variety of standards of entry to college education in America. In addition, the Americans were opposed to the limiting of the number of students accessing university education in East Africa on the grounds of maintaining high standards. The American delegates criticized the concept of “high standards” upheld in East African which led to the over glorification of small class sizes, high staff/student ratios and the overhyped virtues of intimate contact through tutorial groups. 51 To Americans the so-called high standards did not only hinder access to higher education but were also economically wasteful. The American stand was an indication of their disapproval of the British elitist legacy of university education in East Africa.

The American interest in the UEA was part of the cold war competition with the Soviet Union, both vying for influence in the newly independent nations of Africa. Already America offered myriads of opportunities to Africans to pursue higher education in the USA. By the early 1960s, the American influence in higher education had already been felt in Nigeria where a university modeled on the Land-grant universities of the USA had been formed. 52 In East Africa, the American influence was felt at the UEA through the involvement of institutions such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation. Despite the American

50 Abukuse Mbirika, 143
51 Report of a Conference on the University of East Africa, Villa Serbelloni, Bellagio, Italy, 21st to 25th October, 1963, 14
criticism which Ironically was accompanied with support, the British influence at the UEA was not about to wane. In fact, the UEA representatives at the Conference warmly defended the British higher education values with the study group on common faculties declaring that “the tutorial group method, with its opportunities for close intellectual engagement between staff and students, was the single most important element in the provision of trained minds for the future of East Africa.”

The adamant defense of the British standards at the UEA, however, did not deter some East Africans, such as the American educated Mbirika, from calling for reforms in curriculum and entry standards at the UEA. Mbirika criticized the British university legacy in East Africa for upholding unrealistically high academic requirements for admission to the UEA, which “did not have close bearing to the standard of teaching at most of the secondary schools in East Africa.” Consequently, only a few very brilliant students gained admission to the UEA. In addition, Mbirika observed that the university curriculum introduced by the British in their universities in Africa followed a very narrow system of specialization. At the UEA, there were three patterns of specialization including one which allowed students to study only three subjects in their first year, before progressing with two subjects in their second and third years (3:2:2). A second alternative involved studying of three subjects in the first year, continuing with two in the second year and completing their final year with only one subject (3:2:1). The third and the most specialized alternative involved studying of three subjects in the first year and choosing one subject to proceed with in the second and third year (3:1:1). Whatever pattern a student elected to follow, no student in the faculty of Arts and Science was permitted to study more than three courses in their first year or more than

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53 Report of a Conference on the University of East Africa, Villa Serbelloni, Bellagio, Italy, 21st to 25th October, 1963, 68
54 Abukuse Mbirika, 138
55 KNA/ED/3/138, “University of East Africa” Contains guidelines by the Provisional Council of the University of East Africa Concerning Degree Structure in the Faculties of Arts and Science in the University of East Africa issued on April 11 1962
two courses in the second and third year. Mbirika concluded that the narrow curricula offering at the UEA was “a system designed to produce specialists not generalists.”

Eric Ashby, a British scholar also criticized specialized honors system that the British introduced to the new universities in Africa. According to Ashby, the honors system was based on an erroneous assumption that “either the students are going to become professional scholars or scientists, or that the training appropriate for an academic is the best education to give students who are going to become civil servants, employers of public corporations and so on.” In either case, this was not true since most of the students became neither professional scholars nor scientists. As Mbirika noted, the rigidity of the UEA’s curriculum was “unsuitable for educating people in developing countries since it did not prepare its graduates to engage in a wide range of careers.” To support his assertion, Mbirika demonstrated several specialization models at the UEA that revealed the narrow focus of the curriculum. One of the models that Mbirika depicted was that of a student admitted to study Bachelor of Arts degree who:

In the first year specializes in History, Geography and English. In the second year this student might drop English and in the third year he drops Geography. When the student graduates with a Bachelor of Arts in History it is likely that he has a specialised knowledge of History. However in his high school and even at college he never learned even elementary economics, sociology, logic, mathematics, psychology, etc. Suppose this graduate comes out of college and is offered the job of District Administrative Officer, he is automatically a lower magistrate responsible for certain civil and criminal cases. It is obvious that a graduate of this type needs to know more than history to be able to discharge his duties with competence.

Many experts shared the concerns expressed by Mbirika regarding the unsuitability of the honors system in East Africa. For the UEA Development Committee, the highly restrictive higher education system that East Africa adopted was unlikely to meet the

56 Abukuse Mbirika, 152
58 Abukuse Mbirika, 152
59 Abukuse Mbirika, 152
demand for highly trained human resource that faced the new nations. The Development Committee, therefore, recommended the relaxation of entry requirements at the UEA by creating “a one year pre-degree course within the university admitting candidates after successful examination, to degree courses of the present duration.” 60 Additionally, the Committee called for the introduction of “a four year degree curriculum in Arts and Science, with School Certificate entry, and the development of junior colleges, possibly in association with the University.” 61 If implemented, the Development Committee expected its recommendations to “contribute to solving the East Africa’s present high level manpower crisis.” 62

The Development Committee proposal was an indictment to the elitist education system that the British colonial government wanted to bequeath to East Africa. Implicitly, the proposal was a call to democratize higher education by abrogating the British higher education system in East Africa and in its place adopting the more democratic American model. If adopted, this system would have hastened the Africanization process that the East African nations desired in order to increase the representation of the indigenous people in the public and private sectors.

The Development Committee recommendations for democratizing access to university education did not receive support at the donor Conference in Italy other than from the Americans. The Conference however was unanimous in its call for increased Africanization of the academic and administrative staff at the UEA. The Conference unanimously passed a resolution requiring the UEA to target at achieving a forty percent Africanization of its teaching staff by 1967. This meant making “over 100 East African

61 Ibid 14
62 Ibid 13
appointments over the next four years.” To meet the target the UEA required expanding undergraduate admissions in order to have enough students qualified to pursue postgraduate education who would then return to teach at the University. The Conference articulated a three-point plan that would ensure the achievement of the Africanization target at the UEA that included:

1. Expanding the supply of able students undergoing postgraduate training
2. Securing the services of the best of them by an active recruitment policy and strong inducements
3. Retaining, encouraging and promoting them after appointment

The Africanization plan at the UEA, and in the wider economy, would not be achieved without higher education reforms that would ensure increased access. The plans for reforming university education in East Africa were supported by the first education commission of Uganda chaired by E. B. Castle. Appointed by the newly independent government of Uganda in 1963, the Castle Commission was charged with the responsibility of reforming the country’s education system as it entered the post-independence era. Although not necessarily charged with investigating higher education, the Castle Commission felt obliged to make reference to entry requirements and curriculum model at the UEA. As the Commission observed “our anxiety about the future staffing of secondary and high schools and the need for Uganda graduates prompts us to comment on degree structure.” The Castle Commission was particularly opposed to the Higher School Certificate as the entry requirement at the UEA. According to the Commission, “the standard required for the East African university colleges is higher than that demanded in many parts of the English speaking world, and suggests that the university colleges are more concerned

64 Ibid
65 KNA/ED/3/2909, “University of East Africa,” Extracts from: Education in Uganda (The Castle Report) August 28 1963-presented to the Members of Academic Board by A. Rowe-Evans, Secretary to the College and Acting Registrar
to educate an elite than to produce a large number of graduates and diplomats suitably trained for East Africa’s present needs.” 66

The Commission was categorical in its opposition to the A-Levels and the Higher School Certificate as the entry examination to university:

We are not entirely convinced of the value to a large number of high school pupils of the British two-year higher school certificate course, nor are we convinced that such an examination should constitute the standard of university entrance in a country which is facing an emergency and had to produce a large supply of graduates quickly. It is doubtful whether an entrance level adopted in the UK only after the Second World War, in order to select university entrants for an almost overwhelming number of 6th form applicants is necessarily appropriate to East African conditions.67

Like the UEA Development Committee, the Castle Commission viewed the entry requirements at the UEA as restrictive and elitist. To address the shortcomings in the university system the Castle Commission asked the UEA to discard a narrow specialization and instead adopt a broader curriculum “on the lines of the Scottish Ordinary degree.”68 The adoption of the reforms recommended by the Castle Commission would require an extension of the time it took to graduate with an undergraduate degree from three years to “four years after passing an adequate school certificate.”69

The Castle Commission, like the UEA Development Committee, aimed at reforms that would reduce the influence of the colonial policies on higher education. One such colonial policy that both bodies wanted abolished was the requirement that junior colleges must be “complete in themselves like the English polytechnics” and not act as “feeders to university colleges.”70 The British put this policy in place during the establishment of technical colleges in Africa in the late 1940s. The “complete in themselves” policy severely...

66 KNA/ED/3/2909, “University of East Africa,” Extracts from: Education in Uganda (The Castle Report) August 28 1963-presented to the Members of Academic Board by A. Rowe-Evans, Secretary to the College and Acting Registrar
67 Ibid
68 University of East Africa ED/3/2909. Extracts from: Education in Uganda (The Castle Report) August 28 1963-presented to the Members of Academic Board by A. Rowe-Evans, Secretary to the College and Acting Registrar
69 Ibid
restricted the avenues through which Africans could access university education. This policy ensured that only qualified high school students gained admission into university. Those who failed to attain the required university qualifications at the end of their high school education and instead enrolled at junior or technical colleges were essentially prevented from ever attaining university education even if they excelled in their education at the college level. The Castle Commission and the UEA Development Committee, however, wanted to increase the avenues for accessing university education by giving a chance to those who excelled at junior colleges to later join the UEA. In addition, the Castle Commission wanted the high school A-Levels abolished to have the School Certificate examination taken at the end of four years of high school as the qualifying entry at the UEA. The Commission also wanted more junior colleges created which would take the place of the abolished A-Levels. Not only would the adoption of the Castle recommendations abolish barriers of access to university education but also it was the most economical way to ensure mass access to post-high school education in general. As the Commission observed, the establishment of the recommended junior colleges would absorb the likely future expansion of high school graduates. Further “the teaching of science would probably be less costly at a junior college and the recruitment of well qualified staff easier.”

In response to the strong opinion calling for the reform of the entry criteria and the curriculum, the UEA senate appointed a Working Party to “submit for consideration by the Senate and Council of the University a factual report on the various questions connected with the University’s standard of entry and graduation, and the related subject of degree structure.” The Carnegie Corporation of New York supported the Working Party with a

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71 KNA/ED/3/2909, “University of East Africa,” Extracts from: Education in Uganda (The Castle Report) August 28 1963-presented to the Members of Academic Board by A. Rowe-Evans, Secretary to the College and Acting Registrar
72 University of East Africa, Entrance Levels and Degree Structure: Report 1964, 1
$12,000 grant. Given its composition and the kind of sources from where it solicited its opinion, it was very unlikely that the Working Party would make any recommendations contrary to the wishes of the British who still controlled higher education despite granting independence to East African nations. Majority of the members of the Working Party were either British academics or Africans educated in Britain thus heavily influenced by the British ideals. In addition, the Working Party solicited for opinion from “members of the University Colleges, Headmasters of secondary schools and officials of the governments.” Like the members of the Working Party, all these were either British expatriates working in East Africa or the few educated Africans who were products of the British education system. Therefore, majority of the solicited opinion did not favor making any reforms on entry criteria and the curriculum. As the Working Party observed:

The overwhelming majority of people who provided written papers or with whom we talked were against a reversion to School Certificate as an entry to the University. The arguments put forward were varied but emphasis was on the following points: a) The immaturity of the students at this level; b) The high cost of University education compared with Higher School Certificate in schools; c) The good effect on the Secondary Schools of a Higher School Certificate students; d) a number of people stressed that the numbers who would be entering the University for a Four year Degree Course after School Certificate would be such as to swamp the Colleges.

Although acknowledging that the Higher School Certificate limited the number of students who could access university education, the Working Party supported the existing entry standards stating, “we believe that Higher School Certificate courses benefit the pupil in a school in many ways, for example, by stimulating intellectual interests and promoting more

The Chair of the Working Party was H. Creaser, Dean of Education at Makerere. Other members included R. C. Honeybone, Professor of Education, Dar es-Salaam; N. C. Otieno of the University College Nairobi; D. Wasawo, Vice Principle of Makerere; H. W. Springer, Director of the Institute of Education the University of West Indies and E. F. Sheffield, Research Director, Canadian Universities Research Foundation.

73 University of East Africa, Entrance Levels and Degree Structure: Report 1964, 1
74 Ibid
75 Ibid
mature leadership.” The Working Party therefore did not recommend any changes regarding the curriculum despite all the prior criticism that the University encouraged narrow specialization. To support their stand, the Working Party stated, “on the whole the people who discussed this point thought that the present structure was satisfactory. The Working Party also rejected suggestions for the adoption of some aspects of the American university model including broadening of the curriculum and award of course credits. On this issue the Working Party was categorical:

We do not favor a system for degrees based upon ‘credit hours’ where each course is allocated a certain number of ‘credits’ and where a student can obtain a degree by passing a number of courses often in unrelated fields. We much prefer a degree course based upon related subjects, as exists at the moment.

By rejecting university reforms, the Working Party recommendations served to institutionalize colonial university elitism that ensured continuation of policies and practices that limited access to university education in the post independence period. In fact, the elitist agenda of the Working Party were vividly expressed by its assertion that “the recommendations were based on the need to guard excessive growth that might outstrip the planned expansion of university facilities as has happened in Kumasi and Ibadan.” Accordingly, the Working Party noted that it was not their “intention to open university courses to those candidates who we are convinced will not make degree level, for the sake of increasing numbers, but we consider our recommendations sound in the light of evidence and discussions.” The effect of these recommendations would ensure

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76 University of East Africa, *Entrance Levels and Degree Structure: Report 1964*, 8
77 Ibid
78 Ibid, 18
79 Ibid, 16; The Working Party was arguing that they did not want expansion of access in East Africa as had happened in the former British West African colonies of Ghana and Nigeria (Kumasi and Ibadan) where the university institutions established during the colonial period had greatly expanded enrolment and the independence governments in those countries had gone ahead to establish additional universities.
80 University of East Africa, *Entrance Levels and Degree Structure: Report 1964*, 16
that there was very modest expansion in student enrolments at the UEA. Ironically, the elitist British university education model became institutionalized in East Africa in the post independence era. Settled for the British university model, the UEA began implementing the Triennium Development Plan that had received support from the donor community during the UEA Conference in Italy.

One of the issues discussed at the Conference was the role of the UEA in national development especially in combating diseases and poverty that crippled East Africa. In this regard, it was agreed that the faculty of Medicine at Makerere should be expanded to enable it to produce more doctors. By 1963, only thirty medical doctors were graduating every year from Makerere to serve the whole of East Africa. Under the new plans, it was agreed that the expansion of the faculty of Medicine at Makerere would result in the production of ninety medical doctors every year.81 The expansion of the faculty of Medicine at Makerere, however, would require financial support from all the East African nations to supplement whatever donor support that was forthcoming. The recommendation to expand Makerere faculty of Medicine became the first serious flashpoint testing the commitment of the three East African states to the new UEA.82

At independence, each of the three East African governments had prioritized provision of healthcare to its citizens. The governments, however, did not have a common healthcare plan. Tanzania for instance, planned to build two hundred health centers throughout the country, mainly in the rural areas where ninety-five percent of its population then lived. Diploma holders from the new Dar-es-Salaam Medical School created in 1962 to

82 Tanganyika united with Zanzibar in April 1964 to form a new nation called Tanzania following the coup that toppled the government of Zanzibar
train diploma medical practitioners would staff these health centers.\textsuperscript{83} In addition to providing medical outreach to the rural folks through the establishment of health centers, Tanzania’s plan emphasized community health, health education and the health of mothers and children and public health measures in general. The plan to expand Makerere’s faculty of Medicine therefore fell outside the healthcare plan of Tanzania because it relied heavily on the less expensive staff trained at the Dar-es-Salaam Medical School. In addition, unlike Makerere, the graduates of Dar-es-Salaam Medical School were “trained to deal with the specific problems prevailing in Tanganyika and will be specifically skilled in the methods of community and rural practice.”\textsuperscript{84} The government of Tanzania, therefore, felt that contributing to the faculty of Medicine at Makerere would strain its resources at a time when it was striving to implement its health plan. Knowing that their plan which was contrary to the spirit of regional university unity through the UEA would elicit controversy, the Tanganyikan government was quick to point out that the Dar-es-Salaam Medical School was not undermining Makerere since the institution “did not train doctors for the open market as university graduates. Dar-es-Salaam doctors receive one year’s training less than at Makerere.”\textsuperscript{85}

Soon, Kenya ignited another crisis when the Ministry of Health announced at a UEA Development Committee meeting that it had begun clinical training for its staff at the Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi.\textsuperscript{86} This announcement by the Chief Medical Officer, Dr. J. C. Likimani, was quite misleading since, in reality, Kenya had begun training medical

\textsuperscript{83} KNA/ED/3/2918, “Higher Education, University of East Africa” contains a joint Confidential Letter by East African Education Ministers: J. D. Otiende of Kenya; S. N. Elufoo of Tanganyika and Dr. S. J. L. Zake of Uganda to Sir Bernard de Bunsen, Vice Chancellor UEA, 8, April, 1964

\textsuperscript{84} KNA/ED/3/2918, “Higher Education, University of East Africa” file contains “Report on Dar es Salaam Medical School by the Tanganyika’s Ministry of Education” of 5 December 1963

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid

\textsuperscript{86} KNA/ED/3/2918, “Higher Education, University of East Africa,” contains minutes of the sixth Meeting of the University Development Committee held at University College Nairobi on Friday, 3\textsuperscript{rd} February 1964; Kenyatta National Hospital was formerly known as formerly King George VI Hospital.
practitioners. The announcement prompted protests from Uganda’s government, which accused Kenya of undermining the UEA by training its own medical doctors. In response to Uganda’s protests Dr Likimani observed that the clinical training in Kenya was “an extension of the facilities that are available at Makerere… the Kenya Government has not acted unilaterally in this connection.”

Uganda was not persuaded by Dr. Likimani’s argument, and further accused Kenya of flouting “the laws of the East African Central Legislative Assembly that entrusted the University with responsibility for the planning of higher education in East Africa, yet staff was apparently being recruited to augment the strength of the Faculty of Medicine without the knowledge of the University.”

Not only had Kenya begun to train doctors but also plans were afoot to establish a school of pharmacy in Nairobi. Kenya was acting in total disregard of the laid down procedures by making unilateral decisions neither sanctioned by the UEA Development Committee nor included in the Triennial Development Plan for 1964-67. Kenya had kept the plan to establish a school of pharmacy secret, revealing it only after securing funding. As in the case with the medical school, the Ministry of Health was involved in the plans to establish the school of pharmacy. According to Likimani, Kenya had secured funding for the project following the visit by the Minister for Health to Europe where “the government of Germany expressed interest in assisting in the establishment of a school of pharmacy.”

Commenting on the implication of Kenya’s unilateral decision to establish a school of pharmacy, Bethwell Ogot, who served in the UEA Development Committee has observed...

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87 KNA/ED/3/2918, “Higher Education, University of East Africa,” contains minutes of the sixth Meeting of the University Development Committee held at University College Nairobi on Friday, 3rd February 1964; Kenyatta National Hospital was formerly known as formerly King George VI Hospital.
88 Ibid
89 KNA/Ed/3/143, “University of East Africa” file contains a Letter by Kenya’s Director of Medical Services J. C. Likimani to the Vice Chancellor of the UEA Sir, B. de Bunsen of 9 July 1964
90 Ibid
how the national governments especially Kenya played a big role in undermining the UEA. He noted that Kenya, and to some extent, Tanzania did not follow laid down procedures which required the implementation of the Triennial Plan before initiating new plans. In establishing the schools of Medicine and Pharmacy, Kenya subverted the spirit of cooperation and of non-duplication of expensive programs that the East African nations were expected to uphold in their relation with the UEA. According to Ogot, the tendency towards duplication was accelerated by a growing desire by the East African governments to have national universities with the full range of professional and non-professional schools. In addition, the governments sought to align university programs with national needs, which were different in each country. This was especially so in Kenya and Tanzania which strove to develop their university colleges to attain the same level as Uganda’s Makerere.

It was obvious that barely a year after its creation, national ambitions and conflicting priorities were endangering the existence of the UEA. A few influential East Africans were concerned that the conflicting national interests were a threat to the UEA. In Kenya, the Permanent Secretary for Education, Kenneth Matiba, lamented the lack of coordination among the East African countries on the issue of the UEA. In a memo to his minister, Matiba wanted all East African governments to “give an assurance that the UEA should continue into being for at least 10 years. By then the College may have grown into sizeable bodies capable of becoming separate universities.” Matiba also suggested that the supranational East African Common Services Organization (EACSO) should take over the running of the UEA to contain the competing interests among the East African governments.

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92 Ibid
93 KNA/ED/3/135, “University of East Africa,” a Memo by Kenneth Matiba the P.S. Education to Education Minister dated 2/11/1964
Matiba noted that he had already consulted with the Tanganyikan officials who supported his idea while “Uganda had not yet indicated its position.”

Like Mr. Matiba, the Vice Chancellor of the UEA Bernard de Bunsen was becoming increasingly uncomfortable with the attitudes of the three East African countries towards UEA. In a memo to the Development Committee, de Bunsen lamented the lack of cooperation among the three East African nations that had affected the smooth implementation of the Triennial Plan 1964/1967. Due to the failure to adhere to the programs articulated in the 1964/1967 Triennial Plan, de Bunsen asked the Development Plan to begin an early preparation of the coming 1967/1970 plan. In preparing the envisaged Triennial Plan, de Bunsen insisted that the Development Committee should ensure that it included programs that carried “the support of the governments and the Colleges and are the most acceptable means of cooperation between them in the years ahead.”

Dr. de Bunsen, like Matiba, was calling for an intervention in order to save the UEA from collapse. In de Bunsen’s view, the Development Committee needed to play a proactive role by drawing a forward looking and well thought-out plan for the coming 1967/70 plan period that would prevent the kind of conflicts witnessed in the implementation of the 1964/67 triennial plan. In his memo, de Bunsen articulated a set of questions that the Development Committee would deliberate upon with the governments and the colleges as they went about soliciting for the ideas to incorporate in the development plan. These questions included:

1. Are the present pattern and powers of the University as established in the Act and Statutes and interpreted in practice to be maintained in their present form? If either of the latter, in which particular direction?
2. Have the governments and Colleges views, however tentative on the possible length of life of a common University of East Africa

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94 KNA/ED/3/135, “University of East Africa,” a Memo by Kenneth Matiba the P.S. Education to Education Minister dated 2/11/1964
95 KNA/ED/3/157, “University of East Africa,” Memorandum by the de Bunsen to the UEA Development Committee on the Basis of Future Development Planning, of November 1964
3. Is the proposal to establish on the governments side a Ministerial Committee to EACSO for Higher Education with which the University would be related and through which it would receive a fairly substantial proportion of its finance likely to be accepted? 96

Based on the above set of questions it is clear that despite his position as the Vice Chancellor of the UEA, de Bunsen was in the dark regarding the future university policy of individual nations. Basically, de Bunsen wanted to establish whether the governments were interested in the long term survival of the University. Interestingly, de Bunsen shared the same views with Matiba that the long-term survival of the University would be guaranteed by bringing it under the umbrella of the EACSO rather than national governments, as was the case.

The Development Committee sent de Bunsen’s questions to individual governments seeking clarification regarding their long-term view of the UEA. In Kenya, the task of addressing de Bunsen’s queries fell on J. K. Njoroge who had succeeded Matiba as the Permanent Secretary for Education following a cabinet reshuffle by the President. Njoroge like Matiba expressed his “conviction that the life of the University should be maintained until such time that the Colleges, especially Dar-es-Salaam and Nairobi have grown to an extent of being able to stand on their own.” 97 Njoroge also added that Kenya and Tanzania were in favor of the establishment of a ministerial committee of EACSO for Higher Education, which would reduce the control of the individual states on the UEA. He however regretted that “Uganda as far as I am aware have not yet indicated their agreement.” 98

Although playing a major role in undermining the UEA, still, Kenya and Tanzania wanted the regional university arrangement maintained while at the same expanding and

96 KNA/ED/3/157, “University of East Africa,” Memorandum by the de Bunsen to the UEA Development Committee on the Basis of Future Development Planning, of November 1964
97 KNA/ED/3/157, “University of East Africa” Reply of J. K. Njoroge, Permanent Secretary Education Kenya to Dr. Porter the Principal University College Nairobi regarding Kenya’s views about the UEA OF 27 February 1965
98 Ibid
improving the university colleges located in their territories. Both countries saw an early collapse of the UEA as prejudicial to their interests since their university colleges were still in their infancy compared to Makerere. Furthermore, they had contributed immensely to the establishment of Makerere; therefore, they felt that they had to reap the full benefits of their investment. Uganda on the other hand, had a different opinion, viewing Kenya and Tanzania as holding back the development of Makerere. Certainly, the conflicting positions regarding the UEA were becoming a source of disunity rather than cooperation among the East Africa nations.

Following the obvious moves to undermine the spirit of non-duplication that had served as one of the key pillars of the UEA, 1965 opened with an animated debate over the federal university arrangement. Joining the debate were UEA students who, at a seminar held in Dar-es-Salaam in April 1965 resolved that the university unity in East Africa should remain. In July, the students proceeded to inaugurate the University Students Association of East Africa (USAEA) at Makerere.99 In a joint communiqué released at the end of the seminar, the students cautioned East African leaders against allowing the disintegration of the UEA, which they noted would be “a death blow to East African unity and solidarity and hence contrary to the aspirations of the African people.”100

Despite the strong support from the students, it was clear that the UEA was in a serious danger of disintegration due to mistrusts and competing interests of the East African governments. The Academic Board of the University College, Dar-es-Salaam attributed the challenges confronting the federal university to hard feelings by Ugandans who regarded “efforts to bring the three colleges to positions of rough parity… as causing an unnecessary

99 KNA/XJ/2/34, “University Students Association of East Africa” A Joint Communiqué during the inauguration of the University Students Association of East Africa in Dar-es-Salaam on 3 April 1965
100 Ibid
slowing of the development of Makerere College.” The Academic Board of the Dar-es-Salaam College regarded Uganda’s concerns as misplaced since the federal UEA had succeeded in attracting “more international interest and support than if each had gone its own separate way. The efforts of the University College Dar es Salaam to raise capital had certainly benefitted just as in previous years Makerere College had benefitted by being East Africa’s only University College.” The observations by the Academic Board of the Dar-es-Salaam College reflected the increasing strain in regional relations with Ugandans viewing the federal university arrangement as inimical to the development of Makerere. According to Ugandans, Kenya and Tanzania were taking advantage of the federal university to attract international funding to develop their university colleges while hindering the progress of Makerere. That was unacceptable. At a special meeting of the UEA Council held on May 20, 1965, the Uganda’s Minister for Education Dr. J.S.L. Zake, tabled a paper entitled “Uganda Government: Views on the Future of the University of East Africa,” in which he attacked the very grounds for the federal university’s existence. The paper dismissed the principle of ‘non-duplication,’ which was one of the pillars justifying the federal university arrangement in East Africa. Accordingly, the paper stated that, “while non-duplication is a sound principle on economic grounds, it collapses in the face of the requisites of political status symbol.” The paper also noted that since the needs of each country varied accordingly, “each of the three constituent colleges of the University will have to be an autonomous university sooner or later.” The paper by Zake indicated that the Ugandan government had become impatient with the UEA and soon it had to give way to university colleges to develop into full

101 KNA/ED/3/157, “University of East Africa” File contains Extract from the Minutes of the 15th meeting of the Academic Board of the University College, Dar-es-Salaam held on 17 January 1965
102 KNA/ED/3/157, “University of East Africa” File contains Extract from the Minutes of the 15th meeting of the Academic Board of the University College, Dar-es-Salaam held on 17 January 1965
103 Quoted in Bethwell Ogot, My Footprints in the Sands of time, 174
104 Ibid
universities. Importantly, Zake’s view regarding the varying needs of each East African nation was apt. By 1965, each East African nation had drawn a survey of its high-level labor needs, which placed their university colleges at the center of preparing the much-needed personnel. In Kenya, the government had commissioned two surveys—one “A preliminary Assessment of High Level Manpower in East Africa” released in 1963 and “The High Level Manpower Requirement and Resources in Kenya, 1964-1970” released in 1964. The government viewed these reports as crucial in planning economic development and education. Both reports identified important occupational areas in both the public and private sectors that were lacking enough personnel and wanted the government to prioritize the establishment of university programs in those priority areas. Due to the differing priorities as articulated by each nation’s labor needs, Zake proposed the dissolution of the UEA, to give each country a chance to “train its manpower the way it thinks best, openly without hindrance or fears of stepping on anybody’s toe.” Zake’s arguments about the need to dissolve the UEA were powerful. Moreover, as a senior government official, Zake expressed the feeling among many Ugandans that the UEA was frustrating rather than encouraging the development of Makerere.

The news that Uganda had threatened to pull out of the UEA were received with disappointment in several quarters. Among those opposed to the dissolution of the UEA was the Uganda Students Association who while expressing their concern about the reports of the likely break-up of the university, wrote a letter to all education ministers in East Africa inquiring their “policy towards the UEA and what the causes of disagreement about its future are.” Whereas the Kenyan government response to the letter from Uganda students was

106 Ibid
107 Quoted in Bethwell Ogot, My Footprints in the Sands of time, 174
108 KNA/XJ/2/34, “University Students Association of East Africa” contains letter from E. Kasara Secretary
cautious, that of Tanzania was more forthright. The Kenya Permanent Secretary for Education informed the Uganda students that, “it is true there has been a lot of reports in the newspapers and rumours that the University was breaking up but as far as we know the matter was left in the hands of the Heads of the three countries who will no doubt make the decision.” On his part, the Tanzania’s Minister for Education informed the students that, “the idea to break up the common university emanated from Uganda and you should request the Minister for Education Uganda to give you his paper in which he gave his reasons for wishing to break up the University of East Africa.” As the Kenyan officials noted, the decision on whether the UEA would dissolve or not had become an urgent matter necessitating the intervention of the heads of state of East Africa.

In Kenya, the Uganda’s proposal to dissolve the UEA raised uproar. There was a near unanimous agreement among Kenyans that the UEA should not be dissolved. The Kenyan opinion regarding the UEA was consistent with the country’s general stand that supported strong regional ties through the East African Common Services Organization (EASCO). It was obvious that the strains regarding the UEA had similarly affected the regional economic cooperation with Tanzania and Uganda complaining that Kenya benefitted disproportionately from the EACSO. Kenyans were worried that the dissolution of the UEA would affect the relations among the East African countries and probably damage the standing of the EACSO. This worry was manifested more among workers who, due to the EASCO, were free to work and reside anywhere in East Africa. Thus, one of the vociferous protests against Uganda’s proposal for the dissolution of the UEA came from W. K. Mugerwa, the National Students Association to Kenya and Tanzania’s Ministers of Education of August 1965

109 KNA/XJ/2/34, “University Students Association of East Africa,” contains a reply to above from the office of Kenya’s Permanent Secretary of Education to Uganda Students Association dated 24/08/1965
110 KNA/XJ/2/3427/08, “University of East Africa,” contains a reply by Tanzania’s Minister for Education to Uganda Students Association, August 1965
General Secretary of the Tailors’ and Textile Workers. Mugerwa opposed the dissolution of the UEA because of the prevailing need for highly educated personnel in East Africa. According to Mugerwa, “the higher academic and technological institutions such as ours should be geared not only to fulfilling the local requirements of those states in which they were situated but also to the requirements of fellow states whose facilities have yet to be fully developed.”

Soon protests against Uganda’s position shifted to the Kenyan parliament with the member for Elgon South West, Mr. C. M. Makokha castigating Uganda’s determination to break up the university. Makokha wanted the Kenya’s minister for education to inform the House whether “the university was going to break up or not… We do not want to be caught unawares as when the breakup of the common currency was announced.” Commenting on the same issue the member for Embu North, Mr. G. Mbogoh, asked the Minister to tell the House if the government intended to establish a Kenya university in the event of the dissolution of the UEA and that he “did not see why Kenya should bow to other countries which wanted to break the university.” He further noted that the move to break up the unity of East Africa was growing because “other countries thought Kenya had the lion’s share of everything.” Mr. R. G. Ngala of Kilifi South warned that the Kenya Minister might be out-maneuvered by the tactics of other East African ministers for education.

The Kenyan legislators were definitely alluding to the fact that the strains experienced in the East African common market had shifted to the UEA. The Uganda’s proposal for the dissolution of the UEA had followed on the heels of Tanzania’s announcement that they were pulling out of the East African Currency Board, which had

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112 The East African Standard (Nairobi) 23, July 1965, pg 19
113 The East African Standard (Nairobi) “Parliamentary Report” Friday 28, July 1965, pg 3
114 Ibid
115 Ibid
116 Ibid
existed since 1919. 117 It was obvious therefore, that East Africa was facing a systematic
dissolution of common services and institutions, one by one.118

The response by the Kenya’s education minister, to the protests from the members of parliament was unsatisfactory and did little to allay the concerns that Uganda wanted to wreck the UEA. The education minister Mr. Mbiyu Koinange, responded by informing the House that he would only be in a position to tell the Kenya’s future policy on higher education once he met and discussed the sticking issues with fellow colleagues from Tanzania and Uganda.119 Uganda, too, quickly responded to the complaints from Kenya’s members of parliament with the Permanent Secretary for Education Mr. Rwetsiba denying that his country wanted to break up the UEA.120

Despite the denials from Uganda, tensions regarding the status of the UEA remained. In 1966 for instance, Kenya took a unilateral decision to review the salaries of staff at the University College, Nairobi awarding them a 12.5% salary increase. Kenya, thereafter, asked both Tanzania and Uganda to contribute to the increased costs as a result of the salary hike. The governments of Uganda and Tanzania refused to contribute anything towards the increased costs leaving the Kenya government with no alternative but to shoulder the extra £15,002 alone.121 Clearly, the federal university concept as embodied in the UEA had lost its true meaning since the university colleges were slowly becoming the national universities of the countries in which they were located.

The East African Heads of States responded comprehensively to the tensions that had surrounded both the East African economic union and the UEA, in 1967 by dissolving the

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118 Ibid
120 The East African Standard (Nairobi) “No Discussion on breakaway” Tuesday 3 August 1965, pg 5
121 KNA/ED/3/259 “University College Nairobi,” file contains minutes of the University College, Nairobi Council Meeting held on 7 May 1966
East African Common Services Organization and in its place signed the Treaty for East Africa Cooperation that created the East African Community. The treaty aimed at giving a new lease of life to the beleaguered East African cooperation. Significantly, the treaty of cooperation excluded university education from the domain of the East African Community arguing that the demand for higher education necessitated “growth of three or four separate universities in place of the present bodies.”\footnote{122 Report of the Working Party on Higher Education in East Africa, 1968, 6} This was an admission that the demand for university education in East Africa had outstripped the available opportunities offered through the federal UEA. It was now time to make provision of university education a national concern in order to allow expansion of opportunities without the constrains placed by the federal UEA arrangement. The East African governments therefore agreed that the federal university arrangement would only continue “for at least the next triennial planning period which ends in June 30th 1970.”\footnote{123 Ibid} In addition, through the treaty, the East African nations agreed to appoint a Working Party on Higher Education that would work out “the way in which and the pace at which the various facilities now provided by the three colleges could be expected to develop as purely national concerns.”\footnote{124 Ibid} The East African governments appointed the Working Party on Higher Education in August 1968.\footnote{125}

The appointment of the Working Part sealed the fate of the UEA. The Working Party’s appointment was simply a polite way to dissolve the University since the East African government had already made a decision to that effect. The Working Party’s Report that was released in 1969 recommended that “the constituent colleges on the University of

\footnote{122 Report of the Working Party on Higher Education in East Africa, 1968, 6}
\footnote{123 Ibid}
\footnote{124 Ibid}
\footnote{125 Professor George D. Stoddard chaired the Working Party. Other members included Sir James Cook Vice Chancellor UEA; Y. K. Lule C.B.E representing Makerere; Dr. A. T. Porter, Principle, University College, Nairobi; Dr. W. K. Chagula, Principal, University College, Dar-es-Salaam; Mr. A. C. Mwingira, Principal Secretory Ministry of Education, Tanzania; Mr. Evaristo Nnyanzi, Under Secretary, Ministry of Education, Uganda; Mr. Charles Maina (later replaced by G. R. M’Mwirichia) Deputy Secretary Ministry of Education, Kenya; and Dan M. Wako, Deputy Secretary Research and Social Services, East African Community as Secretory.}
East Africa should be given full university status and become national universities for the three East African republics on July 1, 1970. Concurrently, the UEA would be dissolved.126 Regarding the need for future cooperation among the East African nations once the new national universities came into effect, the Working Party noted that, “an Inter-University Committee for East Africa should be established by the East African Community to help maintain cooperation among the Universities in East Africa.”127 The suggestion for the creation of an Inter-University Committee for East Africa was an attempt to keep some level of university cooperation in East Africa after the dissolution of the UEA in 1970. Unlike the UEA, the Inter-University Committee for East Africa had very little influence in the running of individual universities. It was simply a mechanism to keep the spirit of university cooperation alive in the absence of the UEA.

The creation of the UEA was basically a British colonial project which due to its inherent nature of limiting access failed to meet the high demand for university education in the postcolonial period. The expansion of basic education in East Africa had created pressure for expansion of higher education facilities. The non-duplication policy however limited the expansion of the UEA necessitating Kenya and Tanzania to make unilateral decisions about the expansion of university colleges located in their territories. The UEA was also undermined by the fact that the East African governments had entered into the independence era as sovereign states with separate national priorities and interests. The command economies adopted by these nations in which government planning dominated the direction of economic activity placed universities at the center of implementation of territorial development plans. Each territory, therefore, desired to control university education as a means to achieve its

127 Ibid
development priorities. The manpower surveys that each East African nation conducted in the 1960s convinced them that they had to control university development in order to produce the required personnel for their economies. The dissolution of the UEA was therefore the most pragmatic decision to allow each nation to develop its university education in the way it deemed best. Establishing independent national universities was the only way to avoid conflicts over expansion and funding witnessed in the short period in which the UEA existed. But the advent of national universities was also heralded by unique problems as the next chapter will demonstrate.
CHAPTER 4


This chapter examines how the ‘manpower’ and labor demands as well as the changing economic situation influenced university policies and finances in the formative years of President Kenyatta’s administration. The period under study also experienced momentous political developments whose effects were felt in the university arena. A coalescence of factors including the ‘manpower’ demands and the changing economic and political environment led to a rising student assertiveness expressed in strikes and protests. The violent student politics came to define the new University of Nairobi (UON) and the Kenyatta University College (KUC), institutions formed after the dissolution of the University of East Africa (UEA) in 1970.

The disintegration of the UEA in 1970 heralded a new dawn in university education in East Africa. Before its dissolution, the control of the UEA rested broadly on the cooperation of the three East African governments, and the East Africa Common Service Organization (EACSO) that was renamed the East Africa Community (EAC) in 1967. With the dissolution of the UEA, the three East African governments were now free to control their national universities. The three East African nations had for a long time competed over the control of the UEA, which they all wanted to use as a means to advance their respective national interests. As stated in chapter three, independent governments in East Africa viewed the UEA as a crucial institution that would facilitate the achievement of their development goals as underscored in the development plans and other policy documents. In Kenya, the two main development and policy documents produced after independence were the Development Plan for 1964-1970, and the Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965. Both documents described universities as crucial in the attainment of social and economic progress, and indicated the government desire to assert control
over university education. The government desire to control university education came out clearly in the Sessional Paper No. 10 that stated:

The plans for Nairobi University College must be fully integrated with the government Development Plan if the University College is to contribute effectively in solving our manpower problem... The government must also take steps to ensure that Kenyans are guided into those studies and occupations where skilled manpower is urgently needed.¹

The policy paper signaled that the Kenyan government regarded the UEA as a temporary arrangement that would soon give way to a full national university. The new national university would play a critical role in producing the right personnel required to steer the country’s economic development. The policy paper further revealed that the government was prepared to play a more intrusive role by directing students to those programs identified as crucial for the attainment of economic development. Elaborating on this point, the 1964/70 Development Plan noted that the government:

Would move increasingly towards loans as a method of financing students in secondary and higher education... loans for education can be used as an incentive to encourage students to enter occupations for which qualified personnel is in short supply."²

Soon after releasing the 1964/1970 Development Plan, the government unveiled a more comprehensive Manpower Survey entitled “The High Level Manpower Requirement and Resources in Kenya, 1964-1970”. The 1964 Manpower Survey, which was funded by the Ford Foundation, investigated “the demand and supply situation with respect to jobs requiring in general at least two years of post secondary education.

In its report, the Survey categorized the labor needs of Kenya in four main levels that included:

- **Category A**: Those occupations requiring university or higher education
- **Category B**: Professional occupations in which a university degree is not mandatory
- **Category C**: Skilled technicians and clerical workers needing secondary or trade school education
- **Category D**: Qualified artisans.  

University graduates, therefore, would be required to fill Category A and to a lesser extent Category B positions. The survey predicted that by 1970 there would be enough supply of university-educated people to fill Category A positions coming from domestic and overseas universities. It was estimated that “about 4,600 should become available over the period mostly from universities overseas in the US, UK and the Eastern countries, and about 1,000 educated in the 3 colleges in East Africa.” However, the survey noted that the near balanced aggregate picture was marred by bad composition:

The composition of the supply may be uneven with serious shortages in some areas and wasteful surplus in others. Major shortages are likely to exist of graduate secondary school teachers, doctors, mechanical and electrical engineers, architecture, surveyors, pharmacists, physical planners, veterinarians, lawyers and journalists. These shortages are serious but even more greater significance is the well educated power (sic) that may be partially wasted because they have been educated in fields where surpluses may exist. These fields include non-professional B. A. studies, zoology, agronomy, physics, chemistry, and mathematics and statistics. Guidance and other measures is therefore needed to ensure that future university students select professional studies most urgently needed.  

The main concern of the Manpower Survey was the achievement of the Africanization program a government policy designed to replace the departing European expatriates with

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4 Ibid
5 Ibid
Africans. While the Survey acknowledged progress in the Africanization program with 51.6% of the total high and middle level ‘manpower’ employed in Kenya being African, it however lamented the uneven racial composition of occupations. According to the Survey, Category A positions were “the least Africanized of the four groups, largely because most jobs in this category require a university degree or even higher education and the supply of qualified Africans is limited.” In addition, the Survey noted that progress in the Africanization program was “very uneven more of it taking place in the government than in the private sector.”

The scenario depicted by the Survey revealed the maladjustments that characterized labor distribution in Kenya. To solve the problem, the Survey called for government intervention to direct the production of educated people in priority areas. Like in the 1964/70 Development Plan, the Survey recommended the use of loans and bursaries as a tool to direct students to fields where skills were urgently needed. By so doing, all individuals receiving a scholarship, bursary or loan for higher education from government would “be bonded or tied to work in government for a specified number of years after graduating, unless released for this obligation by government.” To ensure total control of career paths pursued by Kenyans, the Survey also proposed:

Awards of overseas donor scholarships should be brought into harmony with the manpower needs of Kenya. It should be government policy that such scholarships offers are made to the government of Kenya, not to individual Kenyans. Government should accept those in fields in which it needs the skills and should decline those in fields for which it has no needs or in which the present and prospective supply is adequate or in surplus.

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6 The usage of the term Africanization gradually changed to Kenyanization to take into consideration the non-black citizens of Kenya.
8 Ibid
9 Ibid
10 Ibid
The measures proposed by the Manpower Survey would ensure that the government had the “first claim on the individual’s services after graduation.” The recommendations by the Manpower Survey would have a significant effect on university policy. The recommendations justified greater involvement by the government in the control of university education. The Survey’s recommendations called for the government intervention in university education in three major ways. First, the Survey called for the creation of an incentive mechanism in terms of bursaries and loans that would direct university students to pursue academic fields that the government wanted. Henceforth students did not have a choice but to pursue academic fields to which they were directed by the government. Secondly, students receiving government support in terms of loans, bursaries or scholarships were to serve in the government service for at least three years upon completion of their studies. They had to get government permission to undertake any non-government job. Until then, all Kenyan students at the UEA were on government scholarships, which catered for both their tuition and living expenses. The Survey’s recommendation, therefore, aimed at helping the government recoup its investment in students by mandating them to serve in the civil service after graduating from university. The Survey referred to this policy as “bonding”. Thirdly, foreign governments were supposed to direct their scholarships offers to the Kenyan government, which would then choose students to study abroad. This recommendation seemed directed more to the eastern Communist countries such as the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, which the Kenyan Minister for Education had once described in parliament as inclined to “provide scholarships in their own

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countries rather than provide cash to assist the UEA.”\textsuperscript{12} All these recommendations would enhance the role of the government in university education.

The Kenyan government did not hesitate to implement the recommendations of the Survey. In 1965, the government announced that it “had revised the traditional policy of awarding bursaries and foreign scholarships regardless of field in favor of their allocation among specific priorities.”\textsuperscript{13} In the same circular, the government announced that it would “have all scholarship holders bonded to serve the government for a minimum period of three years on completion of their studies. This would apply to both Kenya government bursaries and to all scholarships offered to Kenya by other sources.”\textsuperscript{14} According to the circular, these policies were in accordance with the identified ‘manpower’ needs, which had made it clear that “the development of plans undertaken by the governments could not succeed without adequate numbers of qualified personnel in the proper fields.”\textsuperscript{15} This circular further clarified the rationing of the government scholarships at the UEA as follows:

- **Science based candidates**
  - 30% will be bonded for teaching
  - 20% will be directed into medical and dental studies
  - 25% will be directed into agricultural and related studies (with a minimum of 10 scholarships per year in forestry & 15 in veterinary sciences)
  - 25% will be directed into engineering and related studies (With a minimum of 4 scholarships per year in geology)

\textsuperscript{12} KNA/ED/3/176, “University of East Africa,” Contains House Deliberations of April 1964; The UEA founded by the British colonial government continued to receive support from the Western nations principally Britain and the USA even in the postcolonial period. Since the UEA was a Western university in orientation and ideology, it could therefore not receive support from the rival USSR and other Eastern bloc countries. In countries like Kenya, politicians such as Jaramogi Odinga who sympathized with the USSR and its communist ideology faced government persecution and had their personal rights taken away by the government.

\textsuperscript{13} KNA/ED/3/152, “University of East Africa,” contains the Government Circular on the Implementation of the government policy on bursaries and bonding, January 1965

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid
General Arts Candidates
50% will be bonded to teach in the secondary schools and their courses arranged accordingly
50% will be available for other Arts subjects (with a minimum of 20 per year in law).\(^{16}\)

The detailed government circular that spelt out the implementation of the “bonding” policy as recommended by the labor Survey of 1964 elicited swift reaction from the Kenyan students at the UEA. The Kenya Students’ Coordinating Office of the UEA wrote a letter to President Jomo Kenyatta protesting against the system of wholesale bonding of students. The protest letter among other issues noted that:

1. The introduction of bonding system in the middle of our academic careers violates our right of free choice.
2. The bonding of students and channeling of their efforts into the government service deprives private industries of the very persons that they are clamoring for and leaves them with no alternative but wholesale importation of expatriate officers.
3. Bonding will encourage class mentality since those who are able to pay their way through college will not be bonded because the government has spent nothing on them. Such a case will lead to clear decision between those who are capable of buying their freedom by virtue of their wealth and those who have to beg their way through the college.\(^{17}\)

The students concluded their protest letter by rejecting the bonding policy and warning the government against continued mistreatment of students at the UEA:

Having examined scrupulously the ultimate implications of the wholesale bonding of all students, we totally and strongly deprecate, deplore, and reject this government maneuver to suppress our future freedom of choice of individual destiny as such a policy flagrantly contravenes the basic principles of law and natural justice as propounded in the Kenya constitution and other complementary documents.\(^{18}\)

The hard-hitting protest letter by the Kenyan students at UEA, however, did not reach the head of state as intended. The students decided to inform the officials at the


\(^{17}\) KNA/XJ/2/34, “University Students Association of East Africa” contains a letter by the Kenya Students’ Coordinating Office, University of East Africa, to the President of Kenya protesting against Bonding of Student.

\(^{18}\) Ibid
Ministry of Education of its contents before dispatching it to the President. Upon receiving the letter, the Minister for Education and his Permanent Secretary dissuaded the students from sending the letter to the President noting that the Ministry would address their complaints.\footnote{KNA/XJ/2/34, “University Students Association of East Africa” The Permanent Secretary of Education memo on Student Complaints of 14/1/1965} To prevent further student protests the government decided to begin implementing the bonding policy in a phased manner beginning with the incoming freshmen entering college in 1966/67.\footnote{Ibid} This development marked the beginning of the pervasive government interference in universities. What had began as an innocuous policy to direct students to the high priority fields would lead the government to eventually play a more intrusive role in university education. It marked the beginning of the erosion of university autonomy and academic freedoms. Commenting on this issue, Malcolm Crawford noted how, with the coming of independence, the new governments in Africa felt that they should have complete control over all institutions in their country.\footnote{Crawford Malcolm, “Thoughts on Chemical Research and Teaching in East Africa,” Minerva IV, 2, (1966): 170-185} The single federal university arrangement had temporarily halted the government control of university education in Kenya. Soon, however, the government was able to control university education by instituting mechanisms such as the bonding policy and directing students to particular fields. The policy that allowed the government to choose the academic fields that students would pursue at university began the slippery slide that ultimately led to total subversion of institutional autonomy and academic freedoms. This subversion of freedoms included the government requirement that scholars seek government approval and topic registration.
before conducting any research. Of course, no approval would be given to any topic with awkward or intrusive political connotations.

The government interference in university education was felt even in the creation of new faculties as demonstrated when the authorities of the University College, Nairobi decided to upgrade the diploma course in Domestic Science to a degree program. The existing diploma course in Domestic Science was offered under special arrangement with the University of Manchester. In 1966, the University College decided to discontinue the diploma in Domestic Science course and instead offer two degree programs in Home Economics and Nutrition. The government, through the Ministry of Education, rejected the decision to create a degree program in Nutrition noting, “there is no difference in substance between the B.Sc. Nutrition and the B.Sc. Home Economics.” Further, the government rejected the decision by the university administration to reverse the policy, which prohibited men from gaining admission in the diploma course in Domestic Science. The university wanted to inject gender balance in the new programs in Home Economics and Nutrition a decision that the Ministry of Education rejected. In a tense statement to the Registrar of the Nairobi College, the Permanent Secretary for Education stated, “I specifically request you to withdraw the men students from the course and direct them to the B.Sc. general course. This ministry will not this year or in future find it reasonable to sponsor men students for degrees in Home Economics (Science or Arts).” To justify his action

22 Abukuse Mbirika, “An examination of the functions of the University of East Africa in relation to the needs of the people,” (PhD Dissertation: New York University, 1970) 133
24 Ibid
the Permanent Secretary noted: “so far I am not aware of men students taking the
University of Manchester Diploma in Domestic Science.”

This justification was flimsy. The government wanted the University College, Nairobi to imitate what the
University of Manchester was doing without offering any credible justification for its
demand. It demonstrated how Kenyan officials were uncritically dependent on
foreign ideas especially those from Britain.

The gradual but direct encroachment by the government into the university affairs elicited
outrage from university students. Student resentment was illustrated in the protest note from the
Kenya Students’ Coordinating Office, which in addition to criticizing the bonding policy also
noted: “the students of the UEA have always felt unwanted by the government.”

This complaint illuminated the growing resentment against the increasing influence of the government in university
education. The relationship between the university students and the government was further strained
by the increasing student enrollment that did not correspond with similar expansion of facilities at
the University College. The total number of Kenyan students at the UEA in 1964 was about 600. Of
these 275 were at Nairobi, 228 at Makerere and 20 at Dar-es-salaam. By the end of 1966, the figure
had risen to 1,017 with 597 at Nairobi, 287 at Makerere, and 139 at Dar-es-Salaam.

Due to the increasing number of students, the Ministry of Education reported in 1966: “there was some
pressure on space at the colleges and the accommodation situation in particular is acute, especially
in Nairobi.”

The University College, Nairobi responded to the accommodation problem by

Permanent Secretary of Education, to the Registrar University College Nairobi, dated 10 December 1968
26 KNA/XJ/2/34, “University Students Association of East Africa” contains a letter by the Kenya Students’
Coordinating Office, UEA to the President of Kenya protesting against Bonding of Students.
27 KNA/XJ/17/50, “Annual Reports and Others Achievement in Education since Independence” Ministry of Education
Triennial Survey 1964” and “Annual Report for 1966,” 24
requiring students to share their living rooms. Students however rejected sharing of rooms by boycotting classes and staging demonstrations. At the same time, Stephen Nagenda, the President of the Student Union of the University College, Nairobi, sent a protest note to the media explaining that, “the congested conditions in rooms do not make it conducive to the good studying required by the university student.”

The University reacted to student protests by expelling Nagenda. This pointed to a more acrimonious relationship that would come to characterize the relationship between university students and the government on the one hand, and between the students and university administrators on the other. The government interference in the University College, Nairobi brought it in a collision path with the students. The differences between the students and the government would soon acquire political dimensions with the increasing authoritarianism of President Jomo Kenyatta’s government.

The increasing interference by the government in university affairs in the 1960s mirrored the political trend where Kenyatta was busy consolidating his powers following the dissolution of the opposition party KADU in 1964. The dissolution of KADU gave Kenyatta an opportunity to reign in the communist wing within his own party KANU that was led by the Vice President Jaramogi Oginga Odinga. Kenyatta and his chief ideologue Tom Mboya, who was also the Minister for Planning, supported the western values of free market economy while Odinga led a radical faction that was more circumspect regarding the merits of capitalism in a developing country like Kenya.

The ideological differences within the ruling party KANU were aggravated by the prevailing cold

29 University of Nairobi(UON)Archive/PUEA/1/38, “Student Demonstrations” a Memorandum of grievances by Stephen Nagenda President of Student Union of the University College, Nairobi, dated 7 December 1965
30 A Special Correspondence, “The Changing Face of Kenya Politics” Transition, No. 25 (1966),45
war politics with the USA fronting Mboya as their point man in Kenya while the USSR established linkages with Odinga. Mboya exploited his connections with the USA to secure hundreds of scholarships for Kenyan students while Odinga received similar patronage from the Eastern bloc countries. Kenyatta and Mboya resented Odinga’s more populist ideology that appealed to the masses and therefore plotted to clip his wings by expelling him from KANU’s leadership. Odinga reacted to Kenyatta and Mboya’s maneuvers by defecting from KANU to form a rival political party the Kenya Peoples Party (KPU).

As members of the small elite in the country, university students found themselves enmeshed in the unfolding political events. Students were sympathetic to the radical ideology propagated by Odinga that promised equitable distribution of national resources at a time when the power elites were amassing wealth at an unprecedented scale. The government was uncomfortable with the assertiveness of university students. When the students protested the congestion at the University College, Nairobi in 1965, Tom Mboya on behalf on the government asked them “not to emulate the example of students in the developed countries who kept on passing resolutions condemning everything that their forebears had built. In African countries the governments and people expected the university student to be mature people not irresponsible youths suffering too much exuberance.”

Despite Mboya’s admonition, students continued to challenge the government of President Kenyatta. The relation between the students and the government took a turn for the worse due to the authoritarian containment of the KPU activities. The KANU government reacted to the formation of a new opposition party by putting in place measures that would cripple the KPU including the

34 “Students Urged to be Constructive” *Daily Nation* Wednesday December 22 1965, 17
enactment of constitutional amendment that forced sitting members of parliament who were defecting from KANU to join the opposition, to seek fresh mandate from the electorate under the new party. In the ensuing “little general election” of 1966, there was systematic state-sponsored intimidation and massive electoral manipulation, which ensured that KPU won only seven seats in parliament out of the contested twenty-nine seats. Even after the “little general elections”, the government continued harassing the opposition.35

The limiting of democratic space by the government put university students into the center stage of national politics. Students openly embraced dissidents turning the University College, Nairobi, into a center of radical opposition politics at a time when the Kenyatta government was turning increasingly repressive. With the activities of the opposition KPU severely restricted, the University College became the only available space for conducting opposition politics. University students were ready to accommodate the opposition politicians at a time when the rest of the country feared being branded as subversive when they sympathized with the opposition. To demonstrate their openness to alternative political ideas, the Political Science Club at the University College, Nairobi invited Oginga Odinga to give a speech at the campus on Friday, January 10, 1969. The government however promptly cancelled the scheduled meeting. The cancellation of Odinga’s address by the government elicited more angry protests from the students. Whereas Odinga’s invitation had been a small affair of the Political Science Club, the cancellation of the address sucked the entire student body into the crisis. The Students’ Union that represented the interests of the students stepped in and demanded explanation from the Principal on the reasons for cancelling Odinga’s address. The Principal, however, absolved

himself from blame stating that he had no objection to Mr. Odinga speaking on the campus “providing that the proper procedures were used and that reasonable notice was given.”

Following the Principal’s assurances, the Students’ Union issued another invitation to Mr. Odinga for Friday, January 24, 1969. A day before the scheduled meeting, the government issued another cancellation notice of Odinga’s address. A tense statement issued by the Ministry of Education stated:

The government of Kenya, under the headship of his Excellency President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, who is also the Visitor of the University College, wishes to announce that the university students’ meeting scheduled to be held in the College premises on Friday January 24th 1969 and to be addressed by the Hon. Oginga Odinga is hereby cancelled. Any demonstration or protest against this decision will be tantamount to a defiance of government authority and will therefore be dealt with as such.

The government’s threats to students were ineffective. The day of the scheduled meeting, students decided to boycott classes and demonstrated against the cancellation of Odinga’s address. The government reacted swiftly to students protests by ordering the closure of the College. Students were ordered to vacate the College by 2:00pm of January 27, 1969. The police supported by the paramilitary General Service Unit moved in to forcefully evict students from the halls of residence resulting in violent clashes in which several students were injured.

Not only did the students strike reveal the extent of the erosion of university autonomy in Kenya but it also exposed the differences between the African faculty members and the European expatriates at the Nairobi College. The African members of staff were sympathetic to students and viewed the western powers that had seconded expatriate staff to the University College as responsible for the increasing government repression. It is a fact that there was a

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36 UON/PUEA/1/38, “University College Nairobi,” Update on the Events Leading to the Closure of the College by M. L Shattock, Acting Registrar at the University College Nairobi dated 15 April 1969
37 Ibid
38 Ibid
significant presence of the Cold War politics in the factional struggles between Kenyatta and Odinga. The western powers enlivened the growing sense of paranoia in Kenyatta’s circle that contributed to his growing authoritarianism. The African faculty members also were frustrated with the slow Africanization process at the University and the continuing racial discrimination in promotions. The slow progress towards Africanization was contrary to the aspirations of the UEA Development Plan for 1964-67 that targeted at achieving 40 percent Africanization of teaching staff by 1967. This target however was not achieved. In the 1966/67 academic year for instance, of the 158 members of faculty at Makerere only 45 were East Africans representing 22.2 percent of the academic staff. During the same year, East Africans constituted only 15.8 percent and 18.7 percent at the University College Dar-es-Salaam and Nairobi respectively. Of the 45 East Africans at Makerere, 25 or 56 percent were “special lecturers,” that is to say, lecturers who were standing by on full salary waiting to be appointed on the academic staff when vacancies occurred. At Nairobi College “special lecturers”, constituted 68 percent and at Dar-es-Salaam, all African members of faculty were still “special lecturers.”

Discontent existed even among the Africans who had succeeded to become full faculty members. In this group, Africans were poorly represented in bodies that formulated the policies of the UEA such as the College Committees, the Academic Board, and the University Senate. Abukuse Mbirika notes that many African lecturers were overwhelmed by frustrations and despair that they resigned from their academic positions and took other kinds of employment. In addition, many East African graduate students studying abroad, who were aspiring to join the

41 Abukuse Mbirika, 154
staff of the UEA, decided to take temporary teaching jobs in their host countries.  

The level of discontentment among the African faculty members was revealed when the Principal of Nairobi College, Arthur Potter, called a meeting of African members of staff to explore ways of solving the crisis caused by the cancellation of Odinga’s address. Potter hoped that the students would obey a plea to end the strike issued by fellow East Africans who were members of staff. During the meeting, Potter mentioned that the responsibility for finding a solution to the crisis lay on the faculty members from East Africa since the expatriates had “washed their hands off the present crisis.” Potter’s remark ignited outrage from African faculty members further reinforcing the view that expatriates were not concerned with the wellbeing of the College and that of the country at large. In fact, the meeting ended in disarray with the faculty members from East Africa arguing that the students had legitimate reasons to protest. The African members of faculty issued a statement after the meeting in which they called for the protection of the rights of the students who had participated in the strike. 

The crisis at the University College, Nairobi took new proportions when the Minister for Education, Gikonyo Kiano released a press statement on February 6, 1969 announcing the reopening of the College. In his statement, Kiano announced a staggered reopening of the College with students in various faculties reporting at different dates between the February 12 to 22 1969. The same press release noted that returning students would sign a form seeking permission to resume their studies at the College. The forms contained a clause stating that students would, “abide by the laws and regulations of the government of the republic of Kenya as well as the

42 Abukuse Mbirika, 154
43 UON/PUEA/9/3, “Student Demonstrations and College Closure” Complaint Memo by the East African Members of the Academic Staff to the Principal dated 26/1/1969
44 Ibid
rules of the college. They must also not take part in processions or demonstrations which are not authorized by the college or the Kenya government.”46

Contrary to the wishes of the African members of faculty, Kiano also announced the indefinite suspension of several students for leading the strike. The African faculty members reacted swiftly to Kiano’s press release protesting the suspension of the five ringleaders of the strike and the requirement that returning students had to sign a form seeking readmission to the College. The staff members noted that the strike was a collective action of the students “and should be dealt with as such.”47 Soon, matters were complicated when James Ngugi a vocal member of the faculty tendered his resignation protesting the complicity of the college administration in the growing interference by the government in the university matters. 48 Ngugi summarized his reasons for resigning as follows:

The attitude of the College administration in not making a clear and consistent public stand over the issues of (Academic Freedom, etc) that brought about the present crisis, the mishandling of the crisis by the same administration, and the consequent singling out of five students for suspension, itself a form of victimization and thus creating the impression, in the general public that the students were involved in something ugly and sinister and were entirely to blame for the course the crisis has taken. My last day of work should be 25th May 1969.49

Ngugi’s resignation caused furor with the members of the Academic Board dispatching an urgent memo to the Principal asking him to “urge Ngugi to reconsider his resignation. We also urge you to establish appropriate college machinery to consider all aspects of the recent crisis

47 UON/PUEA/9/3, “Student Demonstrations and College Closure,” A letter by All Members of the Academic Board dated 10 February 1969
48 James Ngugi later dropped his Christian name James and is now known as Ngugi wa Thiongo. He was the first academic to be detained by the government of Kenyatta. He fled Kenya in 1982 and lived in exile first in Britain and later in the USA. He is currently a Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literature and Director of the International Center for Writing and Translation at the University of California, Irvine.
49 UON/PUEA/9/3, “Student Demonstrations and College Closure,” Resignation letter by James Ngugi Special lecturer English Department to Dr. A. Porter dated 26 February, 1969
and to recommend how without compromising the integrity of the college crises could be avoided in the future.”

Potter replied to Ngugi’s resignation letter absolving himself from any responsibility in the cancellation of Odinga’s address to students. He blamed the government for the crisis noting that “I made it clear to the government that I had no academic reason for withholding permission for the meeting and that I would find it embarrassing if I were ordered to cancel the meeting.”

Potter informed Ngugi that he would put his letter of resignation before the General Purpose Committee of the University Council at its upcoming meeting but hoped “that on receipt of this letter you will give the matter reconsideration and that you will feel able to withdraw your resignation.”

Potter moved to defuse tensions at the Nairobi College by appointing an independent Committee of Inquiry to, “to investigate the cases of the five students alleged to have been deeply implicated in the defiance of the Kenya government’s directive to students to return to classes, which led to the closure of the college by the government.” Potter himself sat in the Committee of inquiry chaired by the Mayor of Nairobi Councilor I. Lugonzo. The Committee, which had only one government representative, was largely sympathetic to the student cause as evidenced in its report. The Committee observed:

 bearing in mind the long period during which these students had been prevented from attending classes following the closure of the College and the period of suspension the Committee considers that this represents an adequate punishment

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50 UON/PUEA/9/3, “Student Demonstrations and College Closure,” Letter by Members of the Academic Board to the Principal in support of Ngugi dated 12/3/69
52 Ibid
54 Other members of the Committee included the Permanent Secretary of Education J.K. Njoroge, Deputy Principal Bethwell Ogot and Dr. Nderito who was a Faculty Member with Acting Registrar M. L. Shattock as Secretary
in itself. Therefore these students should be readmitted to the College at the beginning of the third term of the academic year, namely 14th April 1969.”

Following the recommendations of the Committee of Inquiry, all suspended students were allowed to resume their studies. Satisfied with the decision, Ngugi revoked his resignation. Normalcy at the University College however did not last for long. Soon, students were back in the streets protesting the June 1969 assassination of Tom Mboya.

The assassination of Mboya marked a turning point in Kenya’s politics. With Odinga and his party KPU largely contained, the Kikuyu politicians in KANU decided to get rid of the shrewd Mboya who had led the containment campaign against Odinga. Elaborating on the emerging scenario, Anyang Nyongo notes that there were many more currents in the political arena rather than the apparent duality of the ideological rivalries. One such undercurrent was the growing unease among the powerful Kikuyu politicians in KANU due to the increasing influence of Tom Mboya who was from the Luo ethnic group. Although they were bitter opponents, Mboya and Odinga came from the same ethnic community. Nyongo notes that the powerful Kikuyu politicians such as Mbiyu Koinange, Charles Njonjo and Njoroge Mungai had convinced Kenyatta, a fellow tribesman, that Mboya’s association with the Americans undermined his power. With Oginga out of the way, the next battlefront took ethnic proportions that culminated in the assassination of Tom Mboya in June 1969. Students understood the nature of Kenya’s power play that led to the assassination of Mboya. Students therefore staged massive protests blaming Jomo Kenyatta and his government for involvement in the assassination. The government responded to the protests by closing the university. The growing authoritarianism of

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56 Ibid
Kenyatta’s government would become the main cause of student protests in the subsequent period.

Meanwhile the government did not relent in its crackdown on radical politics by banning books and other publications that advanced radical ideologies. The government also began to conduct intelligence monitoring of the university lecturers in a bid to clampdown on those who taught any radical ideas. Some of the publications banned by the government included *Political Thoughts of Mao*, *Quotations from Chairman Mao*, and the *Communist Manifesto*. The government considered these as dangerous publications that were contaminating students with radical ideas. The first casualty of the government ban on radical publications was John Okatch, a lecturer at the Adult Studies Centre of the University College. After the 1969 closure of the College, the police arrested Okatch for possessing *Political Thoughts of Mao* and *Quotations from Chairman Mao*. He was charged before a Resident Magistrate’s Court in Kiambu, for “possession of prohibited publications (published by the Foreign Languages Press, Peking) contrary to section 53(1) of the penal code.” In his charge, the prosecutor remarked, “there was also evidence that he had been preaching subversive ideas in his lectures.” The government however failed to prove the case against Okatch since the said books were published in the USA and not China as the prosecution had charged. The case, however, proved the extent that the government wanted to go to limit academic freedoms at the University College.

The government measures to control university education were boosted by the plans to implement the recommendations of the 1968 Working Party on Higher Education in East Africa. The recommendation called for the dissolution of the University of East Africa and in its place

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57 UON/PUEA/9/3, “Student Demonstrations and College Closure,” Internal Memo From the Director of Institute of Adult Studies to the Principal dated 13/3/1969
58 Ibid
the establishment of national universities. In April 1969, the Minister for Education appointed a Committee that would “develop a plan to implement the Working Party’s recommendation for the establishment of a Kenyan university.”59 Besides himself as the Chair, the other members of the Committee included Professor Bethwell Ogot, Dr. Arthur Potter, Mr. Njoroge the Permanent Secretary for Education, Mr. J. N. Michuki the Permanent Secretary Finance, and Mr. E. Mathu, Comptroller of State House. An interesting addition to the Committee was Emma Njonjo, a junior official at the Ministry of Education, who, however, was a sister to the powerful Attorney General of Kenya, Charles Njonjo.60 The inclusion of Emma Njonjo reflected the extent to which the power elites in Kenyatta’s government were entrenching ethnicity and nepotism in the running of public affairs. Appointment in high positions in the government became a matter of rewarding political allies and family members instead of finding those capable of doing the job effectively. In the case of Emma Njonjo, it also indicated that the government considered the establishment of a new national university a sensitive matter that needed close monitoring by including trusted insiders in its founding committee.

Upon the formation of the Committee, Potter wrote a memo that he wanted the government to consider as it planned the establishment of a Kenyan university. In his memo, Potter noted that for the “new university to play its proper role some degree of autonomy must be granted to it.”61 Having witnessed a pattern of interference by the government in the university affairs, Dr. Potter’s observations carried particular weight. Potter also revisited the issue of access to university education that had been laid to rest by the 1964 Report on the University of

60 Ibid
East Africa, Entrance Levels and Degree Structure, which ruled that Higher School Certificate done at the end of the A-Levels was the only qualification to the UEA. Potter noted that this policy needed adjustment to allow for multiple entries and consequently democratize access to university education. Potter’s arguments were radical since he was also calling for the scrapping of the British university model for a more flexible American model. According to Potter:

“Few things have made objective discussion and flexible decisions more difficult than the persuasion that there is a single test and a single place of entry for university education, and the false equation between sixth form work and “A” level entry on the one hand and high standards on the other… Kenya should not adopt the orthodox European type university dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake and for entrance to the learned professions. It is inconceivable that Kenya at its present stage of industrial and agricultural development would want a pattern of higher education made up almost exclusively of a university with profound academic intellectualism producing only “gentlemen” and entrants to the so called learned professions, e.g. law, medicine, the church.”

It is clear that Potter aimed at reviving the debate regarding the appropriate university model for Kenya. According to Potter, Kenya needed to adopt:

A Dual Higher Education System comprising the University and the Service Colleges. The Dual Higher Education system, characterized the United States of America at an important stage of its development. This system is politically less vulnerable to the charge that all the university level institutions are located in Nairobi. Built into this pattern is a greater possibility of national geographical distribution, the provision of greater equality of opportunity for multiple entry and exit and an unquestioned and explicit concern with planning higher education in the service of the country.

Potter believed that the prevailing university model did not only limit access but also advanced regional and ethnic inequalities. He believed that the imminent establishment of a national university presented an opportunity to reform the university model. Although Dr. Potter was a member of the Committee formed to plan the establishment of a Kenyan University, his

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63 Ibid
views and those of Professor Bethwell Ogot, the only other academic on the Committee, were a minority. Politically appointed bureaucrats whose power and influence was on the steady increase as Kenyatta’s government turned authoritarian dominated the planning Committee. The domination of the bureaucrats in the government mirrored the accumulation of state power by the executive branch of the government at the expense of other branches. The powers of the executive eclipsed those of the legislature and even the ruling party KANU. As J. R. Nellis observed:

Since independence there has been a steady accumulation of resources and important functions by the national bureaucracy, and a corresponding erosion of the powers and responsibilities of the local government system. Parliament—much less the near moribund party—has not emerged as a truly effective counterweight to the bureaucracy.  

Even the Members of Parliament felt the suffocating powers of the bureaucracy. In 1971 a Member of the Kenyan Parliament M. J. Seroney lamented the increased powers of the bureaucrats. According to Seroney, “the government has silently taken the powers of the National Assembly and given them to the civil service. The National Assembly is now a mere rubber stamp of some unseen authority”

Seroney’s observation similarly applied to university education where the government, through its senior civil servants, was stamping its authority at the expense of the academics. Under normal conditions, a committee charged with planning the establishment of a national university would have been composed largely of members of the academia. In Kenya however, the bureaucrats were in charge.

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65 East African Standard, 18 March 1971, pg 4
University students shared Dr. Potter’s views on the need to maintain academic freedom at the envisaged university. As John Washington Otieno, the President of the National Union of Kenya Students (NUKS) observed on January 1970:

…all that is needed is a mechanism evolved to act as a safety valve to protect the national university when it comes to be, from serving as an instrument of political expediency. It remains to be seen whether the University of Kenya will support the lofty ideals of academic freedom and function as an effective instrument for the people.66

The evolving political environment characterized by increased authoritarianism by the state and coupled with politics of tribalism and cronyism prevented the implementation of university reforms as envisaged by Dr. Potter and the university students. The University of East Africa dissolved in July 1970 and through the enactment of the University of Nairobi Act in 1970, the University College, Nairobi was elevated to a full university status. The Act stated that “there shall be established a University which shall be the successor institution to the institution hitherto known as the University College, Nairobi and which shall include Kenyatta College.”67

The incorporation of the Kenyatta College into the University of Nairobi was a positive move that would allow the new university to admit more students. On the negative side however, the dissolution of the University of East Africa removed the last barrier that had hindered the unfettered interference by the government in university education. Since 1964, the East African governments had slowly placed impediments to the smooth running of the University of East Africa necessitating its eventual dissolution. The creation of a national University of Nairobi

66 KNA/XJ/2/35, “National Union of Kenya Students,” file contains Statement on Academic Freedom issued by John Washington Otieno President National Union of Kenya Students (NUKS) on 20th January 1970 to mark one year of the student strike that was followed by the closing of the University College Nairobi
presented the Kenyan government with an opportunity to impose its will on the new institution as it wished.

One of the elements characterizing Kenyatta’s government since the mid-1960s was increased tribalism reflected in political appointments of Kikuyus into the most powerful positions in the government. Anyang Nyongo has noted that clanism, tribalism and nepotism were already becoming a problem by the mid-1960s. According to Nyongo:

The Kikuyu felt that they had been discriminated against during the emergency; now that independence had been won, they needed to be given extra advantage in getting public service jobs. Moreover, with the establishment of new parastatals, there was a tendency for the president to staff top posts predominantly with people of Kikuyu origin. This led the bureaucratic bourgeoisie to owe direct loyalty to the president.68

Tribal appointment of Kikuyus in high posts extended to the new University of Nairobi following the expiry of Dr. Potter’s term as Principal of the University College, Nairobi, in 1970. When Dr. Potter retired, it was expected that Professor Ogot who had served as Deputy Principal of the College, or any other senior African Professor would be appointed as the Vice Chancellor of the new University of Nairobi. That was not to be. Instead, President Kenyatta appointed a fellow Kikuyu, Dr. Josphat Karanja, a career civil servant until then serving as Kenya’s High Commissioner in Britain to head the University of Nairobi. According to Maurice Amutabi, “the decision to hire an inexperienced individual to head a premier national academic institution ushered in mediocrity and a series of crises in the university system in Kenya from which it has not been able to recover.”69

Despite his lack of experience, Dr. Karanja assumed his position with gusto. Karanja understood that the new university had to play a major role in the country’s development as spelt

68 Anyang Nyongo, 241
out in the national development plans of 1964/70 and 1970/74. The new 1970/74 Development Plan had noted the need to emphasize science and technology at the university. The development plan also stated the government desire to implement the Student Loans Scheme proposed in the 1960s. ⁷⁰ Addressing faculty members soon after his appointment in 1970, Karanja reiterated the views of the 1970/74 Development Plan that “the primary object of higher education in the difficult early years of a young country such as ours is to produce technical and professional manpower needed to promote and control all aspects of national development.” ⁷¹ As the 1970/74 Development Plan and Dr. Karanja’s statement, demonstrated, scientific and technological training would become the mantra of the new decade of the 70s. According to Dr. Karanja, “in order to meet manpower needs the science based faculties should expand more rapidly than the arts based faculties.” ⁷²

Following the establishment of the University of Nairobi in July 1970, the new institution registered staggering admission of 1,254 new undergraduate students, representing an increase of over 300 students over the previous year’s undergraduate intake. With the admission of a big first year class, the student population at the University of Nairobi in the 1970/71 academic year stood at 3438 up from the previous year’s 2,666 students representing a twenty-nine percent increase. ⁷³ In a bid to justify the explosive increase of students, Dr. Karanja noted:

> More and more people are demanding higher education and provision must be made for everyone who wishes it and who is qualified by ability and attainment. This is a principle which guides our university and I believe it is what is required of us as a national university in providing high level manpower for national development and growth. ⁷⁴

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⁷⁰ *Kenya Development Plan* 1970-1974
⁷¹ Bound Speeches, Available at the Africana Section of the University of Nairobi Library. Speech by Dr. J. N. Karanja, Principal, University of Nairobi at Kabete Junior Common Room Dinner, on Friday 21st August 1970
⁷² Ibid
⁷³ Speech by Dr. J. N. Karanja V.C. At a Congregation for the Conferment and Presentation of Degrees and Diplomas on Tuesday 26 October 1971
⁷⁴ Ibid
Although many people viewed the appointment of Dr. Karanja as the first Vice Chancellor of the University of Nairobi (UON) as an extension of Kikuyu favoritism, his first year in office was characterized with many successes. In addition to the expansion of student numbers, the UON overcame the problem of residential accommodation that had plagued the former University College, Nairobi. The University of Nairobi had attracted support from the Swedish Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, which with the Kenyan government, helped to finance the building of additional halls of residence. According to Karanja, “plans were under way for the construction of two additional halls of residence to accommodate approximately another 600 students.”\(^{75}\) Despite these achievements, Karanja noted that the University of Nairobi faced hurdles in achieving the goals of the 1970/74 Development Plan of increasing the output of students in scientific and technological fields. The first main hurdle was the lack of enough resources to develop facilities such as laboratories. According to Karanja, “the annual cost of engineering and science students is high perhaps three times that of students in Arts.”\(^{76}\) Secondly, while the government emphasis on science and technology targeted the UON, secondary schools that supplied the University with students were producing students oriented towards arts subjects than sciences. Thus, Karanja observed, “because of the lead-time in switching the emphasis in the secondary schools the University is under certain pressure to increase its Arts intake very rapidly.”\(^{77}\) Lack of facilities to support expansion of science and technological programs at the University, and oversupply of arts students by secondary schools would continue to haunt University education in Kenya for a long time.

\(^{75}\)Speech by Dr. J. N. Karanja V.C. At a Congregation for the Conferment and Presentation of Degrees and Diplomas on Tuesday 26 October 1971

\(^{76}\)Ibid

\(^{77}\)Speech by Dr. J. N. Karanja V.C. At a Congregation for the Conferment and Presentation of Degrees and Diplomas on Tuesday 26 October 1971
Karanja’s views were apt. Since the mid 1960s, the government had enacted measures such as the “bonding” policy intended to stimulate students to pursue fields in science and technology. These measures however were a failure. Instead of focusing on grandiose and intrusive policies such as “bonding”, the government should have reformed the entire education system, both basic and higher education, to orient it towards the production of the needed professionals in scientific and technological fields.

The consequence of the inept university policies was the overproduction of graduates in the humanities and the social sciences at the expense of science and technology. As a result, university graduates in Kenya in the early 1970s faced the grim prospect of unemployment. In 1971, the Commission of Inquiry on the Structure and Pay Scales of the Public Service headed by Duncan Ndegwa, the Governor of the Central Bank, attributed the likely unemployment to “education expansion not matched by a similar expansion in income earning opportunities.”

Similar observations were made by the 1972 report of the Training Review Committee that examined “the Kenya government’s existing training policy, objectives and programmes in the light of current and foreseeable training priorities.” According to the Training Review Committee, the Kenyanization scheme that aimed at increasing the number of Kenyan citizens staffing the civil service had achieved a 96.5% success rate by July 1971. In fact, in some areas the Kenyanization scheme had achieved a 100% success rate. Despite the high success rate, the Committee noted, “in the technical and professional fields there is still

79 Report of the Training Review Committee 1971-72 (Accessed from the library of the Commission for Higher Education); Kenyanization program aimed at providing Kenyan citizens of all races with an opportunity to serve in the civil service thus replacing the British citizens who had served in the colonial government but had remained after independence.
some way to go. In some areas e.g. quantity surveying, no Kenyans are yet available for
appointment in the Civil Service. “\(^8^0\)

As a developing and non-industrial economy, the government of Kenya provided the bulk
of the most prestigious formal employment for its citizens. The 1960s had witnessed phenomenal
growth in the government sector jobs as the state expanded its role in the economy. Anyang
Nyongo has noted that the state became the largest employer of labor in the 1960s as it
established new parastatals and expanded the old ones. By 1971, however, this expansion had
reached its limit. In 1963, public sector employment accounted for 30 per cent of all 'formally'
employed persons; in 1971, this had risen to 40 per cent and this figure did not change much
subsequently. \(^8^1\) With the growth of the government reaching its limit in the early 1970s, its role
as the main employer in the economy was severely diminished. The job seekers who could not
be absorbed in the government employment suffered the consequence of this slowdown.
Students who graduated with degrees in arts subjects were the most likely to experience
unemployment. As the Training Review Committee observed, those in the technical,
professional, and scientific fields were still in high demand. The University of Nairobi was not
producing enough of these graduates to meet the demands of the Kenyanization program. \(^8^2\)
Definitely, there was a link between government policy, the emerging unemployment and the
failure to produce enough graduates in science and technology in the 1970s. The government
policy saw universities as playing a simple role of producing “manpower” that would work
predominantly in the civil service. The government did not conceive a policy that would allow

\(^8^0\) Report of the Training Review Committee, 1971-72 (Accessed from the library of the Commission for Higher
Education ); Kenyanization program aimed at providing Kenyan citizens of all races with an opportunity to serve in
the civil service thus replacing the British citizens who had served in the colonial government but had remained after
independence.
\(^8^1\) Anyang Nyongo, 241
\(^8^2\) Report of the Training Review Committee, 1971-72 (Accessed from the library of the Commission for Higher
Education )
universities to produce graduate entrepreneurs who would create employment opportunities in
the economy rather than acting as passive potential employees.

The emerging unemployment served as a rude awakening to university students who
realized the bleak future that awaited some of them. Maurice Amutabi has noted the parallels
between the university students of the 1960s and those of the 1970s. According to Amutabi,
university students of the 1960s were generally politically inactive and aloof from the
happenings of the suffering masses as they were supplied with basic requirements and
guaranteed positions in the ranks of the bourgeoisie. The government paid for all students’ fees
including granting them handsome allowances for their books and stationery. Due to their
privileged position, these students had careerist mentalities and good prospects for becoming
members of the technocratic upper class because they were guaranteed jobs upon graduation in
the Africanization program. Amutabi notes that all this changed in the 1970s when university
students abandoned their ivory tower mentality and began a systematic engagement in political
action, including violent confrontation with the government.83

Although Amutabi is not entirely accurate in his assessment of the level of political
participation by university students in the 1960s, it is true that the increasing prospects of
unemployment in the 1970s contributed to the rising number of strikes and protests at the
University of Nairobi. The government aggravated the situation by increasingly interfering in the
university affairs, as was the case in 1970 when it declared that the Ministry of Education had to
approve the introduction of any new courses at the UON.84 The directive from the Ministry of
Education came after the UON sought to modify its curriculum by creating partnerships with

83 Maurice Amutabi, 161
84 KNA/TR/34/2, “University of Nairobi” Letter by P J. Gachathi, the Permanent Secretary of Education, to the Vice
Chancellor University of Nairobi, about the establishment of Projects/Courses by various ministries at the University
of Nairobi dated 12/10/1970
private and government agencies. Rejecting the university plans the Permanent Secretary for Education stated, “this ministry is the one charged with the responsibility for education for the entire nation and this includes higher education. In general, therefore, all courses at the University have to be approved and coordinated by this Ministry.” The directive from the education ministry ensured further erosion of governance and institutional autonomy at the new University of Nairobi.

The relation between the government and the University was set to become more complicated with the looming balance of payment crisis that engulfed Kenya and other non-oil producing countries in the early 1970s following the sharp rise of global oil prices. To address its budgetary constraints, the government of Kenya called for help from the Bretton Woods institutions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As was to become the norm, the Bretton Wood institutions would only advance budgetary and development support after the government agreed to fulfill a raft of conditions. The most critical conditionality imposed by the Bretton Wood institutions was a commitment from the government that it would reduce spending especially in social welfare programs such as education. In 1974, G. Pennisi a senior official of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development stated this fact when he informed the Permanent Secretary for Education:

You will be aware that there have been a series of discussions between the Bank and the government concerning the economic position following the oil crisis, and recently the dialogue has focused on the possibility of a program loan from the Bank to support Kenya’s balance of payments over the next few year. One of the matters we are concerned about is the need to curtail the rapid growth of education expenditures in the budget…. We would be very grateful for any information you may give us on your government’s intention to review the overall

85 KNA/TR/34/2, “University of Nairobi” Letter by P J. Gachathi, the Permanent Secretary of Education, to the Vice Chancellor University of Nairobi, about the establishment of Projects/Courses by various ministries at the University of Nairobi dated 12/10/1970
national educational policy and priorities keeping in mind the financial constraints. 86

In order to get loan support from the World Bank, the cash strapped Kenya had to reduce its recurrent expenditure. Education was one of the areas targeted by the Bank for expenditure cuts. The demand for Kenya to reduce its expenditure on education provided the government with the nudge to act on its own plan for a student loan scheme proposed in the 1960s. Since independence, government policy documents such as the 1964/70 Development Plan and the 1965 Sessional Paper Number Ten envisaged a loans scheme for university students. The same was repeated in the 1970/74 Development Plan. When university students began to protest against government excesses in the 1960s, some bureaucrats argued for the introduction of the proposed loans scheme as a way to instill discipline on students. In 1969 for instance, the Assistant Director of Education in charge of higher education called for the introduction of a loans scheme, noting that the system would instill a sense of responsibility on students. The official complained that students “take the bursary and even the personal allowances as a right and do not hesitate to make this clear to the officer concerned.” 87 A study by Daniel Rogers supported plans to create a university loans scheme claiming that the government spent a disproportionate amount of money supporting university students to the detriment of the other levels of learning. 88

According to Rogers, a year of secondary school costs five times and a year of university costs thirty-three times the average income per capita. Thus, peasants earning a few hundred dollars per year are taxed to support individuals at the colleges and universities at

87 KNA/XJ/1/224, Internal Memo from the Director of Higher Education to the Permanent Secretary Education dated 11/4/1969
88 Daniel Rogers was an American scholar and a Research Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies at the UON
the cost of a few thousand dollars per year.\textsuperscript{89}

Further, Rogers observed that students taking out loans to finance their education would “certainly be more serious about their studies than students who are getting a free ride at the expense of government. They will not only benefit in their academic studies but also in their attitudes toward the world and work.”\textsuperscript{90} A loans scheme, therefore, recommended itself on several fronts. First, a loans scheme would allow the government to save enormous amount of money currently spent on providing for full tuition and living expenses to university students. Secondly, it would serve as a means to instill a sense of responsibility to ‘spoilt’ university students.

Not every government official, however, was convinced on the suitability of a loans scheme. Upon the release of the 1970/74 Development Plan, the Permanent Secretary for Education, P. J. Gachathi, opposed the suggestion for the creation of a loans scheme noting that it would jeopardize the ability of the government to attract qualified personnel in priority areas such as Medicine, Engineering, Architecture, and other professional fields. According to Gachathi:

When a loan scheme is introduced such students even though they may be required badly in government service would prefer joining the private sector where the initial salaries are at least higher and therefore the burden of the payment of their loans is less.\textsuperscript{91}

Gachathi also opposed a loans scheme because it would place unbearable financial burden on university graduates already bearing the responsibility of providing for their extended

\textsuperscript{89} Daniel C. Rogers, “Student Loan Programs and the Returns to Investment in Higher Levels of Education in Kenya”, \textit{Economic Development and Cultural Change}, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Jan., 1972), 243
\textsuperscript{90} Daniel C. Rogers, 255
families. In his study however, Rogers responded to concerns like those expressed by Gachathi when he noted:

It is argued that the pressure of the extended family on the successful individual are so great that there is never any excess which would be used to retire educational loans. While it is quite clear that this type of pressure does exist and is indeed heavy for many individuals, it is also clear that methods could be devised which would assist the individual in successfully resisting such pressures.

It is clear that Rogers did not understand or chose to ignore the enormous social and financial obligations faced by educated Africans. Unlike the individualistic society of the west where Rogers came from, educated Africans were expected to provide financial support for not just themselves but also members of their extended family. Rogers dismissed Gachathi’s concerns without providing a concrete solution. It is clear that Rogers only concern was to develop a study that would appeal to the wishes of organizations such as the World Bank that were calling for the reduction of budgetary allocations on education.

The Minister for Education, Taita Arap Towett, shared Gachathi’s views about the inappropriateness of a student loan’s scheme, a stand that brought him in conflict with the Minister for Finance and Planning, Mwai Kibaki who supported the introduction of the loans scheme. Like the international aid agencies, the Ministry of Finance and Planning that controlled the purse strings of the government supported the introduction of a loans scheme as a means to control expenditure on education. In a correspondence with Towett, Kibaki supported the introduction of the loans scheme on the basis that:

The Government gross actual expenditure on education (both recurrent and development) has risen from K.£7,157,368 in 1963/64 to K. £ 26,853,083 in 1970/71, representing an increase of 275% in a period of seven years. Government gross expenditure on university education has risen from k.£622,104

93 Daniel C. Rogers, 256
in 1963/64 to k. £2,878,789 in 1970/71, representing an increase of 363%. We are unlikely to sustain this high rate of growth of expenditure on education and at the same time afford universal primary education as well as other government programmes.94

Kibaki’s explanations, however, did not impress Towett who in his reply noted that the government ran the risk of becoming unpopular with young people since it would be the first and the only African nation to introduce a loans scheme for university students. Towett also noted that Kenya had already experimented with a loans scheme for overseas education, but the government had failed to receive loan repayment from the beneficiaries. He cautioned that “if we were to extend our limited scheme to cover all university students, the problems involved in getting repayments would be so great that the whole purpose of introducing the loan scheme may very well be defeated.”95 Towett further dismissed Kibaki’s argument that the government was spending too much money on education noting, “although expenditure has increased over the last few years, there has also been a corresponding increase of over 300% in government revenue since independence.”96 Towett, however, recognized that the powerful Ministry of Finance and Planning, supported by similarly powerful aid agencies, were resolute on the issue of a loans scheme and thus reluctantly backed down from his opposition to the idea. Communicating his position to Kibaki, Towett stated, “in spite of my misgivings about the proposed Loan Scheme, I have nevertheless appointed a Committee to go thoroughly into the implications of introducing such a scheme and on receiving their recommendations I shall communicate further with you”97

Kibaki did not relent in his quest to create a loans scheme for university students as demonstrated by his quick response to Towett. In his response, Kibaki dismissed Towett’s

96 Ibid
97 Ibid
observation that a loans scheme for domestic university students would be a failure just like the one established during the colonial times for students pursuing their education abroad. In Kibaki’s opinion, those owing the government monies for their education had failed to repay their loans due to double standards that existed in the system. Kibaki pointed out that “it is obviously very difficult to collect repayments from a few individuals when the bulk of those trained through the University are not expected to pay towards their education.”98 Kibaki demonstrated that he did not want to leave anything to chance when he demanded representation in the Committee appointed by Towett to investigate the feasibility of a loans scheme.

The said Committee, however, was a nonstarter since the Ministry of Finance and Planning had finalized the loans scheme issue. Increasingly, the Ministry of Education became aware that it could not win a tug-of-war with the Finance Ministry, a fact noted by Gachathi who stated, “I am not a believer in this system but I have been forced to accept it by the Treasury’s insistence and reluctance to allocate sufficient funds for Higher Education.”99 The Ministry of Education had to strike a compromise with the Ministry of Finance as both ministries now agreed on a loans scheme formula whereby “part of the money spent on a University Student will be treated as a loan while the rest will be considered a bursary. The per capita cost will be divided into tuition and residential and students will be expected to secure a loan to cover a substantial proportion of the latter.”100

It is important to note that although the government had envisaged the introduction of the scheme at some future point, a coalescence of external and internal factors had contributed to the implementation of the loans scheme in the early 1970s. One of such factors was the rising

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100 Ibid
demand for university education. The government had responded to the rising demand by expanding the enrolment at the University of Nairobi and creating the Kenyatta University College. The Kenyatta College was conceived as a center for training secondary school teachers.\textsuperscript{101} Following the expansion of student numbers at the University of Nairobi and the Kenyatta College, it became clear that the government would not support the policy of fully subsidizing university education for all students. Secondly, in the early 1970s Kenya began to experience budgetary constraints calling for the intervention of the international aid agencies. The aid agencies, principally the World Bank, demanded that Kenya had to reduce its expenditure on education to qualify for loan support. This development introduced a new chapter in the relations between Kenya and the western aid agencies. Henceforth these agencies would attach their loan support to specific conditions that the government had to meet. To fulfill the demands of the international agencies, the University of Nairobi Grants Committee called for:

the reduction in the rate of enrolment of undergraduate students from academic year 1972/73, a limitation of post-graduate students to approximately 10\% of the undergraduate population at any given time and an overall maximum in student population of 6000 on the present campus.”\textsuperscript{102}

The Committee also called for the implementation of the proposed loans scheme. It was evident that demand by the aid agencies for the checking of the growth of university education was gaining support in Kenya. Surprisingly, university students at a General Assembly meeting of the Kenya Students Union also accepted the proposal for the introduction of a loans scheme. The executive council of the Kenya Students Union reiterated the students support for the loans

\textsuperscript{101} UON/7A/11, “Vice Chancellor, Development, Planning and Establishment Committee,” contains Minutes of the Sub-Committee of the Development Planning and Establishment Committee convened to discuss the relationship between the Kenyatta College and the University of Nairobi 24\textsuperscript{th} September 1971

\textsuperscript{102} KNA/XJ/3/222, “Commission of Inquiry, University of Nairobi,” contains Report of the University Grants Committee for 1972-1975
scheme at a meeting held on October 1972. The statement released after the executive meeting stated:

We the Kenya Students at Nairobi University, recognizing the financial difficulties of our Government in educating the increasing number of her youth, and considering also the financial problems of Kenya Students at Nairobi University, resolve that we ask the Government to grant to students Loans, instead of allowances.\(^{103}\)

The students however gave the government several conditions that it would have to fulfill to make the loans scheme acceptable. According to the Kenya Students Union, the government had to offer student loans with favorable terms that included:

…the repayment of the loan that should start six months after the commencement of employment of the students concerned. Also, the rate of repayment should be commensurate with the salary of the recipient of the loan provided that such a rate of repayment does not exceed Ksh. 80 per month except by the express consent of the recipient.\(^{104}\)

By supporting the loans scheme, the students sent a strong message that they recognized the sacrifices made by the public in supporting their education while at the same time compelling the government to create a loans scheme with very considerate terms.

In the meantime, the government continued with the plan to curb the escalating costs of university education by laying admission conditions that would limit the number of students gaining university admission. The report by the University Grants Committee for 1972/1975 had noted that in the period between 1970 and 1972 the University of Nairobi had registered high enrolment rates averaging almost fifteen percent per annum.\(^{105}\) The Ministry of Education reacted to the high enrolment statistics by noting that henceforth:

\[^{103}\text{KNA/XJ/9/27, “Loans for Higher Education” Statement released by the Kenya Students Union, University of Nairobi of 3 November 1972}\]

\[^{104}\text{Ibid}\]

Student intakes projections should be based on Kenya’s manpower requirements rather than what the faculties think is a convenient or comfortable number of students to be taught regardless of whether their services are required in the economy of the country…. The government cannot afford to give every qualified Kenyan a University education except in those areas where manpower shortages are still a reality.106

The government’s view about basing university enrolment on ‘manpower’ needs was not new. The statement, however, was telling since the government was essentially declaring that university education was not a right but rather a privilege of the few. Not everyone, even those with good high school qualification would expect to join the university. The statement demonstrated the growing desperation to curb government expenditure on university education. It was also becoming clear that the job prospects for university graduates especially those with Arts degrees were grim. Thus, when the Ministry of education announced that the Treasury wanted to introduce the loans scheme in July 1974, they also noted that the “present system of Student Bonding has become rather meaningless since the government is not in a position to allocate jobs to every student with a degree of a general nature.”107 This was an indication that the university policy operating since the colonial period, which conceived university as a milling ground for civil servants needed to be reformed. The government was no longer capable of providing every university graduate with a job.

The implementation of the university loans scheme began in July 1974 with a circular from the Ministry of Education stating, “the University students will continue to have free tuition, but they will have to look after themselves as far as residential, accommodation, pocket
money, book allowances, stationery etc are concerned.”\textsuperscript{108} The terms of the loans scheme were very easy. The government did not require collateral from the students and the loans attracted a two percent annual interest.\textsuperscript{109} The students were to begin loan repayment after “a grace period of 3 years after the completion of their studies.”\textsuperscript{110} The introduction of a loans scheme was a fulfillment of the demands by the international aid agencies that were calling for a balanced budget. The aid agencies were already directly involved in the formulation of government policy with some of their expatriates seconded to the ministries. One such expatriate working in the Ministry of Education was Dr. C. E. Cunning who, in 1974, prepared a report that called for the establishment of the National Commission on Education Objectives and Policies (NCEOP) that would “formulate policy decisions which will have to be taken within the next couple of years.”\textsuperscript{111} Cunning also called for the government to prioritize the provision of primary education instead of university education. According to Cunning:

There is a need to hold down Higher Education expenditure and reduce the proportion allocated to Higher Education… It is necessary for the government to restrict the total number of Higher Education places because of pressure on its resources from other educational sectors and other parts of the economy. The result of this restriction will be that only a certain proportion of those with the minimum entrance requirement will in future get a publically supported higher education. \textsuperscript{112}

The Ministry of Education responded to Cunning’s proposal by announcing that not every qualified student would gain university admission. A statement from the Ministry of Education observed that, “despite the increase in the number of students obtaining minimum university

\begin{thebibliography}{11}
\bibitem{108} KNA/XJ/9/29, “Commencement of Loan Repayment” Memorandum on the new Loan Scheme for University Students 1973
\bibitem{109} KNA/XJ/9/28, “Loans for University Education,” contains a Circular to all University Students regarding University Loans 20th April 1976
\bibitem{110} KNA/XJ/17/55, “University Education Annual Report,” Progress on University Students Loan Scheme, 1978
\bibitem{111} KNA/XJ/9/30, “Loan Scheme for Kenyan Students in East African Universities” contains a report by Dr. C. E. Cunning entitled “Entry to Higher Education in Kenya,” dated 7/5/1974
\bibitem{112} Ibid
\end{thebibliography}
entry requirement the number of students intending to take Arts based courses would be
drastically reduced. It was clear that the government had succumbed to pressure from the
West to limit student access to university education. Furthermore, it indicated that Kenya was a
neocolonial state where foreign powers were still in control of government policies. In April
1975, the government moved to implement the suggestion by Cunning for the formation of the
National Commission on Educational Objectives and Policies (NCEOP). The NCEOP role was
to “redefine Kenya’s educational objectives and recommend policies to achieve these objectives
within the financial constraint that public recurrent of expenditure on education should not grow
at a faster rate than the government’s recurrent budget.” The Commission, which was chaired
by the Permanent Secretary for Education, P. J. Gachathi, began its work in December 1975. It
is noteworthy that civil servants instead of academics dominated a Commission on education.

Meanwhile, as the government embarked on policies to reduce expenditure on university
education, the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University College, were going through a
period of turmoil. The confrontation between the government and university students that began
in the early 1969 had taken a life of its own, becoming a permanent feature in the 1970s. In the
1970s, however, students were not only protesting against the erosion of university autonomy
and academic freedoms but also concerned with issues affecting their quality of life. The most
serious of these happened in 1972, as students protested over delayed “construction of a bridge

113 KNA/XJ/1/225, “University Admissions,” A memo by W. W. Njaga, A.D.E. (H.E.) to the Registrar of University
of Nairobi 13 February 1975
114 KNA/XJ/1/184, “Proposed National Commission on Education” 7th April 1975
115 Other members of the Commission included Josephat Mutugi, Commissioner of Labour; Samuel Kihumba
Secretary Board of Adult Education; James Mburu, Director of Agriculture; Dr. Michael Migue, Principal of the
Medical Training Centre; Harris Mule, Deputy PS Ministry of Finance and Planning; Kyale Mwendwa, Former
Director of Education; Geoffrey Njoroge, Deputy Director of Personnel, Office of the President; Prof. Simeon
Ominde Professor of Geography at the University of Nairobi; Mrs Julia Ramtu, Home Economics Lecturer at
Kenyatta University College; Mrs Joan Waithaka Headmistress, Alliance High School; Joseph Oyugi of the Kenya
Institute of Management and LT.-Col. Gordon Swansbury Chief Secretary, Salvation Army. Joint Secretaries were
Ayub Muraya, Deputy Director of Education and Leonard Ngugi Principal Economist, Ministry of Finance and
Planning.
or a tunnel on State House Road to prevent continued accidents.”  

The then new Student Organization of Nairobi Union (SONU), which succeeded the disbanded Student Union as a representative organization for university students, issued a statement after the strike noting that the State House Road issue was not the only concern that caused protests. According to SONU, the State House Road issue was a focal point of a host of other major problems, which faced university students. The students’ grievances included:

- the urgent need for educational reform, especially in the curriculum and examination system;
- the need for representative student participation in making decisions affecting their welfare;
- the arrogant and oppressive bureaucracy of the university administration;
- the deteriorating and often non-existent services provided to the students by the sanatorium, the bookshop, the cafeteria and the kitchens, etc.  

 Predictably, the government reacted to the protest by expelling the student leaders. This however did not deter subsequent strikes such as that of 1973 that engulfed both the UON and the KUC. The KUC students went on strike in sympathy with their colleagues in Nairobi who were protesting the change in curriculum at the Architecture Department. Like in the earlier 1972 protests, students seized on the crisis at the Architecture Department to voice their displeasure with foreigners who still dominated many departments at the University. The Architecture Department was especially culpable to the student charge since foreigners dominated the faculty. This time, however, the student protests turned fatal when several protestors succumbed to injuries following a violent confrontation with the police. The student leaders released a tense statement condemning the Vice Chancellor Dr. Josphat

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116 UON/PUEA/9/5, “Student Matters General” contains SONU Newsletter, the University Platform, New Series No. 4 Thursday 27 July 1972
117 Ibid
Karanja for allowing the police to kill students during the protests and the overbearing influence of the foreigners.\textsuperscript{118} According to the students:

The Commerce faculty is run by Canadian Aid—hence to teach in the faculty, the Canadian government has got to appoint you. The law faculty is a citadel of the British. The Inns of Court in England have been emulated with wonderful success in Kenya—the pinstriped suited and carnated clan with their waist coat gold watches. The Institute of Development Studies has got to respond to the wishes of the Gulf Oil-Rockefeller multimillionaire exploiter concerns. The Social Sciences must indeed reflect social change in America. It is in this foregoing perspective that the totally uncalled for brutality and massacre of innocent students must be seen.\textsuperscript{119}

The University of Nairobi administration reacted to the 1973 student protest by appointing a Committee chaired by I. Lugonzo, “to examine and make recommendations to Council as soon as possible on the cause of recurring disruptions of the running of the University and suitable machinery to deal with students’ problems.”\textsuperscript{120} The Committee released its report in 1974 in which they blamed the lack of proper communication machinery between the administration and the students as the main cause of the student protests. In addition, the Lugonzo Commission criticized the contradictions in the Kenyan society as having created confusion among students leading to recurrent protests at the university. According to Lugonzo, “the students or young people in general appear to be thoroughly confused if not fed up with adult exhortations to be good. They see the world as full of contradictions: tribalism, nepotism, unequal wealth and lack of moral values.”\textsuperscript{121} As a solution to the frequent protests, the Committee proposed the founding of a staff association that would serve as a platform for

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\textsuperscript{118} KNA/XJ/2/37, “Kenya Students’ Union, University of Nairobi” contains a Statement by Nairobi Students Union, 1973  
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid  
\textsuperscript{120} KNA/XJ/17/65, “Lugonzo Committee Report”  
Other Committee members included Mr. T. K. Mbathi, Mrs A. Masakhalia, Mr. K.S.N. Matiba, Mrs D. Luseno and J. Getao, P. S. Education, and S. W. Karanja.  
\textsuperscript{121} KNA/XJ/17/65, “Lugonzo Committee Report”
\end{flushright}
exchanging ideas not only amongst the staff but also with students’ representatives and administration. The Lugonzo Committee also sought to minimize the contagion effect that caused student strikes to spread from the UON to KUC or the vice versa. Whenever a crisis emanated from one institution, students from the other college joined in the protests in solidarity with their colleagues. To solve this problem the Lugonzo Committee proposed the separation of the KUC from the University of Nairobi. According to the Committee:

To maintain a huge conglomerate with about 10,000 people will hardly work. We heard from several witnesses that the students at Kenyatta College at one time went on strike “in sympathy” with Nairobi. Is it perhaps because the students feel they are minute units in one gigantic atomized mass where they have no identity and where mass hysteria is the only outlet left to air grievances?¹²²

The government, however, failed to implement the recommendations of the Lugonzo Commission that attributed the frequent student strikes to governance decay at the two university institutions in the country. The Committee had noted that the vices of tribalism, nepotism, and corruption were widely prevalent at the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta College. The same vices, however, were widely evident in the Kenyatta administration. The government therefore lacked any moral ground to reform the university administration and not surprisingly chose to ignore Lugonzo Commission recommendations.

The release of the Lugonzo Commission report in August 1974 did not solve the violent student activism. Soon, University of Nairobi students went on strike in solidarity with their colleagues at Kenyatta College who were protesting against the high handedness of their Principal, Dr. Dunstan Ireri. It was now clear that the government

¹²² KNA/XJ/17/65, “Lugonzo Committee Report”
had failed to contain discontent among university students as it resorted to extreme measures such as banning of student organizations.

When outright proscription of student unions did not work, the government employed divide-and-rule tactics by encouraging the establishment of tribal student unions. One such organization was the Agikuyu Student Organization (ASO) founded as an organization for Kikuyus only. The ASO had support from Kenyatta government itself dominated by members of the Kikuyu community. The ASO therefore turned itself into a pro-government mouthpiece at the University of Nairobi, an institution where the government enjoyed least support. ASO became the main opposition to the Nairobi University Students Organization (NUSO), which was created after the government disbanded SONU. To undermine NUSO, the ASO in 1975 petitioned the government to stop financing the organization. Ironically, the ASO, a self-professed tribal organization, accused NUSO of being a tribal organization. According to the ASO, NUSO was composed:

of a few disgruntled elements who have been working closely for the disruption of the highest seat of learning in this country and make it a seed-bed of treasonable and subversive activities in form of political opposition to the government which has failed to take root in the national political arena. In the last NUSO elections the only campaign strategy against all Kikuyu candidates was that they should be isolated and alienated from university politics because admittedly the President of our popularly elected government and the Vice-Chancellor of the University are Kikuyus… We are therefore making it absolutely clear that we are not members of NUSO and not a single penny of our loan should be deducted towards the financing of this tribal organisation.123

The ASO castigation of NUSO as a tribal organization was baseless. The NUSO’s Secretary General, Kithinji wa Kiragu, was a Kikuyu and its executive council was

123 KNA/XJ/2/37, “Kenya Students’ Union University of Nairobi” A memo by the Agikuyu Students to the University Administration and the Ministry of Education over NUSO Subscription Fee dated 18 November 1975
representative of the Kenyan communities. The ASO was a scheme to divide the student body along tribal lines in order to emasculate the student opposition to the government. It is therefore little wonder that the government endorsed the suggestion by ASO that it should not offer any form of financial support to NUSO.\textsuperscript{124}

Clamping down on student organizations, however, did not stop student protests. The year 1975 witnessed a violent student strike over the assassination of the popular politician J. M. Kariuki. Kariuki was allegedly assassination by state agents for opposing the policies of Kenyatta’s government. Similar protests also occurred in 1976 as students commemorated the first anniversary of Kariuki’s death. The most destructive and violent protests, however, occurred in 1977 and spread throughout the year. The first strike in 1977 took place on March 2, 1977, a day set aside to commemorate the assassination of J. M. Kariuki. Since the government did not want a politician, who had opposed its policies honored in any way, a violent showdown between the students and the police became inevitable. In the same month, the students in the Faculty of Commerce had protested against administrative irregularities in the sitting and marking of exams, and seventy students were suspended in the riots that followed. More riots took place in June when the students clashed with the police while commemorating the first anniversary of the Soweto riots of June 16, 1976, in South Africa in which six hundred black South Africans were killed. In September, students clashed again with police while protesting the slaying of the young Black anti-apartheid activist in South Africa, Steve Bantu Biko, on September 12, 1977. The year winded down in a sour note with the December detention of Ngugi wa Thiongo, a popular radical lecturer at the University of Nairobi. The students could not

\textsuperscript{124} KNA/XJ/2/37, “Kenya Students’ Union University of Nairobi” file contains Minutes of the Meeting Held on Friday 9\textsuperscript{th} January 1976 in the Office of the Assistant Director of Education in Charge of Higher Education.
contain their hatred for a government that was becoming increasingly dictatorial in the twilight years of Kenyatta's regime.125

By the time of President Kenyatta death in August 1978, the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta College had become the major sources of irritation for the Kenyatta government. At a time when the opposition had virtually seized to exist due to excessive authoritarianism of Kenyatta’s administration, university students paid dearly for opposing the excesses of the government. During this period, many university students lost their lives in confrontations with the police while others suffered serious injuries. Many others never completed their studies after they were expelled from the University for taking part in protests.

Meanwhile the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (NCEOP) that began its work in December 1975 continued to collate public opinion with a view to develop a comprehensive education policy as directed by the government. In one of its public sitting held in Mombasa in April 1976, the Committee heard submissions from the powerful Provincial Commissioner of Coast Province Eliud Mahihu who complained that both the UON and the KUC were “producing the wrong kind of people.”126 According to Mahihu:

It is necessary for the University of Nairobi to be a government University and thereby curtail any freedom of academics. Nairobi University should be looked into critically because of the ideas, freedom that is in existence there. All lecturers should be screened properly to establish what they actually have in terms of academic and attitude. At present, for instance how many lecturers at our university believe in the Sessional Paper No. 10? …The University must be under the Ministry of Education. Only then can we hope to give education relevant to this country. The stone throwing students at the University are the same people who are soon coming out and occupy positions of great responsibility in society.

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125 Maurice Amutabi, 167-168
126 KNA/XJ/3/238, “National Committee of Education,” contains Records of Proceedings of Interviews Conducted by the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies in Mombasa on April 3-4\textsuperscript{th} 1976
If they have not been educated towards responsible citizenship, how can they lead others properly?  

As a trusted insider in Kenyatta’s government, Mahihu expressed the government frustration with the increasing student radicalism. The government believed that university lecturers were largely to blame for students’ radicalism. As Mahihu stated, it is true that many academics did not share the ideological views of the government. Amutabi has noted that in the 1960s and 1970s, many academics in Kenya like in other developing countries were influenced by the radical debates of dependency, underdevelopment, and neocolonialism. In Kenya, some academics derided the African socialism philosophy articulated in the Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 as nothing but capitalism thus coming to a collision course with the government. The views by powerful figures like Mahihu were an indication that the government would soon reign in radical academics. This happened in December 1977 with the detention of Ngugi wa Thiongo.

The NCEOP released its report in December 1976. The Committee’s recommendations called for the overhaul of the education system by extending the primary school cycle by two years and making Form 6 the terminal year for high school education. This meant that the School Certificate examination taken at the end of Form Four (end of four years of high school) would be scrapped making it possible for all students to progress to the Advanced Level (Forms 5 and 6). Until then only students who scored high grades at their School Certificate exam got a chance to progress to the

127 KNA/XJ/3/238, “National Committee of Education,” contains Records of Proceedings of Interviews Conducted by the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies in Mombasa on April 3-4, 1976
128 Maurice Amutabi, 164
130 The National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (NCEOP) report is popularly known as the Gachathi report
Advanced Level. If implemented the NCEOP recommendations would have extended the total cycle for basic education (primary and secondary schooling) by two years from thirteen to fifteen years.

On university education, the Committee asked the government to halt the growth of the University of Nairobi and instead develop the Kenyatta University College to full university status. The Committee envisaged Kenyatta University to achieve an optimal population target of 5,000 students by 1986. According to the Committee, “when Kenyatta has grown to its optimum size a third university institution should be established.”

The NCEOP modest expansion plan for university education fulfilled the wishes of the government and the aid agencies. A meeting between the government and the World Bank after the release of the NCEOP report noted that the implementation of the recommendations would “limit the annual growth rates of education expenditure to 7% and the total budget allocation on education will not be allowed to exceed 29% of the national budget.” Because of the “commendable” work done by the NCEOP to limit expenditure on education, “the World Bank expressed interest in financing acceptable education and training programmes to the tune of $40 Million.” The loan support from the World Bank was an expression of victory for eventually having achieved its aim of influencing the course and direction of education growth in Kenya. By recommending a slower university growth however, the NCEOP had acted like the earlier

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131 At the end of the A Levels which was the fifth and sixth year of high school students would sit for the Higher School Certificate and those who excelled in the exam got a chance to join the University
132 Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies, 1976, 87
134 Ibid
Beecher Committee, appointed by the colonial government in 1947. Like the NCEOP, the Beecher Committee had drawn a very modest education growth targets for the Africans. The Beecher Committee targets that aimed at frustrating the educational achievement of Africans however never succeeded since the 1950s witnessed explosive expansion of African education. Only time would tell whether the NCEOP plan succeeded or failed.

In the subsequent years, the high demand from the public forced the government to expand university education to unprecedented levels. This expansion however only came after the death of President Kenyatta in August 22, 1978, steered by the second president of Kenya, Daniel Arap Moi. Kenyatta left a mixed legacy on university education. On the one hand, Kenyatta’s period witnessed a gradual but modest expansion of university education. Kenyatta’s administration had to grapple with the legacies of colonialism and the dictates of a neo-colonial order that cast its shadow over Kenya. The legacies of colonialism and the dictates of neocolonialism ensured that Kenyatta administration operated under influences from the developed world. One of the legacies of colonialism was the UEA arrangement that severely limited access to university education. Kenyatta also continued with the colonial thinking that saw the role of university as simply the production of a small class of administrators to serve in the civil service. After the dissolution of the UEA, international aid agencies stepped in and continued to influence university policy. Kenyatta’s period also saw the rise of university students as a vocal political voice in Kenya. Kenyatta inadvertently played a major role in radicalizing university students with his growing authoritarianism that limited the political space in the country. University students were the only organized group able to challenge the excesses of Kenyatta’s government. The economic downturn of the 1970s that created unemployment and

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135 See chapter one for more on the Beecher Commission
forced the government to introduce a student loans scheme further reinforced the strain between the students and the government. Student protests would continue to be a feature in Kenya under President Moi’s government. Unlike Kenyatta however, President Moi was able to manipulate the neocolonial world order and expanded university education to unprecedented scale.
CHAPTER 5

POLITICAL CHANGE: THE ERA OF POLICY SHIFT AND RAPID EXPANSION OF UNIVERSITIES, 1972-1985

This chapter examines the contrasting policies on university expansion between President Kenyatta’s government and that of his successor, President Moi. While chapter four explored the challenges that faced universities in the 1970s most of which centered on the lack of adequate financing from the government, this chapter will unravel the impact of the differing policy choices made by Kenyatta and Moi’s governments on access to university education in Kenya.

Kenyatta’s government began active implementation of measures that limited university funding and consequently controlled growth in enrolment in 1972 after a two-year period of massive expansion at the newly established University of Nairobi (UON) and Kenyatta University College (KUC). Between 1970 and 1972, both university institutions had recorded an impressive average annual enrolment growth rate of fifteen percent. Soon, however, the Treasury, which had immense powers in President Kenyatta’s government, began to voice concerns about the economic implications of the university expansion. The Treasury was concerned that the high university enrolment rates demanded increases in budget allocation for university education. The Treasury’s concerns were expressed through the University Grants Committee (UGC), a government body that made financial and development planning for the university on a triennial basis. The majority of the UGC members were government bureaucrats drawn from the

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Ministry of Finance and National Planning. The composition of the UGC was important because its resolutions reflected the official thinking of the government. In its triennial report for the period 1972 to 1975, the UGC decried the high enrolment rates since 1970. The Committee was particularly concerned about the implication of this pattern of expansion at the UON, arguing that it would complicate the persistent “problem of student accommodation and the related items such as the acquisition of land within the proximity of the main campus and the provision of capital funds needed for student hostels.” The UGC concerns expressed the government policy of financial parsimony and confirmed its unwillingness to increase the budgetary vote for universities. It was a revelation that despite the steps taken to expand opportunities through the establishment of the UON and KUC, the government was yet stuck in the old elitist ideology that sought to open university education to just a few individuals who would be accommodated in the civil service. Thus, in its report, the UGC recommended drastic measures to curtail future expansion, including “a reduction in the rate of enrolment of undergraduate students and a limitation of post-graduate students to approximately 10% of the undergraduate population at any given time.”

The Ministry of Education responded to the UGC recommendations in January 1973 by announcing, “the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University College should base their intakes in relation to manpower requirements rather than the results of the sixth

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Only three representatives out of the thirteen members of the UGC in 1972 were members of the academia. These included Dr. J. N. Karanja, the Vice Chancellor UON, Professor Bethuel Ogot, and Professor P. A. Robins. Humphrey Slade, a politician and former speaker of the National Assembly, chaired the UGC.
4 Ibid
form examinations.\textsuperscript{5} This statement showed that the government was intent on implementing the UGC recommendations. It also demonstrated that a mere attainment of necessary qualifications at the A level exams did not guarantee entry into university. Only the cream of the students would get a chance to pursue university education.

However, it is important to note that despite the government declared intentions to halt expansion, student enrolments at both UON and KUC continued to rise albeit at a less explosive rate than in the early 1970s. The decision on whether to admit or turn down qualified students fell on the admission committees of both universities and not on government bureaucrats who were calling for the halting of expansion. The admission committees found it difficult to limit admission of qualified students as the government officials recommended. Further, the government would not reverse the rising tide of increased enrolments with mere pronouncements. Since the government had only issued ordinary pronouncements regarding admission, which were not translated into concrete policy, the UON and KUC adopted a trend of modest increase of student enrolment.

While the total student population at both the UON and KUC in 1972/73 academic year ranged slightly below 4,000, by 1974/75 the number had risen to almost 5,500 students.\textsuperscript{6}

Although government bureaucrats were not successful in halting expansion, they were the ones responsible for budget allocations to the university. This put them in a position to control the levels of financing that both the UON and KUC would receive from the government. Consequently, government financing of the university did not

\textsuperscript{5} KNA/ XJ/3/222, “Commission of Inquiry,” file contains a circular by G.. R. M’Mwirichia a Senior Official at the Ministry of Education responding to the University Grants Committee recommendations 13/1/1973

\textsuperscript{6} KNA/XJ/17/55, “Ministry of Education Annual Reports,” contains University Education Annual Report 1974
match the enrolment increase. The limited government support in the face of increased enrolment strained both the physical and human resources at the universities. While the university defied the government directives and continued to increase the enrolments, it did not have its own resources to cater for the needs created by the surging numbers of students. Only government intervention would save the deteriorating situation.

In 1974, Professor Joseph Mungai, the Deputy Vice Chancellor of the UON lamented the enormous challenges that faced the university in providing adequate accommodation to all students. Mungai noted that the UON was unable to accommodate 1,626 in the 1974/75 academic year because “no new halls have been built to cater for the increased intake of students.” The situation was so dire that even if two additional hostels are constructed to cater for the 1,626 without accommodation, “there will be about the same number of students uncatered for in the halls due to intake in subsequent years.” It was evident that the government needed to increase financial allocation on universities since learning facilities, just like student accommodation were also overstretched. Due to the crumbling facilities, university students who had previously conceived of themselves as a special class of elites felt alienated by the government resulting in intensification of protests in the 1970s.

The government responded to the accommodation crisis in 1974 by establishing the University Halls of Residence Institute (UHRI). In establishing the Institute, the government wanted the administration of both the UON and KUC to focus on academic

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8 Ibid

9 KNA/XJ/27/65, “University of Nairobi,” file contains Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the Board of Directors of University Halls of Residence Institute 8th July 1975 in the Conference Room of the Ministry of Education
matters and leave the responsibilities of accommodation and catering to an independent body. As the Permanent Secretary of Education remarked:

…the government wanted the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University College to be primarily learning institutions. To this end, the day-to-day administration of the students’ welfare directly related to accommodation and catering had to be divorced from the management of relevant institutions. These services were to be taken over by a strong government supported non-profit making and independent body.¹⁰

The government wanted the new UHRI to source for private finances and construct additional hostels, which would ease the problem of inadequate accommodation at the university. The Institute, however, was not a private company but rather a parastatal that would rely substantially on government support. Given the low performance rate of government agencies, it was doubtful whether the UHRI would find a solution to the chronic shortage of student accommodation. Nevertheless, the government went ahead to register the Institute in December 1974 and charged it with the task:

1. To provide board and lodging for University students
2. To operate and manage student halls of residence in Nairobi and elsewhere in Kenya
3. To acquire, take on lease, modify or develop property and rights of any kind and subject to any conditions, trusts or liabilities and to enter into or procure the grant of any licenses, charters, concessions or other instruments or rights necessary or desirable in connection with the objects of Institute.¹¹

Upon the establishment of the UHRI, the Treasury instructed the Ministry of Education “to credit direct to the Institute, the residential and catering services portion of students’ loan so that the Institute could arrange with individual students to whom to

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¹⁰ KNA/XJ/27/65, “University of Nairobi,” file contains Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the Board of Directors of University Halls of Residence Institute 8th July 1975 in the Conference Room of the Ministry of Education
¹¹ Ibid
remit the room and board charges.”12 The Treasury’s directive gave the Institute a direct source of funding in the form of accommodation fees deducted from the loans advanced to students by the government. The UHRI however did not solve the chronic shortage of accommodation. Soon, the UHRI became involved in tussles with the university administration over who had the legal right to control halls of residence and other university property. The university administrators refused to transfer to the UHRI land and halls of residence claiming that those were non-transferable university property.13 Eventually the government disbanded the UHRI and returned the role of providing accommodation and catering to the university. The confusion over the role of the UHRI and its failure to execute its mandate was an indictment of the government’s university policy.

In the meantime, university expansion continued at a very modest rate that failed to satisfy the increasing demand for university education among the public. Despite the slow rate in expansion, the government went ahead in 1975, to call for “a drastic reduction in the Arts based courses especially in the Faculties of Arts and Education.”14 The faculties of Arts and Education were the most populous and continued to attract more applicants. Furthermore, the government directed that “only 4000 Kenyan student should be enrolled at the University of Nairobi and 1200 at Kenyatta.”15 The directives were a

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12 KNA/XJ/27/65, “University of Nairobi,” file contains Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the Board of Directors of University Halls of Residence Institute 8th July 1975 in the Conference Room of the Ministry of Education
13 KNA/XJ/3/224, “University of Nairobi,” file contains the 1982 report of the Visiting and Inspection Committee which details the dissolution of the UHRI
clear statement that the government was intent on controlling university expansion and was not keen on increasing funding.

The university this time adhered to government directives since continued expansion of enrolment had overstretched facilities to the limit. It was however clear even among some Ministry of Education mandarins that the government directive for reduced admission was politically imprudent and likely to cause discontent. Mr Njaga, the Assistant Director of Education in charge of higher education expressed his concerns to the Permanent Secretary of Education over the implication of the plans by the government to halt expansion of student enrolment. In his protest, Njaga noted:

Last year 4,249 candidates entered for EAACE of whom 4,089 actually sat for the examination. Of these 2,584 got the minimum university requirements of at least 2 Principal passes. Add to this number a further 200 private candidates who had qualified for admission to make a total of 2,704 who met the entry requirement. Following the government directive that only 4,000 Kenya student should be enrolled at the University of Nairobi and 1200 at Kenyatta the University admitted into the 1st year only 1,519 school leavers and 14 private candidates for the 1976/77 academic year. Thus, there are 1,279 candidates qualified for admission who have been left out due to as we have been told lack of funds. Many of these students have certainly good passes and it is heartrending to both themselves and the parents….Serious thought should be given to this issue before the volcano we are sitting on erupts.16

Mr. Njaga’s petition suggested that the government policy of restricted growth of universities was detrimental especially to those who had qualified but were denied admission to university. Being the most senior civil servant responsible for higher education, Njaga bore the responsibility of enforcing unpopular government policies on university financing thus putting him at loggerhead with the university administration. Njaga was the highest-ranking bureaucrat who had to deal with the university

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16 KNA/XJ/1/162,“University of Nairobi,” file contains Memo by W.W. Njaga A.D.E (H.E.) to the Permanent Secretary, Education on University New Intake 10/6/1976
administrators already fed up with the government policy that limited university financing. Njaga lamented his role as a government “messenger” who kept passing the painful message to university administrators informing them “to cut their coat according to the available cloth.”\textsuperscript{17} According to him, “it has come to a point whereby it is almost embarrassing to sit in meetings where the Ministry of Education is being constantly blamed for the inadequacies of the government.”\textsuperscript{18}

Njaga’s position was particularly difficult since he shouldered the blame for being responsible for the dwindling resources that trickled to university. Njaga was merely a messenger who communicated policies that emanated from the Ministry of Finance, which had decided to solve the national budgetary shortfalls by denying universities adequate financing. The Ministry of Education was therefore in a difficult situation since it had to distribute its budgetary allocations internally based on the guidelines that came from the Treasury.

Not only did limited finances affect local universities but also Kenyan students studying overseas. Since the colonial era, the government had supported some students overseas by providing them with either loans or grants. In the early 1970s, as it sought to limit university financing locally, the government decided to discontinue some of the support programs for overseas education as well. In 1974, the Treasury instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to stop administering the Student Amenities Fund that provided emergency support to students overseas who faced emergencies that prevented

\textsuperscript{17} KNA/XJ/3/129, “University of Nairobi,” contains Minutes of the Ministry of Education General Purposes Committee Meeting, 24/5/1976
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid
them from affording their tuition or living expenses. The abolition of the Student Amenities Fund came amidst growing calls from the Kenyan embassy in the USA for the government to increase its support for students studying there. The majority of Kenyan students abroad at the time were pursuing their education in the USA. The USA, however, was beginning to tighten its immigration policies including enactment of rules that prevented international students from working. According to Daniel Mbiti, the education attaché at the Kenyan embassy in Washington DC:

Inflation in the USA has been rising so fast that many firms have been forced to close down. As a result many people have been laid off from their jobs, thus creating unemployment. These are jobs the Immigration and Naturalization Service claims it wants to give to the minorities, jobs that otherwise would be done by the foreign students. There is another reason which has not been cited by the US authorities and this is that the US wants to reduce and control the number of aliens entering the country. This move will force many students to return to their countries where they have become a brain drain especially those who come from the developing nations. The students who are affected by this ruling are mainly African students. This is because the students from Europe and Japan are able to pay their way through college.

Due to the stringent immigration rules, several Kenyan students in the USA faced charges of violating the new law that prevented them from working. The Kenyan ambassador and representatives of other African countries lobbied the American

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19 KNA/XJ/9/18, “Kenya Student Amenities Fund,” contains Letter by D. W. Thairu for Permanent Secretary, Education, addressed to the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated 28 September 1974
20 KNA/XJ/9/18, “Kenya Student Amenities Fund,” contains letter by Daniel Mbiti the education attaché in USA to PS Education 9 August 1974
21 KNA/XJ/9/18, “Kenya Student Amenities Fund” Letter by Daniel Mbiti, Education Attache Kenyan Embassy in Washington to the PS Education dated 4, October 1974

According to Mbiti, the following students had run against the law for working in the summer of 1974: a) Waweru Karago is appearing in court today to answer why he should not be deported because of working without permission; b) George Josiah’s student visa has been denied and he is given to understand that he can only stay here if he has support from his family; c) Isaac Munyiri has been refused to change his visa from B-2 to F1; d) Henry Ayaga was refused re-entry to the US after going to do research in Jamaica. He was allowed in only after our intervention; d) John Ndege was threatened with deportation because of working without permission.
Congress to modify the law that prohibited international students from working. Senator Kennedy later introduced a senate resolution condemning the immigration and naturalization service regulation.”\textsuperscript{22} In the meantime, pressure was mounted on the Ministry of Education to reestablish the discontinued Student Amenities Fund since overseas education fell under its docket, not that of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry of Education however was adamant that it could not afford to maintain the emergency fund because of lack of adequate finances. The discontinuation of the Students Amenities Fund although coming at a time of increasing financial distress to Kenyan students in the USA provided the government with an opportunity to reduce its bill that went to support overseas education. It was an extension of the policy of financial parsimony dictated by the Treasury.

Meanwhile, increased student enrolment and dwindling resources continued to haunt the UON and KUC, a fact expressed by Dr. Josphat Karanja the Vice Chancellor of the UON on its Sixth Graduation Ceremony in October 1976, presided over by President Kenyatta, who was also the University Chancellor. As Dr. Karanja noted:

\begin{quote}
The University, Sir, depends very largely on government for its financial grants...we have also benefited over the years from the generosity of foreign governments, aid agencies, international organizations and foundations who have helped us with capital development and with post-graduate scholarships. We are grateful to them all. In the past, we have been well-endowed. But in these days of financial stringency and inflation, I would plead that nothing is done which may impair our well known standard of excellence in teaching and research by allowing the spectre of a deficit to hung over our heads like the sword of Damocles.\textsuperscript{23}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{22} KNA/XJ/9/18, “Kenya Student Amenities Fund,” Letter by Daniel Mbiti, Education Attache Kenyan Embassy in Washington to the PS Education October 4 1974
\textsuperscript{23} Text of a Speech by Dr. J. N. Karanja, V.C., on the Occasion of the Sixth Graduation Ceremony, 29 October, 1976
Karanja’s direct appeal to the President for support demonstrated his frustration with the Treasury, which had adamantly refused to provide the required funding to the UON. The appeal, however, had little chance of success due to Kenyatta’s governing style that delegated policy authority to ministers and senior bureaucrats in the ministries.

Karanja’s persistent calls for additional funding did not falter despite President Kenyatta’s apparent disinterest in the matter. During the Seventh Graduation Ceremony held in October 1977, which eventually turned out to be the last graduation ceremony presided by President Kenyatta, Karanja repeated his appeal for additional funding but also went further to ask for the establishment of a second university.\(^{24}\) In his appeal, Karanja showed his frustration with the inability of the UON and its constituent KUC to meet the high demand for university education in the country. Karanja’s call for a second university came due to the stagnation in the first year student admission at the UON and KUC that stood at around 1,500.\(^{25}\) Karanja conceived the establishment of a second university as the only practical way to compel the government to increase funding to university education and therefore reduce pressure on the UON to enroll the soaring numbers of qualified high school leavers. As he noted, although the UON was under considerable pressure to increase its first year intake, “we cannot take more students within the existing facilities without straining to the limit these facilities and risking endangering the standards of tuition and training that we offer.”\(^{26}\) Karanja argued that the only way to relieve the immense pressure on “the pinnacle of the pyramid of the educational system is by providing other appropriate post-secondary training facilities in

\(^{24}\) Kenyatta University College was a constituent college of the University of Nairobi. Karanja was asking for the establishment of a full fledged second university.

\(^{25}\) Text of a Speech by Dr. J. N. Karanja, V.C., on the Occasion of the Sixth Graduation Ceremony, 29 October, 1976

\(^{26}\) Text of Speech by the VC, Dr. J. N. Karanja on the Seventh Graduation Ceremony 27, October 1977
the country so that every sixth former does not believe that his salvation lies in University education.”27 More importantly, the solution lay on “planning and developing another university somewhere else in the country designed to meet the technological and professional training of future generations. Kenya is perhaps one of the few countries with similar resources and potential that has only a single University.”28

Dr. Karanja rightly diagnosed the problem of limited university opportunities in Kenya, which would only be tackled through expansion of the available facilities and addition of more university institutions. Although some critics have only focused on Dr. Karanja’s weaknesses as an authoritarian administrator, to his credit, he utilized very scarce resources to expand student enrolment at both the UON and KUC. The Treasury, however, constantly frustrated Karanja’s efforts to increase enrolment by its reluctance to provide enough funding. Karanja expressed his frustrations with the Treasury when he appealed to President Kenyatta for a reform in government budgetary policy. According to Karanja:

the only complaint we have is that the annual budgetary allocation tucked away as a one line vote in the Ministry of Education Estimates causes considerable problems and wrangling as members of Council are aware. We would plead for triennial grants directly from Treasury to us since this procedure would help us to plan ahead for all our activities.29

In essence, Karanja was calling on Kenyatta to elevate universities to a ministry of its own separate from the Ministry of Education. Under the prevailing arrangement, universities and other levels of education competed for resources voted to the Ministry of Education by the Treasury. Karanja therefore felt that in order to get sufficient funding, universities needed to break free of the Ministry of Education to gain a direct vote of

27 Text of Speech by the VC, Dr. J. N. Karanja on the Seventh Graduation Ceremony 27, October 1977
28 Ibid
29 Ibid
funding from the Treasury. Although Kenyatta did not act on Karanja’s request, when
President Moi came to office in 1978, he immediately formed a Ministry of Higher
Education thus giving universities the prominence that they desired.

Karanja’s appeal for an overhaul in the budgetary policy demonstrated the critical
need for allocation of more resources to university education. A few months earlier, the
National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (NCEOP) had released a
report that had called for the parliament to pass a Higher Education Bill, which would
provide the basis and direction for a university policy. In its report, the NCEOP noted:

….there had been arguments between the Ministry of Education and
University authorities with regard to levels and methods of financing the
University. The Committee therefore suggests that a long term and
adaptable national policy on higher education within which to work out
the short-term patterns of recurrent and capital financing be formulated.
Towards this end, the Committee urges that the proposed Higher
Education Bill be processed as a matter of urgency and long-term planning
of higher education be carried out. 30

The bill proposed by the NCEOP would also regulate the establishment of private
universities, which the Committee expected would soon increase in number due to the
growing demand for university education. As noted in chapter four, the NCEOP report
recommended a very modest government investment in universities only proposing the
development of Kenyatta University College to a full university in the next ten years with
“the ultimate target of 5,000 students.” 31 At the same time, the University of Nairobi
expansion had to stop with the total enrolment capped at 6000 students. The modest
levels of university growth recommended by the Gachathi Report were inadequate to
meet the demands of the high school leavers who qualified for university admission. It

30 Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies, 1976, 85
31 Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies, 1976, 87
was therefore clear that establishment of private universities was the only way to meet demand in the wake of limited investments in public universities.

Despite the lack of a legal framework to allow the operation of private universities, Kenya had a long history of private higher education, which was provided by Christian organizations. These institutions however mainly trained the clergy and the kind of education that they offered was not recognized as being of university type. This however changed in 1970 following the establishment of the United States International University (USIU), as an associate campus of the United States International University based in San-Diego California. The establishment of the USIU as a secular university however seemed irregular since “there was no established legal machinery to facilitate opening of private universities.” According to a Ministry of Education report, the USIU began its operations after an agreement between the then Permanent Secretary of Education and the Trustees of USIU and subsequently registered as a private company by the registrar of companies. The Ministry of Education later noted that the USIU seems to have bulldozed its way to registration using the influence of the American government through its embassy in Nairobi and therefore the founding agreement between its Trustees and the Permanent Secretary “was not legally binding.” For several years following its establishment, the government seemed nonchalant, almost impervious to the existence of USIU as a private university. Although USIU had entered into agreement with the Ministry of Education when it was registered in 1970, by 1975 the Ministry officials were claiming that they were not aware of the existence of the university. This happened when Wellington Opundo, a student offered admission at USIU, requested for financial

33 Ibid
assistance from the Ministry of Education to enable him pursue his education. The Ministry turned down this request noting:

The loans available at this Ministry are strictly for students offered places at Nairobi or other East African Universities and cannot be extended to students at other institutions of higher learning which are not budgeted for. It would however be of interest to us to know where this University in which you have been offered admission is and which courses are offered at this University which according to you is situated in Nairobi, East Africa.

The claim here that the Ministry did not know about the existence of the USIU clearly shows that the government only viewed the UON and the KUC as the only legitimate university institutions in the country. More seriously, it reflected a callous attitude by the Ministry of Education towards university education due to lack of a coherent and consistent policy. It is in recognition of these failings that the NCEOP called for the establishment of a body to “guide the future incorporation of educational institutions for university education” to be known as “the Commission for Higher Education (CHE).” The parliament would approve the establishment of the CHE by including it in the proposed Higher Education Bill.

The recommendation by the NCEOP in favor of private universities fell in line with the prevailing mood in Kenyatta’s government that favored control of university financing. According to the NCEOP reasoning, private universities would fill the void created by the lack of adequate public universities following its recommendation for a very modest investment in expanding public universities. Yet, Kenyatta’s government did not embrace the recommendation to overhaul university policy and establish a second

34 KNA/XJ/1/225, “University Admissions,” contains Letter by Wellington Opundo to the Permanent Secretary of Education dated 25 September 1975
35 KNA/XJ/1/225, “University Admissions,” J. B. M Bukusi Replies Wellington Opundo on behalf of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education 3 November 1975
36 Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies, 1976, 87
university. Some aspects of the NCEOP recommendations were implemented once a new government came into office following the death of President Kenyatta in 1978.

When President Moi assumed office as President of Kenya in August 1978 in the aftermath of the death of Kenyatta, he became the Chancellor of the UON. This gave Moi the opportunity to deal with the many challenges that faced university education, which Kenyatta’s government had ignored. President Moi got a taste of the university challenges when he presided over the UON graduation ceremony in October 1978, less than two months after assuming office. During that graduation ceremony, Dr. Josphat Karanja, the Vice Chancellor of the UON informed the President that the expansion in student enrolment at both the UON and KUC that had then reached about 7,000 up from 2000 students in 1970 had severely constrained facilities. Karanja decried the mismatch between growth in student numbers and the lack of expansion in academic and physical facilities. He informed the President that due to scarcity of finances for “needed capital development in recent years and in many academic departments, we are desperately short of laboratories and teaching space and more critically our libraries are filled to the rafters.”

From the onset, President Moi had very different policy ideas on education when compared to his predecessor, Kenyatta. Reforming both the basic and higher education became the centerpiece of Moi’s administration. His personal involvement in education

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37 Text of Speech by Dr. J. N. Karanja, VC University of Nairobi at a Congregation for the installation of the Second Chancellor of the University and for the Conferment and Presentation of Degrees and Diplomas held on Friday 24 November 1978
policy distinguished his administration from that of Kenyatta who did not make any major reforms in education especially at the higher level since coming to power at independence. Moi’s hands-on style of leadership allowed him to push through the reforms that he wanted to undertake. Due to his leadership style, Moi positioned himself as a populist with his finger on the pulse of the ordinary citizen as he proceeded to address the pressing needs without minding the financial implications of his actions. Thus, unlike Kenyatta who acquiesced to the economic rationality for restricted growth of universities, Moi on the other hand was attracted to the politically expedient policy of expanding universities. Moi began his crusade to expand universities soon after ascending to office in 1978. When he presided over his first graduation ceremony at the UON in October 1978, Moi stated that his government would expand university education by creating a second university. In the subsequent graduation ceremony at the UON in December 1979, President Moi was even more vocal in justifying the need for additional universities. According to him:

> It has not escaped the attention of my government that there exists, in this republic an unsatisfied demand for Higher Education. The pace of progress and development in Kenya has been so rapid that this position has been reached far sooner than could once have been anticipated. We must recognise that even the immense achievements of this university are not enough, and that, in consequence and as I said last year, a second university should be established… At the moment the situation is that when all available places here in Nairobi have been filled, many other candidates of great potential are simply unable to attend.\(^{38}\)

> It was significant that Moi unlike Kenyatta acknowledged the scarcity of university opportunities and was willing to commit his government to finance the establishment of new universities. However, Moi’s motivations to expand university education were not

\(^{38}\) Speech by His Excellency the President Hon. Daniel T. Arap Moi at the University of Nairobi Graduation Ceremony on 14 December 1979
entirely a product of his concern for students who were denied access to university education. Rather, there was a strong desire to address regional and ethnic inequities in university education. Having served in the government since the colonial period, Moi was aware of the deep regional and ethnic inequalities in education in Kenya. Most of the regions and ethnic groups that lagged behind in higher education achievement were the geographically disadvantaged arid areas inhabited by nomadic pastoralists. Moi’s community, the Tugen, a subsection of the larger Kalenjin community residing in the Rift Valley Province were one of the pastoral groups not well represented in higher education. Moi therefore envisaged the expansion of university education as one way to provide opportunities to the disenfranchised communities in the country. During the graduation ceremony that he presided in December 1979, Moi declared his intentions to address university inequities stating:

In terms of equity and of national development, this situation must be regarded as wholly unsatisfactory. We have been giving this problem a great deal of thought and it is now hoped that in the near future the University of Nairobi will be in a position to offer external degree courses. This should open new horizons of opportunity for those who would otherwise be deprived.

The 1979 to 1983 Development Plan further articulated Moi’s plans for expansion of universities. According to the Plan, the government intended to expand university opportunities in order to curb the persistent shortages in fields such as “the Medical doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, engineers, graduate teachers.” The Development Plan too revealed that as part of its policy, the government would “place emphasis on

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39 For more on university inequalities see Kilemi Mwiria et. al, Public and Private Universities in Kenya: new challenges, issues and achievements (Oxford: James Carrey 2007)
40 Ibid
41 Development Plan for the Period 1979 to 1983 (Part 1) 482
scientific and technological fields and also explore the possibilities of embarking on an
external degree programme.”

Unlike the previous Development Plans, the 1979-1983 Plan did not focus on
reducing costs but rather enunciated the government plans to extend university
opportunities without worrying about the economic implications of the move. The silence
on how the government intended to finance its ambitious expansion plans was a precursor
to a trend that took shape under Moi. In the subsequent period, the government undertook
magnificent university expansion projects and massive student enrolments without a well
thought-out financing plan. The implication of this trend were many uncompleted
projects that came to dot the university landscape in Kenya and also overstretched
facilities that impacted on the quality of education.

President Moi’s orders for university expansion began in 1979 when he instructed
the modification of the then planned construction of a library at the UON. The project
was originally estimated to cost K£ 1, 540,000. Moi however ordered the project to be
expanded increasing the construction costs to over K£2M. More presidential decrees
followed later. For instance, in 1980 while opening a Maendeleo ya Wanawake Building
in Nairobi, Moi ordered the KUC “to expand the intake into the Home Economics
Department from the present capacity of 77 to 300 students.” The unexpected order
took the university administrators by surprise since they had not planned for the massive
expansion of facilities to cater for the expanded enrolment. Even the Treasury, as J.K

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42 Development Plan for the Period 1979 to 1983 (Part 1) 482
43 KNA/XJ/7/83, “University of Nairobi Estimates,” contains University of Nairobi Progress Report 7
August 1979
44 KNA/XJ/27/114, “Kenyatta University College General,” contains Letter by J. K. Koinange, Principal
Kenyatta University College to the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Higher Education dated 2 May 1980
Maendeleo ya Wanawake is a non-profit voluntary women's organization with a mission to improve the
quality of life of the rural communities especially women and youth in Kenya. For more information see
http://mywokenya.org/mission.html
Koinange, the Principal of KUC observed, did not step in to provide additional funding to implement the presidential order. Due to the lack of support from the Treasury, Koinange noted, “it had become impossible for interested donors to take on the project. The space available can only accommodate 60 students while the target is 300 students by 1982/83.”

The consequence of implementing Moi’s ambitious and populist decrees came at a high price as noted by W.W. Njaga, a senior official at the newly created Ministry of Higher Education. Njaga lamented the lack of adequate facilities at the UON and KUC, which were bursting on the seams in almost all the buildings.”

Njaga went on to state that the universities lacked “adequate living accommodations; the lecture theaters cannot hold the large classes that are on each campus; the laboratories are non-existent for a large number of students; and the libraries are completely inadequate.”

Limited funding from the government and the expansion of student enrolment that accelerated after Moi’s assumption of office compounded the accommodation problem. The question of overstretched facilities disturbed Njaga, who decried how “a cry for increasing the intake is growing every year.”

His Excellency, the President is from time to time directing that more students be admitted to the two institutions to train our people in various fields where we have not trained or the country is far short of qualified

KNA/XJ/27/114, “Kenyatta University College General,” contains Letter by J. K. Koinange, Principal Kenyatta University College to the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Higher Education dated 2 May 1980

Ibid

KNA/XJ/7/83, “University of Nairobi Estimates,” file contains “University Development” an Internal Memo at the Ministry of Higher Education concerning coming from W. W. Njaga, the Assistant Director of Education (UE) 16/8/1980

Ibid

KNA/XJ/7/83, “University of Nairobi Estimates,” file contains “University Development” an Internal Memo at the Ministry of Higher Education concerning coming from W. W. Njaga, the Assistant Director of Education (UE) 16/8/1980
manpower. Obviously, the University cannot accept more students than the available facilities can hold. The government must therefore accept the responsibility of providing these facilities if the University is expected to effectively train the required personnel.\textsuperscript{50}

In the face of competing demands and a nonperforming economy, it was unlikely that the government would increase its budgetary allocation to universities to adequate levels as suggested by Njaga. Since 1975, the government had failed to reconstitute the University Grants Committee (UGC), the body that planned university financing and development. Ordinarily the UGC planned university development on a triennial basis. Student expansion, therefore, was not the only reason for overstretched facilities. Lack of planning too contributed to the problem. Professor Joseph Mungai who became the Vice Chancellor of the UON after the expiry of Dr. Karanja’s term in 1979 lamented the lack of UGC for the plan period 1975/78 and 1978/81. Due to the lack of planning, “the funding was done on an ad hoc annual basis hence the accumulation of deficiencies while the student numbers have rapidly increased.”\textsuperscript{51} The salary reviews of 1975 and 1977 that awarded both faculty and nonteaching staff salary increases affected the financial health of the university. Each of these salary reviews increased the university’s operating budget by about K£500,000.\textsuperscript{52} According to the 1981/82 UON financial report, “the University did not receive any special funds to finance the revisions. The government continued to fund the University on a per capita basis applying just before the salary revisions was

\textsuperscript{50} KNA/XJ/7/83, “University of Nairobi Estimates,” file contains “University Development” an Internal Memo at the Ministry of Higher Education concerning coming from W. W. Njaga, the Assistant Director of Education (UE) 16/8/1980

\textsuperscript{51} KNA/XJ/3/219, “University of Nairobi,” Letter by VC Joseph Mungai to Vice Chairman, University Council Kipngeno arap Ngeny, March 8 1982

\textsuperscript{52} KNA/XJ/3/218, “University of Nairobi,” contains University of Nairobi Finance Officer’s Report 1981/82
To complicate an already dire situation the government’s grant to the university did not take into consideration the inflationary effects that eroded the value of the Kenyan currency. The UON financial report noted that over the period of three financial years, 1978/79 to 1980/81, the rate of capitation remained at K£1450 per undergraduate student per annum while “costs were all the time rising for practically all items.” In addition, “during the same period when the rate of annual capitation grant at £1450 remained static, our estimates were reduced by the Ministry by 17%, 14%, and 13% respectively. This only made an already bad situation worse.”

Consequently, both the UON and KUC were wallowing in huge deficits due to lack of adequate financing. A special Council meeting of the UON called in November 1980 deplored the dire financial situation facing the university observing:

On account of inadequate funding over the past five years or so, the University is facing serious financial problems and worsening deficits in basic equipment and laboratory apparatus, books, personnel, physical facilities and transport. These shortages of basic resources are seriously affecting the quality of education that the University is able to offer.

By 1981, both the UON and KUC had “an accumulated deficit of over £2M.”

Much of the financial problems that plagued university education stemmed from the incompetence of the politicians and bureaucrats who failed to find creative ways that would have weaned the universities from total dependence on government grants. Recovery of student loans for instance, would have provided the university with

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53 KNA/XJ/3/218, “University of Nairobi,” contains University of Nairobi Finance Officer’s Report 1981/82
54 Ibid
55 Ibid
56 KNA/XJ/3/221, “University of Nairobi,” contains Minutes of the Special Meeting of the University Council 20 November 1980
additional finances and reduced its dependency on the government. The government failed to put in place an effective recovery mechanism to enable former students repay their loans. Since the colonial period, the government had advanced Higher Education Loan Funds to hundreds of students pursuing their education abroad. Many of the loan recipients returned to Kenya and held high profile positions in both the public and the private sectors. Yet, most recipients defaulted on their loans, especially since the government failed to demand loan repayment from the students. The only time when the government made some efforts to go after the Higher Education Loan defaulters was when Moi became president. By this time, former Higher Education Loans recipients owed the government an outstanding Kshs. 2,967,099.90.\(^58\)

The bureaucrats at the Treasury and the Ministry of Education initiated loan recovery efforts in 1978 in response to Moi’s university expansion orders. The bureaucrats were hard-pressed to come up with ways to finance the new expansion program. In a December 1978 missive regarding loan defaulters, J. W. Ichangi, of the Treasury informed the Permanent Secretary of Education, of the need for various government departments to coordinate their efforts to ensure a successful loan recovery campaign. Ichangi expressed his belief that “nobody should be allowed to get away so easily with his own liability; indeed I would suggest that you address a personal letter to each of them individually urging them to follow ‘Nyayo’ and honour their obligations in full.”\(^59\)

\(^{58}\) KNA/XP/9/14, “Higher Education Loans Fund” contains communication between J. W. Ichangi of the Ministry of Finance and Planning and the Permanent Secretary Education dated 29/1/1979

\(^{59}\) Ibid
Essentially Mr. Ichangi wanted the Ministry of Education to take advantage of the Nyayo politics of the day to coerce defaulters into repaying their loans.\(^{60}\) Gachathi who was the Permanent Secretary of Education responded to Mr. Ichangi’s advice and drafted a generic letter to all loan defaulters asking them to repay the loan. The letter by Gachathi stated:

I feel it is necessary that I should write this letter personally to you regarding the outstanding debt owing from you as a result of a loan paid from the above fund towards your education. I find it a matter of regret that this debt should remain outstanding in our books for such a long time. It is equally a matter of concern to me that all the efforts made by this ministry to recover this money from you have only produced unfavourable response. It is hardly necessary that I should point out to you that the purpose of our Higher Education Loan Fund is to assist as many wananchi as possible to gain higher education. What is paid goes into the revolving fund and is straightaway used to help other deserving cases. Even our students at the University are receiving loans and they are required to repay them. It is particularly for that very reason that I feel I must appeal to you to honour your obligation and pay the outstanding balance.\(^{61}\)

Some of the prominent Kenyans who received Gachathi’s letter included Paul Ngei, Minister for Co-operative Development owing Ksh. 32,994.80; Dr. Julia Ojiambo, Assistant Minister for Housing and Social Services owing 26,645.75; R. M. Angaine son of Jackson Angaine who was Minister for Lands and Settlement owing 71, 235.60. Others were members of parliament including G. Mwicigi owing 14,514.45; W. A. A. Ayoki owing 6,448.65; and James Nyamweya who owed 24,426.05. In the list of defaulters also included the Mayor of Nairobi, Andrew Ngumba and David M. Mulindi a senior official of the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT). Both of them had

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\(^{60}\) Nyayo is a Swahili word meaning footsteps, which acquired significance when Moi came to power since he promised that he would follow the footsteps of his predecessor President Kenyatta. Those not following Nyayo therefore were deemed unpatriotic

\(^{61}\) KNA/XP/9/14, “Higher Education Loans Fund” contains letter by Gachathi to Loan Defaulters dated 17, February 1979
guaranteed to repay loans for their children studying abroad. Also in the list was Bishop W.E. Mulwa of the African Inland Church.\textsuperscript{62}

Gachathi’s letter was the only significant move made by the government towards recovering the Higher Education Loans. Gachathi’s appeal however did not bear the intended results since the powerful figures were not willing to repay their loans. The only recourse for the government was to seek legal redress to recover the loans. Thus, the Treasury and the Ministry of Education decided to seek the help of the Attorney General’s office “for some immediate legal action to encourage the repayment of this money.”\textsuperscript{63} However, just as in the case with other government officials, it soon became clear that officials at the Attorney General’s office were not interested in pursuing the legal option since they too were delinquent in repaying their student loans. When the Treasury and the Ministry of Education petitioned the Attorney General for help in pursuing defaulters, he delegated the responsibility to his junior officer Nicholas Wandia Raballa. Soon, Ichangi expressed his disappointment with Raballa who instead of helping pursue defaulters was frustrating the loan recovery effort. It soon dawned on Ichangi that Raballa’s was “himself a debtor of the Higher Education Loans Fund to the tune of 30,231/65.”\textsuperscript{64} Eventually the Attorney General did little to help recover the Higher Education Loans and the matter was forgotten when recovery of the University Loans Scheme became due in 1979.

\textsuperscript{62} KNA/XP/9/14, “Higher Education Loans Fund,” contains letter by Gachathi to Loan Defaulters dated 17, February 1979

\textsuperscript{63} KNA/XJ/9/29, “Loan Recovery,” 5 June 1980 contains a letter by Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education to Attorney General regarding Loan Recovery from the former University Students

\textsuperscript{64} KNA/XP/9/14, “Higher Education Loans Fund” contains communication between J. W. Ichangi of the Ministry of Finance and Planning and the Permanent Secretary Education dated 29/1/1979
When the government instituted the University Loans Scheme in 1974, it allowed students a grace period of three years after their graduation before they would begin to repay the debt. The first cohort awarded the loans completed their grace period in 1979. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Treasury had failed to put in place an effective loan repayment mechanism and instead abdicated the responsibility of loan recovery to the ineffective University Halls of Residence Institute (UHRI) because it had a database of the former students and their home addresses. 65 The assumption that the UHRI was better positioned than either the Treasury or the Ministry of Education to recover students loans was faulty since once students completed their education they moved on to find jobs outside their home locales. Having former students’ home addresses therefore would do little to track them down in case they failed to repay their loans. Moreover, the biggest employer in Kenya was the civil service followed by private corporations. It would have therefore been easier to track loan defaulters through their employers instead of their former home addresses. A study conducted by J.E. Cawley, who was a government consultant, had established that an effective loan recovery mechanism would have netted over ten million shillings in loan repayment per year.66 By delegating the important role of loan recovery to the ineffective UHRI, the government was essentially demonstrating its slowness to carry out an important task to recover loans under the University Loans Scheme just as it had done with the Higher Education Loan Funds.

65 KNA/XP/9/14, “Higher Education Loans Fund” contains a letter by J. H. Wairagu (SDS) to Permanent Secretary Education dated 18/4/1979
Until the 1980s, the Kenyan elite felt entitled to free university education, and this partly explains the difficulties that the government faced in recovering its loans. The realities of a non-functioning economy in the face of high demand and a president interested in expanding opportunities however led to a reevaluation of the ideas about university financing in Kenya. Clearly, the government had overextended its mandate by bearing both the academic and living expenses of university students. Critics were especially against the idea of the government continuing to bear the responsibility of accommodation and catering as evidenced by the recommendations of the reconstituted University Grants Committee (UGC) in 1980. The government had charged the UGC with “studying the general problems of financing education; nature of financial constraints operating on the sector as well as the impact of public pressures and expectations on the educational provisions at all levels.”67 In its report, the UGC noted that if the government policy of providing residential accommodation to all students continued, “the level of undergraduate enrolment would have to be held at 6,000 students.”68 Limiting enrolment to only 6,000 students was inconsistent with President Moi’s declared policy of expanding intake opportunities. The UGC was indirectly calling for a change in government policy to have students bear the responsibility over their own accommodation and food expenses in order to release resources that would finance the envisaged expansion.

A Sub-Committee of the university Council constituted in 1981 to investigate the problems of financing came up with a more forceful stand calling for reforms in university financing. In a report tabled before the Council, the Sub-Committee observed:

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68 Ibid
The whole crux of the matter regarding the financing of the University centres around this confused area of University functioning. Nowhere in the University Act is it stated that the University “shall make arrangements to feed, or indeed involve itself in feeding or administering students living conditions nor does the Act say that the Government will do so beyond the commitment to finance such services… The Committee would like to submit, Mr. Chairman that whoever conceived the idea of a Central Catering Unit and the mass system of feeding students at the rate of 2,000 at a time stands accused by this nation of being primarily responsible for some of the riots that we have experienced at this University. We cannot put it too strongly that mass living, mass feeding and mass anything has dangerous seed of mass hysteria and mass destruction of public and private property. It is the wish of the Committee therefore that I recommend to Council through this report, the separation of purely academic aspects of the University from the non-academic aspects.\(^6^9\)

Like the UGC, the Council Sub-Committee was calling for the discontinuation of the provision of free accommodation and feeding to students. The idea of separating academic work from accommodation and catering responsibilities was not new. The government had tried to separate both in 1974 but failed, leading to the dissolution of the UHRI in 1980. Despite the failure of the UHRI, the reasons that had led the government to seek its formation in the first place remained. As the Committee observed, the government subsidies in accommodation and catering aggravated the financial woes at the university. This situation was untenable now that the government wanted to expand university opportunities. As the Sub-Committee noted:

> In recognition of the fact that the trend the world over today is to give University education to anyone endowed with the mental and intellectual ability to benefit by it, and since the University of Nairobi was planned for an elitist system of education on the basis of Cambridge and Oxford, which is and will remain unacceptable to this country, the Committee recommends to Council that every avenue be explored to divorce the

\(^6^9\) KNA/XJ/3/221, “University of Nairobi, Council Agenda,” contains Report of the University Council on the Financing of the University of Nairobi October 1981
academic planning, management, programming, and financing from the management of Halls of Residence and catering.70

At the time when the Council constituted a Sub-Committee on financing the university was reeling under heavy financial constraints and a deficit of over two million shillings. In order to reduce the deficit the Sub-Committee recommended immediate cost cutting measures including “the suspension of all overseas sabbatical leave for 1981/82; shortening the University terms by 3 weeks; and freezing of all 178 unfilled posts for non-teaching staff.”71 The Sub-Committee calls for austerity measures were similar to those made by the government consultant, J.E Cawley, who in addition to recommending for the establishment of an effective loan recovery program and a revolving Student Loan Scheme also proposed, “restrictions on subsidized hostel accommodation allocated to students who have suitable home accommodation available within the precincts of Nairobi.”72 These recommendations testified to the profundity of the financial woes that plagued university education. It was inconceivable that the university would have to take such deep austerity measures as recommended by the Sub-Committee when it was already reeling under the burden of inadequate human and physical resources.

Various stakeholders agreed on the need for broader participation in university financing in order to free the government from some of the burden. Students and their guardians would now have to bear greater financial burden. This move would free government resources to cater for other aspects of university education such as financing the anticipated expansion programs and provision of learning facilities. The government

70 KNA/XJ/3/221, “University of Nairobi, Council Agenda” contains Report of the University Council on the Financing of the University of Nairobi, October 1981
71 Ibid
however was constrained by the realization that introducing any far-reaching cost-cutting measures that would place greater financial burden on students and their guardians was likely to generate opposition from students. This made the government hesitate on implementing any unpopular reforms. In any case, in the initial years of his rule, Moi was keen on winning popular support through enactment of populist policies. Cost-cutting measures would have undermined the populist image that he was building. In addition, Moi wanted to improve his relationship with university students who in the past had distinguished themselves for their militancy and radicalism. Moi’s government therefore hesitated from implementing the cost-cutting measures recommended by various experts for fear of antagonizing university students. Despite failing to heed the advice by experts to enact cost-cutting measures, Moi would soon find himself facing stiff opposition from university students due to his increasing authoritarianism.

The coming to power of President Moi in 1978 and the accompanying change in political climate had led to a temporary halt in the circle of violence at the university. Following his assumption of office, Moi released all political prisoners including the detained university lecturers, a development welcomed by students with “pomp and fanfare accompanied by joyous demonstrations on the streets of Nairobi.”73 Students’ celebrations, however, were short lived because barely a year into his presidency, Moi began to follow closely in his predecessor’s footsteps by becoming increasingly repressive and dictatorial. Beginning from 1979, Moi began what would become his trademark interference and rigging of elections. In the 1979 general elections, Moi barred the veteran opposition politician, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga and other perceived

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nonconformists from participating in the elections. The emerging Moi’s repression, and
the state’s refusal to reinstate Ngugi wa Thiongo into his former position of a professor
and the increasingly deteriorating university facilities, once again led to the souring of
relations between the state and the students.

The first confrontation between university students and the state since Moi took
office occurred on October 1979 in protests against election irregularities. Moi’s
government responded to students’ protests in the same fashion that his predecessor did,
by closing down the university and banning the Nairobi University Students Organization
(NUSO). 74 The University also expelled six students’ representatives for their role in
organizing the protests. 75 In March 1980, the university was closed yet again for the
second time in five months. 76 Barely a year later, in May 1981 students went on strike
again protesting over “delays in paying them the loan money (boom); alleged low
standard menu in the catering services; and the need to organize themselves to replace the
National Union Students Organisation (NUSO).” 77 As usual the government responded
by shutting down the university.

The frequent university closures reflected the emerging intolerance of President
Moi’s government to dissenting views. Just like Kenyatta, Moi had grown very repressive
in a short span of time and effectively silenced all potential sources of opposition. Those
affected by Moi’s emerging dictatorship included university lecturers following the

74 KNA/XJ/3/221, “University of Nairobi, Council Agenda,” contains Minutes of the University Council
Meeting 17 July 1980 Annexure B
75 Maurice Amutabi, “Crisis and Student Protest in Universities in Kenya: Examining the Role of Students
in National Leadership and the Democratization Process,” 168
76 Ibid
77 KNA/XJ/3/219, “University of Nairobi, “contains Minutes of the 36th Meeting of the University Council
held 10 December 1981
Students referred to their loan money as Boom because it was assumed to be free money from the
government that would not be repaid.
deregistration of their organization the University Academic Staff Union (UASU) in 1980. The UASU was formed in 1972 to champion the interests of the members of faculty at both the UON and KUC. In 1980, however, President Moi deregistered UASU for “over-indulgence in politics.” With the silencing of the potential sources of dissenting views, university students remained the only source of opposition to Moi’s rule. The state used university closures and other repressive tactics as a means to punish the students. In 1981, students released a statement condemning the university administration for resorting to arbitrary closure of the university whenever students expressed their views over pressing issues. The students observed:

“Our view is that the University is a national institution and not the personal property of the top echelon of the University administration. We hold that the Administration is entirely answerable to and only to the University Academic community and the toiling masses of the country. Hence, any arbitrary closure like the present one amounts to calculated betrayal of the aspirations of the workers and the peasants of this country who through the nose, sacrifice their meager resources to invest in institutions which produce badly needed manpower for essential service.”

In addition to frequent university closures, the state also began to use divide-and-rule tactics to undermine the comradeship of the university students by extending special favors to some students to win their loyalty. In 1980 for instance, President Moi invited twelve students from both the UON and KUC to accompany him to a trip to China.”

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The students who accompanied the President included “George Atika, Samuel Karanja, George Kimani Ndungu, Chebet Chesimet, Jessica Ida, Siemeon Mutua, Njeru Githae, Charles Okumu, Amina Abdallah Mwekwa, Joseph Mogire Nyachiyo, Sanni Wagara, Kipkrui arap Langat.”
Some of those who accompanied the President to China and other students who were patronized in various ways by the state were used as government informants at the university. As a result, a general sense of fear and insecurity pervaded the university community since the government spies employed witch-hunting and character assassination to appease their masters. The spies would fabricate stories accusing some students or even members of the faculty of being anti-government or harboring seditious materials. During university Council meetings, it became common to accuse some people of circulating seditious literature. Such accusations commonly resulted in calls for provision of additional state security personnel on campus to clampdown on the perceived dissidents. In 1980, for instance, the Council chair reported that unknown persons were circulating seditious documents around the UON and the KUC.81 The Council therefore passed a resolution that “the University should strengthen its security as much as is practicable in an endeavor to prevent this sort of activity.”82

The university went ahead to step up security as advised by the Council by recruiting more agents who spied on both the students and faculty. The divisions between pro and antigovernment forces in the university only served to make the deteriorating conditions even worse. When the students went on strike in May 1981, they released a statement condemning:

the large presence of stoolpigeons amongst us. They fight tirelessly against the interest of the majority at the University. They tail and shadow us. When they fail, they manufacture lies about us and inform their masters, intimidating and victimizing us. Why is this happening? The

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81 KNA/XJ/3/221, “Univeristy of Nairobi,” contains Minutes of the University Council Meeting 23 October 1980
82 Ibid
reason is simple. It is a reflection if not an extension of the overall repressive conduct of the state in a bid to silence Kenyans.\(^{83}\)

The students specifically noted the activities of the most notorious informants who included “David Murathe son of a wine magnate, Amina Abdulla, Philip Murgor among others.”\(^{84}\) According to the students, the government informants were not only fellow students but included some members of faculty:

The list of betrayers is incomplete without the names of Prof. Ongeri and Dr. Ongwenyi. These lackeys not only inform but also undermine student solidarity. We now know that Ongeri has been rewarded for his nefarious services with a free 10 acre plot. Joining these two is Chris Wanjala who is part of the servateurs of the notorious CIA and Nyati House.\(^{85}\)

Planting spies among students and staff at the university demonstrated the repressive and undemocratic streak of Moi’s government. More importantly, it manifested the governments disregard for the principles of academic freedom and university autonomy. Moi’s government felt a strong need to control the university just as it had done with the political elite in order to secure its hold on power. Nevertheless, as Amutabi has noted, students did not allow state repression to dampen their belief in a democratic and free nation.

The student discontentment with President Moi’s government peaked when they poured into the streets of Nairobi on August 1, 1982, celebrating an attempted military coup. In retaliation, the government closed the university for unprecedented fourteen months. The government also conducted a purge at the university to punish students for celebrating the attempted coup. Amutabi has cited an eyewitness account that claimed:

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\(^{83}\) KNA/XJ/3/218, “University of Nairobi,” contains Student Statement about “Police Seers in our Campus,” of 16/MAY 1981

\(^{84}\) Ibid

\(^{85}\) KNA/XJ/3/218, “University of Nairobi,” contains Student Statement about “Police Seers in our Campus,” of 16/MAY 1981
“two, possibly three buses crowded with students and other youths were machine-gunned on August 1st.”

Many university students lost their lives in the ensuing mop-up of the coup leaders and their sympathizers. The government arrested several students and charged them with complicity in the failed coup attempt. Those arrested included Titus Adungosi, the Chairman of the newly registered Students Organization of Nairobi University (SONU), who was jailed for ten years but died in prison in 1988. Also arrested was Peter Nicholas Oginga Ogego, a student leader, who was jailed for ten years after the courts found him guilty for sedition and for not showing remorse for his actions. The courts also found another student David Onyango Oloo, guilty of sedition and sentenced him to a five-year jail term. Ironically, Oloo’s said seditious document was an incomplete class essay.

After closing the university, President Moi went ahead to appoint a Visiting and Inspection Committee, in November 1982, which would:

Inspect and inquire into the organization, teaching, research and other related activities of the University of Nairobi and examine the possibility of decentralizing faculties into a number of campuses and the suitability of the present location of the University and recommend appropriate measures.

While making the appointment, President Moi stated his government’s intention to “dissolve the present set up of the University of Nairobi in order to create a new university which will be relevant to nation-building requirements, with no prospect

86 Maurice Amutabi, “Crisis and Student Protest in Universities in Kenya: Examining the Role of Students in National Leadership and the Democratization Process,” 169
87 Ibid, 168
88 Peter Ogego is now the Kenyan ambassador in the United States of America
89 Maurice Amutabi, 169
90 Members of the Visiting and Inspection Committee included G. K. Kariithi as Chairman, other were Prof. B. A. Ogut; S. W. Karanja; K. A. Ngeny; Elijah Enane; Kyale Mwendwa; J. K. Kionange; T. C. J. Ramtu; F. Kagwe; Mrs. R. Waruhiu; and J. M. Kamunge as secretary.
91 KNA/XJ/3/224, “University of Nairobi,” Appointment of a Visiting and Inspection Committee 10 November 1982
henceforth that it could lie in our midst as a source or instrument of destruction.\textsuperscript{92} The Visiting and Inspection Committee went ahead to rubberstamp Moi’s stated desire to decentralize the UON into four colleges “according to the related fields of study.”\textsuperscript{93} These colleges were:

Kenyatta University College which would have a college of sciences and liberal arts; Kabete College composed of the faculties of agriculture and veterinary medicine; Kenyatta National Hospital College for human medicine; and the Main Campus of the University of Nairobi which would form a College of its own either for engineering degrees or the Liberal Arts combining the faculties of Arts, Commerce, and Law together.\textsuperscript{94}

According to the Committee, each College would have its own principle, registrar, departments and Student Union. Eventually the UON ended up with six colleges including the Colleges of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences at Kabete, Health Sciences at Kenyatta National Hospital, Engineering and Architecture at the Main Campus, Physical and Biological Sciences at Chiromo, Humanities and Social Sciences at the Main Campus, and the College of Adult and Distance Education at Kikuyu Campus.\textsuperscript{95} KUC was later elevated to a full-fledged university. Still, as the Committee noted, the UON remained one institution despite decentralization:

The university remains one institution with one Chancellor, who is H. E. the President of the Republic of Kenya, one Vice Chancellor, one Deputy Vice-Chancellor, one body of professors, Senior Lecturers etc with similar terms of employment.\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{92} KNA/XJ/3/224, “University of Nairobi,” Appointment of a Visiting and Inspection Committee 10 November 1982
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid
\textsuperscript{94} KNA/XJ/3/224, “University of Nairobi,” Appointment of a Visiting and Inspection Committee 10 November 1982
\textsuperscript{95} KNA/XJ/3/224, “University of Nairobi,” contains the Second Report of the 1980-83 University Grants Committee Dr. Kiano 30 June 1984 (pg 68)
\textsuperscript{96} KNA/XJ/3/224, “University of Nairobi,” Appointment of a Visiting and Inspection Committee 10 November 1982
Clearly, the so-called decentralization was intended to weaken student solidarity by making them feel separate from their colleagues in other colleges. The decentralization of the UON as subsequent events showed, however, failed to suppress student radicalism. Inadvertently, it led to more expansion of the UON. Since some of the Colleges were too small, they felt the need to expand both the enrolment and programs in order to justify their existence.

It is intriguing that in a crisis generated by financial hardships and strained relations between the students and the government, President Moi did not relent in his quest to establish a second university. By the early 1980s, it was clear that the government was unable to provide the required financial support to UON and its constituent KUC. In its report, the UGC had petitioned the government to grant both the UON and KUC K£60 Million for recurrent needs and K£12 Million for capital projects for the period 1981/1984. The expectations were that this amount would enable the university to correct the accumulated deficiencies and finance postgraduate programs that would produce the required staff for the envisaged second university. The government, however, did not honor the UGC recommendation. Instead, it went ahead to reduce substantially the annual grants to the university. During 1981/82 financial year for instance, the Treasury approved only K£10,878,250 down from the recommended K£18,288,000. Despite the critical financial situation, President Moi, in January 1981 announced the creation of a Presidential Working Party on the Second University, which would “prepare detailed plans and recommendations on how this project should be

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98 Ibid
99 KNA/XJ/3/218, “University of Nairobi Council Agenda,” contains the University of Nairobi Finance Officer’s Report 1981/82
carried out.” While announcing the creation of the Working Party, President Moi noted that the country needed a second university since the UON had:

expanded to the point where its Nairobi Campus has reached its full physical capacity. This expansion however has not kept pace with the unending demands made of it in terms of diversified curricula and its capacity to absorb the ever-growing number of secondary school leavers.  

Unlike the previous university commissions established by Kenyatta’s government, Moi’s Presidential Working Party on the Second University under the chairmanship of Professor C.B. Mackay, was largely composed of academics. Out of the seventeen members of the Mackay Commission, there were eleven university academics and six bureaucrats. Interestingly, Mackay was a Canadian who had served as a university administrator in Canada before his appointment in Kenya. The composition of the Mackay Commission was significant since academics were more likely to favor university expansion than government bureaucrats who in the past had opposed expansion on grounds of inadequate finances. When he appointed the Mackay Commission, President Moi asked them to submit their report within six months time. The Commission did its work diligently and submitted its report to the President in September 1981. The report however did not confine itself with only matters of the establishment of a second university as contained in its terms of reference but rather proposed far-reaching reforms at all levels of learning in the country. Unlike the earlier

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100 Second University in Kenya: Report of the Presidential Working Party (Terms of Reference in Forward Section)  
101 Ibid  
102 Members of the Working Party included Chairman C. B. Mackay President Emeritus, University of New Brunswick, Canada, Deputy Chairman Prof. Douglas Odhiambo, Prof. J. M. Mungai, Prof. W.M. Senga, Prof. P.M. Githinji, Prof. D.G. Gatei, Prof. P. M. Mbithi, Prof. G. Saitoti, Prof. P. L. French, Prof. A. E. Wasunna, Dr. B.E. Kipkorir, Mr. S. S. Maneno, Mr. A. K. Kandie, Mr. Y.F.O Masakhalia, Mr. J.T. Arap Leting, Mr. H. M. Mule, Mr. S. A. Wasike
NCEOP report, which Kenyatta’s government ignored, President Moi moved very fast to implement the Mackay report. President Moi wanted to use the establishment of a second university to change the educational landscape in Kenya. The Mackay report recommendations began with primary education cycle, which was to be extended by one year from seven to eight years. Furthermore, the report called for “the restructuring of primary education to offer numeracy and literacy skills and be of practical orientation in the last two years. One examination a revamped CPE should be taken at the end of the primary education.”

It is in secondary and university levels however that the Mackay report made the most radical proposals. On secondary education, the report recommended, “the A-level segment should be scrapped altogether.” To justifying its recommendation, the Commission noted that the initial reason for the introduction of this level of education was to prepare able students for university education. By 1980s, many students were enrolled for the A levels following the proliferation of high schools thus giving “false hopes to far too many students regarding their potential capacity for university education.” The limited university opportunities caused stiff competition at A-levels with only a few students ever getting a chance to advance to university. In addition, the report accused the A-levels of causing disciplinary misalignment where the education system produced far too many arts and social science students and very few science and technology students. According to the report:

There are more Arts than there are Science students. This is in part a factor of the economics of the A level since it is less expensive to set up and run an Arts stream than a science one. There are never enough

\[103\] Second University in Kenya: Report of the Presidential Working Party, 10
\[104\] Ibid, 9
\[105\] Ibid, 8
teachers and facilities to cater for the science streams. In addition, the weak preparation in the Science subjects prejudice students against opting for Science at A level.\textsuperscript{106}

Many arts and social science students in Kenya faced a bleak future due to scarcity of jobs in their field and because the “post-secondary opportunities available to the large number of arts students after A level are fewer than those available for science students.”\textsuperscript{107} Since there were very few options for the A level leavers who failed to gain university admission, the Working Party concluded that, “the two years spent pursuing the “A” level courses appear to have been wasted.”\textsuperscript{108} Further, the Working Party accused the A-level system of fostering too early specialization and of encouraging educational inequalities. According to the report: “because of environmental, historical and other cultural reasons, there has been inequitable distribution of education opportunities and therefore some parts of the country have not had the full benefit from the A level system.”\textsuperscript{109} The issue of educational inequalities had preoccupied Moi since he ascended to power and he had spoken about the need to reform the education system in order to ensure that marginalized communities too accessed opportunities.

On universities, the report noted that the three-year period that students spent pursuing their degrees was too short. It observed that three years was not enough to expose students “to the necessary training for life which university education is expected to impart and not merely instruct in narrow field of specialization.”\textsuperscript{110} Thus, the report recommended that the duration of undergraduate education extend to four years from the then three-year period. The education system that the Mackay Commission

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\textsuperscript{106} Second University in Kenya: Report of the Presidential Working Party, 7  \\
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid, 9  \\
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid, 9  \\
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid, 8  \\
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid, 10
\end{flushleft}
recommended was eight years of primary education, four years at secondary level and four years at university. This system became popularly known as the 8-4-4 system of education and closely mirrored that of Canada, the home country of Mackay.

On the new university, the Mackay report noted that “it would be predominantly agricultural and technological in orientation” with some emphasis placed on “socio-cultural studies as the basis for appropriate use of science and technology for social and economic development.”111 The report recommended that the new university should have a total enrolment of between 3,200 and 5000 students. According to the report, the cost of establishing such a medium size university would be about K£54M. This, the report averred, was an expensive undertaking: “in Kenya the assembling of such resources is made more difficult because of a world-wide recession, high inflation, competing pressures for government expenditure and the rising level of diverse demands from a growing population.”112 The Commission however did not suggest concrete ways to finance the creation of the new university. The Report only observed, “the same spirit which has inspired local communities to contribute to primary and secondary education as well as the Harambee Institutes of Technology should be harnessed to the task of funding the new university.”113 The report however intimated that in the future students and their guardians would have to play a bigger role financing their education. This was an admission that the tradeoff for expanded university opportunities would be less subsidized training.

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112 Ibid, 65
113 Ibid, 66
Harambee Institutes of Technology were institution established by communities through self-help efforts (Harambee) and provided training in various crafts and technical fields.
The Mackay Commission report, which was accepted and endorsed by the Moi’s government, became the most important education reform document of independent Kenya. The reforms that produced the 8-4-4 system of education became the hallmark and a lasting legacy of President Moi’s administration. The implementation of the 8-4-4 system took place in phases, starting with curriculum development for primary and secondary education that began in 1982. In early 1983, the government took the first steps towards the establishment of the second university “by appointing a high powered team of seventeen Kenyans under the chairmanship of Professor Douglas Odhiambo to prepare technical papers on the establishment of the Second University.”114 In October 1983, the government formed the Directorate for the Second University with Professor Odhiambo as its Director.115 The Directorate prepared the Second University Bill and took it to parliament for debate. In May 30, 1984, Kenya officially got its second university when the parliament enacted the Moi University Act. The government acquired for the university “3000 acres of land of what was formerly a wattle tree plantation known as Nigeria Estate owned by the East African Tanning and Extract Company situated 35 kilometers south-east of the Eldoret town, off the Nairobi-Kampala Highway.”116 Moi University became fully operational in July 1984 with a colorful formal launch presided over by President Moi who also became the university’s Chancellor. In October of the same year, the Forestry Department of the UON transferred to Moi University to become the pioneering class at the University. The urgency with which Moi University became operational is amazing. The university admitted the first

114 KNA/BP/144, “Moi University Annual Report 1984/85”
115 Ibid
116 Ibid
class in 1984 even before completion of physical and academic facilities. According to the Moi University 1984/85 report:

Students were accommodated at Kaptagat Hotel 23 kilometers from Eldoret town along the Eldoret-Kerio Valley road while lectures were held under tents pitched on the lawns of the hotel, and practical courses in forestry were done in nearby forest stations… Members of staff were accommodated in various hotels and other rental houses, which were available in Eldoret town.¹¹⁷

President Moi saw himself as having a personal stake at the new university. It was significant that the university was named after the President and was located in his home province of the Rift Valley. President Moi therefore saw the creation of the university as one way of advancing his stated goal to eliminate educational inequalities. By locating the second university in the Rift Valley Province, Moi demonstrated that he would address the marginalized conditions of pastoral communities in Kenya.

It is important to note that although the Mackay report endorsed Moi’s plan for a second university, in reality, however, its plan was very modest. As already noted, the Commission recommended the establishment of a medium sized university. Yet, a medium sized university was not adequate for the kind of expansion that Moi envisaged. This was more so with the creation of the 8-4-4 education system which eliminated the A levels that had acted as a sorting and selecting mechanism for those aspiring to proceed to university. With this new system, thousands of students would be competing for university places after only four years of high school. This, as the second report of the 1980/83 University Grants Committee observed, would increase pressure for more admissions to university. The UGC noted:

With the restructuring of education to 8-4-4 education structure over 200,000 candidates will be competing for University places in 1990.

¹¹⁷ KNA/BP/144, “Moi University Annual Report 1984/85”
compared with the present 17,000. This implies that the pressure for University places in 1990 will be much higher than it has been with A-level enrolment.118

President Moi seized on this pressure to press for further expansion beyond what the Mackay report had recommended. In 1983, the government ordered both the UON and KUC to explore ways to implement Moi’s vision for external degree program. In the same year, the KUC Council announced plans to establish an external degree program, which would “start with the Bachelor of Education (Arts) degree courses, followed by the B. Ed. (Science).”119 According to the Council, the external degrees would “improve the academic status of those teachers in service as well as attracting others who are not qualified as professional teachers.”120 The external degree program formally became operational in October 1984. 121 Soon thereafter, the UON established its own external degree program at its College of Adult and Distance Education at Kikuyu Campus.

More developments took place in 1983 and 1984 that further changed the university landscape in Kenya. On December 21, 1983, the government through the Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Development, William Odongo Omamo announced plans to upgrade the Egerton College into a degree granting institution.122 Omamo also announced the appointment of a Committee that would prepare detailed plans and make recommendations on how best the government decision to upgrade

119 KNA/XJ/3/225, “Kenyatta University College,” contains Kenyatta University College Council Meeting 13 October 1983
120 Ibid
121 KNA/XJ/1/216, “Drafts,” Memo by D. M. Mbiti D.E. (T&H) to Permanent Secretary Education of 19 June 1984
122 The President who made the decision to upgrade Egerton delegated the responsibility of breaking the news to the public to the Minister for Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Development instead of the Minister for Education because Egerton was the Kenya’s premier agricultural college and the government wanted to convert it into a university specializing in agricultural fields.
Egerton College should be implemented."123 Egerton College was an agricultural
diploma granting college located in Njoro, Nakuru. The Committee solicited public views
about the decision to upgrade the Egerton College. The mandate of the Upgrading
Committee however was limited. It was meant to rubberstamp the President’s decision to
convert Egerton College to a University. As the then powerful Chief Secretary, Charles
Nyachae noted when the Committee visited him:

The question of whether Egerton College should give degrees or not is not
a matter for debate. This is because the President did announce it twice,
then the matter was taken to the cabinet and was approved. So unless the
Committee finds out for some strange reason, this cannot be implemented
for the time being, the decision is already taken.124

Nyachae also dismissed concerns expressed by some members of the Upgrading
Committee that the upgrading of Egerton shortly after the establishment of Moi
University would saturate the labor market with university graduates. According to
Nyachae, “the more graduates the country has the better because such a situation would
promote competition which is healthy and which will in the long run promote adventure
into other areas of economic pursuits.”125 Furthermore, when informed that some people
wanted the third university located in a different Province instead of the Rift Valley
Province where Moi University was already located Mr. Nyachae noted:

Committee Released in April 1984
Committee members included Samuel G. Ayany-Chairman; A.K. Kandie-V. Chairman; Prof G.M.O.
Maloiy; Prof. Leah Marangu; Prof. R.S.Musangi; Prof. P.M. Mbiti; Mr. J.M. Githaiga; Mrs Lea Kipkorir;
Mr. Ongalo; Mr. D. W. Waelime; Mr. S. A. Wasike-Secretary
124 KNA/BP/145, “Egerton College upgrading Committee” upgrading Committee meeting with Mr.
Simeon Nyachae, the Chief Secretary and the Permanent Secretary Development Co-ordination and
Cabinet Affairs, Office of the President 1st March 1984
125 Ibid
Kenya has developed a funny mentality of possessiveness and so much so that the habit has become almost institutionalized. People can say what they want but what is important is what is good for Kenya.126

Although some people had suggested that Egerton should become a university college of the UON first and then wait to become a full-fledged university, the Upgrading Committee decided otherwise. The Upgrading Committee recommended that Egerton should “take off as a full fledged university with a major responsibility of providing the nation with competent men and women trained in Agriculture, Science, and other various agriculture related professions.”127

Eventually, however, Egerton became the fourth university established in Kenya instead of the third. In March 1984, the KUC, which had served as a constituent college of the UON since 1970, got a lifeline from President Moi to become the third university in Kenya. While on a tour of the college, President Moi noted that “naturally Kenyatta University College will become its own. I hope that next year I will award degrees here.”128 The President’s wish was fulfilled the following year when on August 25, 1985 the Parliament passed Kenyatta University Act which created Kenyatta University.

In the following year, Egerton College acquired a temporary status of a constituent college of the UON with a pioneer class of undergraduate students in agriculture while at the same time continuing with its diploma work. This status changed

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126 KNA/BP/145, “Egerton College upgrading Committee” upgrading Committee meeting with Mr. Simeon Nyachae, the Chief Secretary and the Permanent Secretary Development Co-ordination and Cabinet Affairs, Office of the President 1st March 1984
in 1987 when through an act of Parliament Egerton became the fourth fully-fledged university.

The transformation of the university scene since President Moi took office was dazzling. Since his first year in office, Moi made it his duty to reform university education by expanding opportunities. Moi’s expansionism contrasted sharply with Kenyatta’s limited university development and student enrolment. Through declarations mostly made in public gatherings, Moi demanded that the UON with its constituent college, KUC should increase student enrolment and expand program offering. Additionally, he appointed the Mackay Commission, which recommended an overhaul of the education system and creation of the second university. Moi seized on the pressure created by the new 8-4-4 education system to create more universities beyond the recommendations of the Mackay Commission. Within a three-year span, between 1984 and 1987, Kenya saw the establishment of three universities. This was an amazing feat considering that Kenyatta who had ruled for fifteen years managed to establish just one university, the UON, which prior to 1970 was a constituent college of the University of East Africa (UEA). Moi established additional universities despite the financial hindrances created by an underperforming economy and in the face of other competing needs. The next chapter will investigate the trends of university expansion and its impact in the period leading to Moi’s retirement in 2002.
CHAPTER 6

ELITISM AT BAY: THE CHALLENGES OF MASSIVE EXPANSION OF UNIVERSITIES, 1982-2002

This chapter investigates the trends and stresses of expansion following the creation of additional universities by President Moi’s government. It will examine the government’s reaction to the scarcity of resources due to the massive expansion of universities and growth in student enrolment. The period under investigation witnessed momentous transformation in the education scene that began with the implementation of the 8-4-4 system of education and the establishment of additional universities. Between 1984 and 1990, Moi’s government established three additional universities to bring the total number of universities to four. During the same period, student enrolment in Kenyan universities increased from about 8,000 to 40,000 students. By 2002 when Moi left office, Kenya had six public universities, over a dozen private universities with the total student enrolment close to 60,000. This astounding expansion however did not come easy. The consequence of expansion under conditions of economic constraints was infrastructural decay at the public universities, increased student protests, overcrowding and falling standards. Private universities on the other hand experienced a renaissance as they became a destination of choice for the Kenyan middle and upper classes who were fleeing the disorder at the public universities.

The new 8-4-4 system of education and the establishment of additional universities were expensive ventures to implement for Kenya. The introduction of the 8-4-4 alone required additional “10,000 teachers, plus extra classrooms, and furniture and an extra 10 teacher training colleges to train this army of teachers.”1 This extra cost on education was happening at a time of

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economic recession when the government had “imposed a ban on the importation of consumer goods to preserve the meager foreign exchange available.” Commenting on the issue the British Times Educational Supplement noted that it was not the right time to introduce such an expensive program. The Times further observed that the Kenyan government had failed to secure support to finance the expensive program from aid organizations such as the African Development Bank, UNESCO and countries like Britain.

The assessment by the Times Education Supplement about the cost of the newly introduced 8-4-4 education system was incomplete since it did not mention the high cost of establishing universities that accompanied the overhaul of the basic education. In any case, overhauling basic education was not as expensive and complicated as establishing new universities. The government left the responsibility of constructing additional classrooms to cater for the additional one year at primary level to local communities who mobilized themselves to raise the required funds. This self-help process in Kenya is known as “Harambee” meaning, “let us pull together.” President Moi presided over many Harambee meetings that raised monies for school projects. According to the Minister for Education, Jonathan Ngeno, President Moi had done a commendable role in “leading, inspiring and mobilizing the whole nation in implementation activities of the new system especially the collection of funds for provision of the standard 8 classrooms.”

University projects, on the other hand, required massive capital compared to construction of primary school classrooms. In that case, Harambee could not sufficiently raise the amount of

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3 Ibid
4 See the online dictionary http://africanlanguages.com/swahili/ for the meaning of Harambee
5 KNA/XJ/1/200, “8-4-4 Education,” Speech by Prof. Jonathan Ngeno Minister for Education, Science and Technology on Inauguration of Standard 8 Classes on Monday 7 January 1985
money required for university projects. The government, therefore, had to step in to provide financial support to the new universities while at the same time maintaining its role as the only financier to the already established universities. With little support forthcoming from the international donor agencies, the government had to shoulder the ever-increasing education burden. By the early 1980s, the total budgetary share of Kenya on education had increased to thirty percent up from about twenty-five percent in the 1970s. Until 1984, university education consumed less than thirty percent of the education budget with basic education taking a preponderant share of more than sixty-five percent. By 1985 however, the university allocation increased to thirty-four percent while that of basic education declined to sixty percent. The increase reflected the massive capital projects that the old and new universities needed to implement in anticipation of future increase in enrolments.

The universities expected enrolment to skyrocket with the admission of the 8-4-4 students set to begin in 1990. In readiness for the expected expansion, universities had embarked on major capital projects. Some of the major ongoing projects in 1985 included the construction of hostels taking place at the Nairobi, Kenyatta, and Moi Universities. The construction of hostels was estimated to cost K£10,000,000. At the UON, another major project was ongoing to accommodate the External Degree Programme at the College of Adult and Distance Education estimated to cost K£4,750,000. Further, the UON had an ongoing construction of the Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library that required additional K£44M and a Staff Housing Project in Kileleshwa requiring further K£33M to complete. The newly elevated Kenyatta University also required massive funding approximating K£22,666,000 to begin new programs. The new Moi

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6 See *Kenya Economic Surveys* for 1984 and 1985
University too urgently needed K£5,600,000 to build required facilities such as staff houses, health clinic, and lecture buildings.\(^7\)

The financing challenges were not just limited to provision of physical facilities but also extended to human resource. As the 1984 university report produced by the Ministry of Education observed, “at both Nairobi and Kenyatta local staff proportion is less than 50% a situation which has persisted over a long time.”\(^8\) It was therefore imperative to expand the postgraduate programs in order to produce sufficient qualified teaching personnel for the universities. The 1984 university report noted the need “to embark on an intensive training programme for the local staff.”\(^9\) To put in place a postgraduate program that would sufficiently cater for the personnel needs of Kenyan universities required massive investment of the already scarce financial resources. According to the University Grants Committee, the UON required to maintain a postgraduate enrolment of about 3,500 per year in order to produce sufficient number of qualified personnel to teach at the local universities and wean the country from continued reliance on foreign expatriates. In its first report, the 1980/83 Grants Committee estimated that UON alone would require investing additional K£1,000,000 in order to increase postgraduate enrolment from 1,170 of the early 1980s to 3,500 by 1988.\(^10\) With the establishment of additional universities, it was imperative to expand postgraduate enrolments beyond the projections of the University Grants Committee. Due to the overwhelming responsibilities that faced the government, it was doubtful whether Kenya would be able to produce the required postgraduates who would enter into the teaching career at the local universities.

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\(^7\) KNA/XJ/1/216, “Drafts,” contains 1985/86 University Development Estimate released by the Ministry of Education on 12 September 1985
\(^8\) KNA/XJ/1/216, “Drafts,” contains Local University Education Section, 1984 Annual Report
\(^9\) Ibid
In addition, universities faced another burden of paying their faculty sufficient salaries commensurate with their qualifications. The ever-increasing number of students had put additional pressure on the workload of university lecturers who were now finding less time to engage in research. In their report, the University Grants Committee had noted the declining budgetary vote on research, which affected the research productivity at the universities.\footnote{KNA/BP/166, “Education General,” contains the First Report of the 1980-1983 University Grants Committee} Despite their increasing workload, the salaries for members of faculty had remained depressed due to inadequate pay raises. The government had appointed several salary review committees for university workers but had failed to implement their recommendations. Furthermore, the government had awarded civil servants higher pay increases than that awarded to members of faculty following the salary review of 1980. Then, the government had awarded a salary increase to civil servants that ranged “from 20-39 percent as compared to a range from 10-37 percent for the university salaries.”\footnote{KNA/XJ/1/216, “Drafts,” contains Memorandum Presented by Prof. J. K. Ng’eno the Minister of Education Science and Technology to the Cabinet on the Review of University Salaries and Terms and Conditions of Service-1985}

The Asinjo Committee appointed by the UON Council in July 1980 to look into the issue of university staff salaries decried the discrepancy in pay increases awarded to faculty members and the civil servants. The Committee reminded the government of the long time it takes to train university lecturers thus the need to remunerate them well. The Committee stated that, “it takes a minimum of 21 years to train a university lecturer; 7 years of primary education, 6 years of secondary, 3 years for Bachelor’s degree, 2 years for masters and at least 3 years for the Ph.D. Only a small percentage of University lecturers take this minimum period of time.”\footnote{KNA/XJ/3/218, “University of Nairobi Council Agenda,” contains report of the Asinjo Committee Appointed by the University Council on 17 July 1980 to Review the Staff Terms and Conditions of Service} Due to the low salaries paid to the faculty members, the public universities were “unable to recruit academic
staff, particularly at senior levels.”\footnote{KNA/XJ/3/218, “University of Nairobi Council Agenda,” contains report of the Asinjo Committee Appointed by the University Council on 17 July 1980 to Review the Staff Terms and Conditions of Service} Earlier, the 1980-1983 University Grants Committee report, had too, noted the need for well-compensated faculty: “the University should be allowed to pay salaries, which will enable it to recruit and retain qualified staff.”\footnote{KNA/BP/166, “Education General,” First Report of the 1980-1983 University Grants Committee} By 1985, even the Minister for Education, Jonathan Ngeno, acknowledged the dire salary situation for faculty members at the Kenyan universities. In a memorandum requesting for a review of faculty salaries presented to the Cabinet in 1985, Ngeno admitted the gravity of salary situation in Kenyan universities where the annual average salary was only K£3,120 compared to K£ 5564 in other universities in Africa. Ngeno further noted that Kenyan universities are:

Increasingly finding it difficult to attract highly qualified academic staff especially in the professional and science based faculties both from local and foreign sources. Retaining the staff in the institutions has become almost impossible as more and more academic staff resign to look for greener pastures elsewhere.\footnote{KNA/XJ/1/216, “Drafts,” Memorandum Presented by Prof. J. K. Ng’eno the Minister of Education Science and Technology to the Cabinet on the Review of University Salaries and Terms and Conditions of Service-1985}

Thus, Ngeno appealed to the Cabinet to approve an additional university expenditure of K£4,643,789 per annum, which would go into awarding salary increases for university staff.\footnote{Ibid} Despite the increase of 1985, the faculty salaries in Kenya continued to remain depressed for the rest of President Moi’s term in office. The unsuitable terms and conditions of service for university staff contributed to brain drain with many faculty members leaving the country for greener pastures abroad while others ditched the teaching profession for more lucrative careers.

Until 1980s, most of the qualified staff at both the UON and KUC were British expatriates who came to work in Kenya under a special program known as British
Expatriate Supplementation Scheme (BESS). Under the BESS scheme, the British
government supplemented the salaries of the British nationals working as faculty
members in Kenya to attain the same levels of compensation as those of Britain. By
1980, there were thirty-five British nationals in Kenya serving under the BESS
program.\textsuperscript{18} Reliance on the BESS program that had been in place since the colonial
period stifled the academic attainment of Kenyans since the government was not under
much pressure to invest in postgraduate training of its local citizens.

Despite the challenges, the government continued to put in place measures that would
support the anticipated student enrolment increase. In the 1983/84 financial year the government
spent K£\(1,360,000\) on capital projects at the UON and KUC and a further “K£550,000 as part of
phase one development.”\textsuperscript{19} In addition, in 1984 the government made an exceptional gesture to
help the UON resolve its deficit crisis. The government stepped in after an appeal by Professor
Philip Mbithi, the UON Deputy Vice Chancellor, to the Ministry of Education. In his appeal,
Mbithi decried the financial situation at the university resulting from:

Financial practice in the University since 1975 and 1977 when the government
did not provide a grant to cover two salary provisions to meet the additional
expenditure from any current yearly allocation, thereby throwing the budget out
of step, introducing cash flow problems, and making our accounts show a deficit
at the end of each financial year. The situation has progressively got worse with
creditors and suppliers who are no longer willing to defer payment for any
significant length of time and a cash flow situation where they cannot be paid on
time.\textsuperscript{20}

The financial woes at the UON were aggravated by the long fourteen-month closure of
the university following the coup attempt of August 1, 1982. According to Mbithi, the Halls and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{18} KNA/XJ/1/216, “Drafts,” Memorandum Presented by Prof. J. K. Ng’eno the Minister of Education Science and Technology to the Cabinet on the Review of University Salaries and Terms and Conditions of Service-1985
\item \textsuperscript{19} KNA/BP/144, “Ministry of Education Science and Technology,” Ministry’s Annual Report, 1984
\item \textsuperscript{20} KNA/XJ/3/220, “University of Nairobi,” Letter by Prof. Philip Mbithi, Deputy Vice Chancellor Administration and Finance University of Nairobi to PS Education dated 22 March 1984
\end{itemize}
Catering department had amassed huge deficits during the 1982/83 financial year because in the absence of students “the University did not receive the loan money of Ksh. 25 per student although members of staff, like anybody else in the university received their salaries throughout the year.”

Mbithi observed the gravity of the deficit situation amounting to over two million shillings:

The auditors have presented their report and they indicated their very serious alarm and pointed out that if the University was a private company it may be under receivership, arising from pressure from its creditors. We cannot therefore overemphasize the urgency for government to assists us in erasing this negative situation since the original problems were not caused by the current university administration, and current budgetary allocations through estimates makes it very difficult to effect any savings.

The government responded positively to Mbithi’s plea and in the budgetary allocations for 1985 provided the UON with “K£2.2 M to wipe out old debts.” This amount however did not wipe out the entire deficit since by then the UON had an accumulated deficit of K£2,467,012. The huge deficits at the UON however were partly due to mismanagement at the institution. A 1983/84 financial audit report for the UON by the Price Waterhouse audit firm noted that there were “numerous internal accounting weaknesses detected including incomplete procedures for controlling use and operation of transport and overspent votes amounting to K£1,472,250 that have not yet received final approval from the Council.”

The report showed that the financial woes at the UON were partly due to corrupt practices by some of the university administrators. Despite the financial difficulties, the UON lacked an efficient financial oversight mechanism to allow for effective utilization of scarce resources. The financial mismanagement at

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21 KNA/XJ/3/220, “University of Nairobi,” Letter by Prof. Philip Mbithi, Deputy Vice Chancellor Administration and Finance University of Nairobi to PS Education dated 22 March 1984
22 Ibid
23 KNA/XJ/1/216, “Drafts,” G. H. Munyi of the University Division at the Ministry of Education on January 22 1985 commenting on Audited Accounts of the University of Nairobi for the year ended 30/June 1984
24 Ibid
the UON mirrored the situation at the Ministry of Education where an ineffective student loan recovery mechanism had rendered university education a bottomless pit that the government funded without making any recoveries.

Despite the administrative ineptitude, the government enacted some expenditure control changes in 1984 by consolidating the Ministries of Basic and Higher Education to form the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.\(^{25}\) The other main development was in the reorganization of the universities. Towards the end of 1983, the government created the University Students Accommodation Board (USAB) as a parastatal body that would provide “accommodation and recreational facilities for the students of the University.”\(^{26}\) According to D. M. Mbiti, the Director of Education in charge of Technical and Higher Education, the establishment of the USAB would “make it possible for the University to avoid the problems which have been experienced in the past over the idea of combining the students’ welfare with the academic matters.”\(^{27}\) The creation of the USAB was one of the recommendations of the Visitation and Inspection Committee formed in 1982 to recommend the reorganization of the UON after its students participated in demonstrations in support of the attempted military coup of August 1, 1982. The USAB, however, was similar to the disbanded University Halls of Residence Institute (UHRI). In 1974, the government had created the UHRI and charged it with the responsibility of administering university residential halls and catering unit. The government expected the UHRI to seek finances from outside sources and relieve it the burden of putting up halls of residences for the ever-increasing number of students. The UHRI however did not succeed in its mandate and the government disbanded it in 1980. The responsibilities of

\(^{25}\) *Kenya Economic Survey* 1984

\(^{26}\) KNA/XJ/3/215, “Nairobi Council Members Meeting Agenda and Minutes,” Loose Minute by D. M. Mbiti Director of Education Department of Technical and Higher Education to the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education dated 23 May 1985

\(^{27}\) Ibid
accommodation and catering then reverted to the university. One of the reasons for the failure of the UHRI was due to the refusal of the UON to make a legal transfer of its properties including land and halls of residences to the institute. In the second attempt to separate accommodation and catering from the university’s academic role, still questions lingered over the ability of USAB, a government parastatal, to deliver its responsibility effectively. By the mid-1980s, ineptitude and mismanagement had become the hallmark of state controlled bodies. The USAB faced similar fate as its predecessor the UHRI since parliament in 1985 failed to debate and pass a bill that would have established it as a government parastatal. Without a legal sanction, the USAB would not execute its mandate effectively. It could neither own nor purchase property or enter into contracts. \(^\text{28}\) Later, Mr. M. Hyder, the Chairman of the USAB complained that the failure by parliament to debate and pass the bill was due to sabotage by some powerful forces.

Accordingly:

- Despite the wide support for the Board its legitimacy has remained elusive. Members of the Board have at times expressed the fear that perhaps some key persons at high levels are responsible for this suspicious state of affairs. This is a matter the Board feels very strongly about and would appreciate if it would be discussed with open minds. \(^\text{29}\)

- Hyder worried that the “lack of legality leaves the Board vulnerable to misgivings and manipulation in a manner detrimental to the original intentions.” \(^\text{30}\) Hyder and others should have known that the proliferation of universities would make the role of the USAB unattainable. It was inconceivable how the Nairobi headquartered USAB would run the halls of residences and provide catering services to universities that were now scattered all over the country.

Additionally, the new universities just like the UON did not want to give up the halls of

\(^{28}\) KNA/XJ/3/215, “Nairobi Council Members Meeting Agenda and Minutes,” Special Joint Meeting of the University of Nairobi Council and Kenyatta University College Council held on 23 May 1985

\(^{29}\) KNA/XJ/3/203, “University Students Accommodation Board” Report by M. Hyder Chairman of the University Students Accommodation Board (USAB) on the Board’s Legal Status dated 23/12/1985

\(^{30}\) Ibid
residences, which they viewed as a crucial component to the university. With the university administrators clearly hostile to the USAB, Hyder resulted to making vociferous appeals to the government to intervene on its behalf. In one of his appeals, Hyder enumerated the advantages both the university and the government would derive from a functional USAB. According to Hyder, the creation of an independent USAB would:

1. Enable the Board to get financed directly from the Treasury or Ministry of Education, Science and Technology without imposing a strain on funds set aside for research undertakings
2. Would relieve the University administration of the burden of grappling with students welfare problems, a development which would enable the University authorities to concentrate on academic matters and research.
3. Would bring the government closer to the students as the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Finance are represented at the Board by the Permanent Secretaries of the two Ministries.31

Hyder’s appeals, however, were all in vain, as the USAB suffered the same fate as the earlier UHRI. Like the UHRI, USAB had little control over the property that it supposedly ran. Without the legal powers that it needed, USAB could not qualify for loans to enable it raise capital for construction of additional halls of residences. Subsequently, accommodation and catering problems persisted.

In the past, the living conditions at the university were near luxurious compared to what evolved following the expansion project that accelerated beginning in 1985. Previously any attempts to have students share rooms were met with hostility and would normally provoke students to protest. All that however began to change in 1985 with the introduction of double-decker beds in the halls of residence. When students at Kenyatta University protested against the introduction of double-decker beds, the administration retorted: “Double Deckers were brought in as a way of preparing ourselves for the extra 192 students who were admitted this year. I am

31 KNA/XJ/3/203, “University Students Accommodation Board” Report by M. Hyder Chairman of the University Students Accommodation Board (USAB) on the Board’s Legal Status dated 23/12/1985
sure no one of you will say that these 192 students should not have been admitted so that you may get a room to suit your needs.”

The unequivocal response signified the looming transformation of the students’ living conditions. Until then, the government had provided university students with all their provisions including taking care of their tuition and living expenses. This situation however was unsustainable with the explosive expansion of universities and enrolments underway. It was time to make loan recovery more efficient and to reduce government subsidy on university education.

When President Moi presided over the graduation ceremony at the UON in 1985, he made it clear to the Ministry of Education that it needed to step up efforts to recover loans from former students. Moi noted the government intention to reform the existing loan scheme to create a revolving fund sustained by loan repayments from former students. According to him:

> It has been observed that whereas it has been possible for graduates working in the government and its parastatals to repay their loans, the system has not been able to cover those who have obtained work elsewhere. The government departments charged with the duty of recovering these loans are therefore required to make the system more effective so that everyone owing the government is made to pay irrespective of his area of work. In the future, it will be necessary to operate this loan scheme on a revolving-fund basis so that the funds generated are used to assist an increasing number of students in our expanding university education system.

While the remarks by the President demonstrated his commitment to democratizing access to university education, it also exposed the dilemma of finding resources to finance the expansion. Moi’s sentiments about establishing a revolving fund were not new. In fact, that was the initial intention of the government when it created the university loans scheme in 1974.

Implementation of the program however had proved problematic. In the 1980s, a new urgency to

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32 KNA/XJ/3/203, “University Students Accommodation Board,” Memo from USAB to All Kenyatta University Students of 24 October 1985
33 Text of the Address by D.T. arap Moi President and Chancellor of the University of Nairobi at the 14 Congregation for the Conferment and Presentation of Degrees and Diplomas on Monday 25 November 1985 reproduced in the University of Nairobi Annual Report 1984/85
look for alternative sources to finance university education had arisen with the ongoing expansion program. The government had stated in the Kenya’s Development Plan for 1984-88 that, “university students would be required to pay for the cost of their studies.” Clearly, a new era in university financing was eminent.

Additionally, the uncertain job prospect was looking gloomier for graduates. In light of this situation, President Moi, during the same graduation ceremony, cautioned university students that careers in the government sector were on decline and they should look for alternative jobs elsewhere:

I would also like to remind the graduands (sic) and their parents that time will come when we shall not have wage employment for everyone who wants it. This task is not for government alone, I expect the private sector institutions to play their part by employing as many of you as they can. This means that we must explore and fully exploit all the opportunities available in the economy for self-employment. Time has also come when parents who are owners of successful businesses or farms should employ their children in such enterprises.

Although unemployment had begun to appear in the 1970s, the government had continued to provide employment to a vast majority of university graduates to a level of saturation. By the 1980s, Kenya was in the throes of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) mandated Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) which included demands to downsize the civil service. By asking university graduates to seek jobs in the private sector, Moi was cautioning of the harder times that lay ahead for job seekers.

In the meantime, more university reforms were underway in preparation for the anticipated expansion. Among the long overdue reforms included the creation of a legal framework to allow for the establishment of private universities. Both the Gachathi report of

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34 Kenya Development Plan 1984-1988, 152
35 Text of the Address by D.T. arap Moi President and Chancellor of the University of Nairobi at the 14 Congregation for the Conferment and Presentation of Degrees and Diplomas on Monday 25 November 1985 reproduced in the University of Nairobi Annual Report 1984/85
1976 and the Mackay report of 1982 had recommended the establishment of a Commission for Higher Education, which would register and regulate public and private universities. The government however had delayed the creation of the recommended Commission for Higher Education, a situation that adversely affected private universities more than public ones. Due to lack of a regulatory body, Kenya neither had a legal framework to register and regulate private universities nor a quality control and evaluation mechanism for universities. Lack of clear rules of operation strained the relationship between the government and the United States International University (USIU) the only secular private university operating since 1970. As stated in chapter five, most of the private higher education institutions in the country were religious affiliated colleges that specialized mostly in theological studies and did not offer university-type education. The 1970s witnessed the emergence of the USIU, which was an associate campus of the United States International University, based in San Diego, California. Since its inception, the USIU had a complicated relationship with the government because it was not an officially recognized university. It however continued to operate as a registered company without experiencing any interference from the government. Suddenly, in 1982, the Ministry of Higher Education began to charge that the USIU provided substandard education. The Ministry claimed to have received public complaints questioning the integrity of the university. Among other charges, the Ministry noted:

a. General complaint by the public who considered the institute as lacking in many ways pertaining to sound education
b. Existence of inadequate facilities for proper learning. The institute is accommodated in a residential building at parklands.
c. Unnecessary and excessive advertisements of the school where their brochures portrayed pictures of building such as Kenyatta International Conference Centre and the Law Courts buildings which have no relation to the University.36

To indicate the seriousness of the matter, Joseph Kamotho, the then Minister for Higher Education reported his Ministry’s misgivings about the USIU to the Cabinet. In addition to the above charges, the Minister informed the Cabinet that the USIU had “very few core teaching staff, but relies mostly on lecturers from the University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University College and some of the working people in Nairobi who work on part-time basis.” Since these were serious charges, a cabinet meeting held on February 4, 1982, directed the Ministry of Higher Education “to carry out a thorough study of the University and submit a report back to the cabinet.”

The Ministry of Higher Education constituted a Study Committee on the USIU and charged it with the responsibility to:

1. Study in detail the historical background of the University
2. Examine the legal framework and its validity as an institution of higher learning,
3. Examine in detail the scope of its-curriculum and its relevance in Kenya, staffing and facilities, accreditation & certification, staff/student ratio and contact hours, fees charged & services provided.
4. Examine entry requirements versus entry requirements of similar institutions in Kenya and to consider, evaluate, and comment on its role, contribution and place within Kenya’s higher education system.

The Study Committee presented its report to the government in December 1982. In its report, the Study Committee recommended that the USIU should improve its staffing ratios, and reorganize its curriculum and administrative machinery. In addition, the Committee noted, “the USIU did not specify absolute academic standards since the criteria for admission was based

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Members of the Study Committee were Professor Philip Mbithi Deputy Vice Chancellor UON as Chair. Other members included Dr. Francis Kibera, Dr. Daniel Kiminyo, Dr. Joshua Akonga, Mr. David Mbiti, Chief Inspector of Schools, Ministry of Higher Education, Chacha Ogwe Education Officer Ministry of Higher Education and Sippuria Biketi Education Officer in the Ministry of Higher Education.
more on the ability to pay than on sound academic background of the candidates.”

The Study Committee also expressed its dissatisfaction with the methods of teaching and learning at USIU noting: “students were underexposed and under-contacted.” To address this issue the report recommended that the USIU should employ a core of permanent staff with defined scheme of service and in addition initiate a staff development scheme. At the time, out of twenty-one lectures, only three were permanent members of faculty, the rest were hired on part-time basis. The Committee also noted the inadequacy of the library facilities. According to the Committee, “the seating capacity at the library was about twenty instead of ninety for a population of about three hundred students.” The Committee also noted “the lack of strength in curriculum offering at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.” As the Committee further affirmed, “in an ideal situation course description must identify course content in each of the subject mentioned in the curriculum but this was lacking at USIU.” Further, the Study Committee criticized the methods of examination at the institution, which they noted was improper. Lastly, the Committee lamented the high rate of turnover of the USIU directors. According to the Committee, “since its inception the USIU’s post of Director has changed hands nine times. This way, there cannot be a degree of continuity neither can the University create an

43 Ibid
44 Ibid
academic sub-culture of its own.”46 Thus, the Committee recommended that senior administrative staff be offered suitable terms of service and their positions to have a tenure of “at least 5 years as is the case in the USA universities.”47

When presented with the report, the USIU refused to acknowledge the deficiencies revealed by the Study Committee. Instead, the USIU management went on the defensive and became critical of the report. According to D.M. Mbiti, a senior official at the Ministry of Higher Education, the USIU management dismissed the Study Committee report arguing that it had “failed to understand the American system of education and also the magnitude of the academic workload at the Nairobi Campus.”48 Mbiti also alleged that the American and the Canadian embassies were applying pressure on his ministry regarding the report on USIU. According to Mbiti, “the Embassies have expressed concern at some of the findings, statements, and recommendations in the report.”49 Mbiti further expressed his concern about the prevailing uncertainty over the recognition of the degrees offered by the USIU, and insisted that the government would only recognize the USIU degrees if the recommendations contained in the Study Committee were implemented.

Due to the firmness of the Ministry of Higher Education, the USIU had to implement the recommendations of the Study Committee despite protestations from the American and Canadian embassies. In a follow-up meeting to monitor the progress in implementation of the report held on April 25, 1984, the USIU management informed the government representatives that they had taken steps to increase full time lecturers who by then were seven up from three in 1982. In

49 Ibid
addition, the USIU reported progress in efforts to introduce subjects and reading materials relevant to Kenyan situation. The USIU management also informed the government of progress made in research and in library facilities. At the time, they noted that a consignment of 10,000 volumes of books awaited collection at the Mombasa Port. They also noted an improvement in journal collection. Lastly, the management noted that they had taken action to improve recreational facilities and promised to remove any inaccurate claims carried in advertisements by the university. The government had accused the University of making inaccurate and misleading claims when advertising itself to the public.50

Despite the progress noted, in September 1984, Mr. C. K. Kasina, the acting Director of Technical and Higher Education, in response to an inquiry by A. Abdallah, the Deputy Governor of the Central Bank, noted:

The Ministry would like to clarify that the degrees awarded by the University are not comparable to those of the University of Nairobi or any other Government Institution. The United States International University, Nairobi is affiliated to its mother campus, which is located in San Diego, California, from where it draws its academic authority. This is the reason why it is impracticable to draw comparisons to our local institutions.51

The sentiments by Mr. Kasina highlighted the lack of quality control and evaluation mechanism for universities in Kenya than on the quality of education offered by the USIU. Kasina therefore hoped that “the proposed Council for Higher Education would be constituted soon in order to streamline the development of higher education institutions in the country. Part of the task for the Council will be to grant accreditation to the private universities in the republic.”52

50 KNA/XJ/1/216, “Draft,” contains Record of the Follow up Meeting between the officials of the Ministry of Education and the USIU administrators held on 24-4-1984
52 Ibid
The USIU was not the only institution that experienced lack of recognition. When the Catholic Higher Institute of Eastern Africa, which had hitherto trained Catholic clergy, sought to convert to a university in 1984, it too faced the same difficulties due to the insistent by the government that it would not recognize its degrees. In a letter to the Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference of East Africa, the Ministry of Education official D. M. Mbiti stated:

It is noted that the first intake of students for your degree program started on 3rd September 1984. It must be noted however that before the legal instruments for establishing private degree awarding institutions in Kenya is established by the government, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology does not have any power to recognise or give authority to your institutions to confer degrees.53

The challenges that faced private universities betrayed the government stated commitment to allow for the entry of private players in university education. In 1984, the then Vice President, Mwai Kibaki, insisted that the government had no “restrictions on the setting up of private universities in the country. The system is open on this issue and there is no intention that this will change.”54 Kibaki’s sentiments echoed the official position stated in the Development Plan for 1984-88, which noted, “the government will encourage the private sector to establish additional private colleges and universities but will ensure that they conform to the educational objectives stipulated by the proposed Council for Higher Education.”55 It is not until 1985, when Kenya achieved an important milestone in creating a favorable environment for the operation of private universities and consequently in expanding access following the enactment of Universities Act, CAP 210B, which created the Commission for Higher Education (CHE), “as

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54 KNA/BP/145, “Egerton College upgrading Committee,” Egerton College upgrading Committee meeting with the Vice President Hon. Mwai Kibaki 2nd March 1984
55 Kenya Development Plan 1984-1988, 152
the regulatory agency for planning and coordinating the growth and expansion of universities in Kenya.”

When the parliament debated the bill establishing the CHE in 1985, most members favored expansion of universities not only as a practical way to satisfy demand but also as an economic and politically expedient policy. During the debate, Members of Parliament noted that the creation of CHE would allow the establishment of more private and public universities and thus prevent the exodus of students to universities abroad. According to the members, “students going abroad are said to bring back foreign ideologies, wives and cultures.” This statement resonated with the many instances that President Moi had blamed political dissidents as brainwashed people who imitated western ideologies blindly. Establishment of local universities was therefore a means of protecting Kenyan youth from ideological indoctrination in foreign lands. More importantly, the enactment of the act created a legal framework that would allow university expansion and therefore help meet the social demand for university education while at the same time help to save the country the foreign exchange spent on overseas education. As the Minister for Education stated, “currently we spend more than KSH350M worth of foreign exchange for university education overseas. This state of affairs appeared no longer justifiable more than twenty years after independence.”

With the establishment of the CHE, the government had finally implemented the recommendations of both the Gachathi report of 1976 and the Mackay report of 1982, which had called for a university regulatory body. The President appointed Professor Joseph Mungai, whose six-year term as the Vice Chancellor of the UON had expired, to serve as the first Chief

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56 Laws of Kenya, Chapter 210B, Universities Act 1985
58 Speech by Hon. J. K. Ng’eno Minister for Education, Science, and Technology at Moi University Inaugural Seminar on the role of a new university in a developing country held in December 1985
Executive of the CHE. Among some of the immediate responsibilities that needed the attention of the newly created CHE included coordination of the “1986/87 admissions into the local universities; inspection of Egerton College; inspection and registration of private universities; and equation of degrees and certificates.”\(^59\) In the end, however, CHE’s main role became that of regulating and registering private universities. The Joint Admissions Board that represented all public universities took over the role of admitting new students into public universities in 1986. The establishment of a Commission for Higher Education (CHE) in Kenya was an important step by the government to ensure that private universities were registered, regulated and recognized. The creation of the CHE also ensured maintenance of high standards by private universities and put an end to arbitrary application of the law that had previously haunted the USIU. Consequently, a few years later, private universities surpassed public universities in prestige due to their superior quality of education.

The policy of expansion under Moi involved both the establishment of new universities and increasing student enrolment in both the old and new universities. By the 1986/87 academic year, Kenya had an undergraduate student population of 8,730 while the postgraduate students were 1,402.\(^60\) The undergraduate population however was soon to double following President Moi’s intervention when he ordered the Joint Admissions Board to increase the number of students in 1988 admission at the four public universities. Initially, the Joint Admissions Board had planned to admit only 4,000 students out of the 13,832 students, who had attained the minimum qualification for university admission at the end of their A-level exam. This decision

\(^{59}\) KNA/XJ/3/183, “Department Meetings,” contains Minutes of the Meeting of the Officers in the Department of Technical and Higher Education of 5 October 1984

\(^{60}\) An Overview Report of National Manpower Survey 1986-1988 Prepared by Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment (Released in October 1989) 87 The undergraduate students were distributed as follows: UON, 5, 567; Kenyatta University, 2,791; Moi University, 263; and Egerton University College, 109.
caused uproar from the excluded students making the government to step-in directing the admissions board to increase its intake. The admissions board responded by admitting 3,000 more of the qualified students to bring the total intake in 1988 to 7,000. This however left about 6,000 qualified students without university admission, which created much furor from those who were left out. Ever a populist, President Moi responded swiftly to diffuse the crisis by directing the Joint Admissions Board to admit all the qualified students. The Presidential directive led to double admission in 1988 since the Joint Admissions Board had already completed the selection of the initial 7,000 students. Because of the double intake of 1988, the total enrolment at the now four universities shot to 18,883 undergraduate students and 1,934 postgraduate students.

In just one year, the number of undergraduate enrolments more than doubled.

The massive expanded university system called for more resources. According to Rees Hughes and Kilemi Mwiria, the recurrent budget for higher education between 1983 and 1987 “increased over one and one-half times… Similarly, in 1983-84, the development budget for higher education was allocated only 31.6 million Kenyan shillings. By 1986-87, the figure was 220 million Kenyan shillings.” The resources required to support and sustain university expansion were enormous. Although it had expanded universities, the government did not intend to continue with the subsidies, as was the case in the past. Since the introduction of the loan system in 1974, the government intended the beneficiaries of university education to bear a proportion of the cost of their education. Initially, the government wanted the loan money to go into paying for the accommodation and other upkeep expenses while it continued bearing the

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tuition cost. With Moi’s plans for massive expansion the government changed its financing plans so that students could bear even greater share of their education expenses including tuition costs. This policy, which came to be known as cost-sharing, was expounded in the 1984-88 Development Plan, which noted, “those who benefit will be required to pay for the cost of their studies.”

The cost-sharing policy became a subject of discussion by the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond appointed in 1986 by Moi and charged with the task of “reviewing the national education and training for the next decade and beyond and to make recommendations thereto.” In May 1986, Moi added another mandate to the team by requesting it “to make proposals on cost sharing as a strategy for financing education and training in the country.”

The Presidential Working Party released what came to be popularly known as the Kamunge Report in 1988. The Kamunge report was sent to parliament in April 1988 for debate after which it was adopted and formed the basis for the government policy document called the Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988 on Education and Training for the Next Decade and Beyond.

Among the most significant recommendations of the Kamunge report included the resolution that the government would continue to expand university opportunities to meet the high demand. The policy document went ahead to observe that the expansion “would be done in a cost effective

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64 *Kenya Development Plan 1984-1988*, 152
65 *The Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond 22 March 1988*
Members included James M. Kamunge a Director of Education as the Chair. Others included: Prof. Bethwell Ogot, Dr. Benjamin Kipkorir, Prof. Philip Mbithi, Dr. Julia Ojiambo, The very Rev. John Gatu, Bishop Ndingi Mwana Nzeki
66 Ibid
67 *Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988 on Education and Training for the Next Decade and Beyond*, 1
manner through optimum utilization of current public universities and the development where necessary of existing institutions as university institutions.”68

The Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988 also adopted the Kamunge report recommendation that “universities should admit undergraduate students as day students in order to expand access to university education and for the purposes of providing university education in a more cost-effective way.”69 Although the idea of admitting non-residential students had been floated in the past as a way of dealing with the shortage of accommodation at the universities, this was the first time that it was given serious consideration. The Sessional Paper noted that admitting day students together with the introduction of the self-sponsored program “would enable the government to utilize available financial resources to expand university education and to provide adequate tuition facilities, equipment and staff to sustain the quality and relevance of university education.”70

In the meantime, university expansion continued unabated. In 1989, the government converted the Jomo Kenyatta College of Agriculture and Technology (JKCAT) into a constituent college of Kenyatta University. Before becoming a constituent university college, JKCAT offered diploma programs in agriculture, science and technology. In the 1988/1989 academic year, the four public universities admitted 7,400 undergraduate students. Although this was less than the 13,832 admitted in the previous year, the total enrolment at the four universities increased to 21,635 from 18,883 in 1987/1988.71 The same pattern of growth in enrolment continued when in the 1989/90 academic year the four public universities admitted 7,700

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68 Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988 on Education and Training for the Next Decade and Beyond, 30
69 The Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988 on Education and Training for the Next Decade and Beyond, pg 32 and The Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond 22 March 1988, pg 76
70 The Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988 on Education and Training for the Next Decade and Beyond, pg 32
71 Kenya Economic Survey 1989, 148
students to bring the total enrolments to 27,572. In just four years, student enrolment at public universities had increased from 8,730 in 1986/87 to 21,632 in 1989. Commenting on the explosive growth of university enrolment in the 1980s, Hughes and Mwiria stated:

The “opening up” of the upper echelons of the educational system represents an abandonment of the 'elitist' ethos that has served as the foundation of the formal educational system in Kenya since its inception. In its stead is a “populist” orientation that vigorously supports a broader diffusion of education. There is, perhaps, less concern with the maintenance of standards than with the accessibility of schooling to more members of the community.72

The university expansion during the first decade of Moi’s presidency is a contrast to that of both the colonial era and Kenyatta’s presidency. While the colonial and Kenyatta’s government conceived universities as preparing elites for leadership, Moi wanted to diffuse the benefits of university education to a wider cross-section of the society. Moi conceived expanding university opportunities as a means to legitimize his leadership by distributing educational rewards to more Kenyans. Moi was aware, as Hughes and Mwiria have observed that not only does expansion of university access perpetuate the illusion of equity but it also helps to prevent higher education from becoming a domain of the privileged. University expansion therefore presented Moi with an opportunity to garner greater popular support while at the same time ensuring that the communities previously neglected by the elitist university system were given opportunities of access.

The phenomenal growth however demanded innovative ways to finance university education. Although the Kamunge report and the Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988 had laid new and innovative university financing policy, implementing the plan proved difficult. As already mentioned, Kenya had a deeply embedded culture of free university education. It was politically risky to try to change this culture. It was especially difficult to convince Kenyan students who

72 Rees Hughes and Kilemi Mwiria, 219
had perfected violent protests as a means for expressing grievance to begin sharing education costs with the government.

Student protests began afresh soon after the release of the Sessional Paper No. 6 in 1988, when the government announced a phased implementation of the cost-sharing plans. The implementation of the policy would begin with the discontinuation of student allowances. Due to student protests, the government beat a quick retreat on its intention to implement cost-sharing plans clarifying that “students will continue to receive their allowances, as before.”

The government backed down because it did not want to risk a face-off with students, which probably would have led to the closure of the universities thus disrupting learning as had happening following the prolonged closure of the UON in 1982. The prolonged closure of 1982 had disrupted the university calendar and created a backlog of first year students that the universities were still struggling to clear. The quick retreat by the government on the issue of student allowances prompted Hughes to observe that “Kenya's history is rich with ineffectual attempts to cost-share; these are scenarios characterized by rhetoric that generally melted with the first sign of opposition.”

Hughes also had in mind the university loan scheme that continued to award students money for their accommodation and upkeep without much effort by the government to make any recoveries once they completed their studies. By 1990, former students owed the government a staggering 75 million shillings, a figure described by the UON student newsletter, the Anvil, as “a conservative estimate considering the persistent annual complaints by the Auditor General, Mr. D. Njoroge, about scant information, poor records, and general inefficiency in the administration of the scheme resulting in a high defaulting rate.”

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73 Rees Hughes and Kilemi Mwiria, 226
75 “All that glitters is not gold,” *The Anvil* 24 November, 1990 p. 8
By 1990 the government had began to feel the urgency to reform the loan’s scheme to make it more effective due to the increasing financial demands occasioned by the high rate of university expansion. In June 1990, Peter Aloo Aringo, the Minister for Education, made the oft-repeated announcement that the government would step up efforts to recover loans from former students in order to “launch a revolving fund for students to borrow from to finance their university education.” Although the government had made the same pronouncement several times before, this time, however, the situation was about to change greatly requiring a more proactive action following the admission of the first 8-4-4 cohort to university in 1990/91 academic year. The 1990/91 admission was significant in two ways. First, it marked the end of the old 7-4-2-3 education system and its last cohort to gain university admission and the beginning of the first 8-4-4 university admission system. The old 7-4-2-3 students would take three years in university while the 8-4-4 would spend four years. Secondly, the admission of students from two different education systems forced further expansion of university enrolment. During the 1990/91 academic year, the four public universities and their constituent colleges admitted over 20,800 undergraduate students. Of these, 12,147 students were selected from the final output of the Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education KACE examination under the old system; while 8,690 were selected from the first KCSE candidates in the 8-4-4 education program. Because of this high admission, the total enrolment almost doubled to 40,000 students. If resources were constrained in the past due to increasing enrolment, the 1990/91 admission made the situation even worse. It was time for the government to act.

In order to provide the required resources to support the enormous increase in student enrolment, the government desperately needed donor aid. Although the government had stepped

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77 *Kenya Economic Survey 1991*, 158
up university expansion program, it had since the 1980s experienced huge balance of payment difficulties that prompted it to seek donor support from the IMF and the World Bank. The situation was a repeat of the 1970s when biting oil crisis and other economic owes forced the government to turn to the Bretton Wood institutions for budgetary and development aid. In the 1970s, the donor institutions had demanded that the government reduce spending as a precondition for aid. In the late 1980s and 1990s, the donor community placed more stringent conditions than in the past known as the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPS). The SAPs required the government to undertake structural policy reforms, which would lead to less spending and balanced budgets. In 1990, the government began implementing the structural reforms by restructuring the civil service to make it lean and efficient. In the same year, in anticipation of a huge increase in enrolment and already reeling from the effects of limited resources, the government appealed to the World Bank to provide financial support to the four public universities. The government requested the World Bank to provide the four universities with a loan of “US$ 752,035,097 to be distributed as follows: Egerton University, $81,384,900; Kenyatta University $133,592,419; Jomo Kenyatta University College for Agriculture and Technology, $76,763,870; Nairobi University, $233,136,000; Moi University, $227,157,908.”

The amount requested was astronomical but it reflected the depth of financial need facing the government. In order to convince the World Bank to support such an expensive program, the government had to provide a compelling case for its need. In the proposal, the government noted the big strides made to democratize access to university education and provided justification for the ongoing expansion. According to the government:

78 For more on SAPs see Shentayanan Deverajan, et. al., *Aid and Reform in Africa: Lessons from ten case studies*, (Washington DC: The World Bank, 2001)
79 “All that glitters is not gold,” *The Anvil* 24 November 1990 (pg 8)
Enrolment has increased from 600 students in 1964/65 and 3,000 in the 1970/71 academic year to 40,000 in the 1990/91 academic year. The student enrolment is expected to double to 80,000 by the year 2000. For the period 1982-87 an average of 51% of the number of students completing secondary school education were qualified to enter University but only an average of 26% were ultimately admitted. In the 1990/91 academic year, the public universities will admit an unprecedented 20,000 students. However, this represents only about 12% of those qualified to join university. This year alone a total of more than 170,000 A level and 8-4-4 competed for the 20,000 university places available in the public universities. The juxtaposition of expanding numbers and limited finance place a tremendous challenge for the development of universities.  

In its request for support from the World Bank, the government provided a detailed justification for the ongoing expansion, which was to blame for strained resources. According to the government, university expansion was necessary because it would help to “prevent higher education from becoming a domain of the privileged by broadening access to university education.” In addition, the government stated that expansion would help in dealing with the problem of brain drain since many of the students who left the country never returned. Expansion also would help the country to save the much-needed foreign exchange. By 1990 the country incurred US.$ 30,000,000 annually on overseas education. Expansion would reduce the astronomical amount of money spent on overseas education since “some students may be accommodated who would otherwise pursue their education overseas.” Furthermore, expansion was necessary because it would address the inadequacy of highly trained personnel such as “doctors, engineers, scientists, and teachers.” Other benefits expected to be derived from expansion included “high productivity of the citizenry, an enhanced sensitivity to health and fertility issues, institutional development, political democratization and a general ability to learn

81 Request to World Bank for Financing University Education in Kenya, June 1990, 1 (Accessed from Ministry of Planning Library, Nairobi)
82 Ibid, 4
83 Ibid
84 Ibid
and respond.” Lastly, the government justified expansion on the basis that although it was an expensive venture, in the long run it would yield some economies of scale since it would “compel universities to more fully utilize existing facilities as well as current staff.”

The government noted its sensitivity to maintaining high standards at the universities despite the expansion, which some critics had argued, would contribute to dilution of the quality of education. The government observed:

To maintain and even improve upon the high quality of education in Kenya the universities have collectively designated “Centers of Excellence” to the individual universities. The Centers of Excellence are intended to develop institutional capacity in the designated areas to high quality undergraduate and graduate education research. Whereas similar programmes will continue to be offered across universities, Centers of Excellence will provide academic and research leadership in the designated areas. Examples of Centers of Excellence are Agricultural Sciences at Egerton; Education at Kenyatta; Medicine at the University of Nairobi; and Environmental Sciences at Moi University.

In response to the request, the World Bank indicated that the government had to implement fully the structural adjustment program including the restructuring of university education to qualify for any support. Specifically on universities, the World Bank called for “cost-sharing and limiting expansion of enrolments.” The World Bank was especially critical of the expansion, which it noted had “produced an unhealthy relation in the labour market giving rise to the inverted pyramid where there are too many university graduates without technical skills.” The World Bank recommended that Kenya should have “one graduate to every 5 technicians to 30 artisans (a ratio of 1:5:30)” The demands of the World Bank meant that the

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86 Ibid
87 Ibid, 5
89 Ibid
90 UON School of Journalism, The Anvil Newsletter, 26 February 1991
91 UON School of Journalism, The Anvil Newsletter, 26 February 1991
government had to implement the unpopular cost-sharing measures articulated in the Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988. The situation was critical due to the mounting budget deficits that plagued universities. By June 1994, the four public universities had an accumulated total debt of “1.32 billion shillings of which 636 million was in the recurrent vote and 686 million in the capital vote.” Now that the government desperately needed the donor support for its universities, it had to face the situation and implement the unpopular policies.

In early 1991, the government announced that it would limit the number of students admitted in that year at the four universities to only 10,000 students. As a result, the 1991 admission was half that of 1990 when the university admitted 20,000 students. When making the announcement, The Minister for Education, Mr. Oolo Aringo, chided Kenyans “to drop ‘the enroll university syndrome and enroll their children in the mid-level technical institutions like polytechnics and institutes of technology.’” The Minister’s remarks were an astounding policy reversal by a government that had, for years labored to dramatically expand university opportunities in the country. The Bretton Woods institutions insistence on preconditions or conditionality for aid began to alter government efforts toward expansion of access to university education.

In a step to implement the cost-sharing reforms insisted upon by the Bretton Woods institutions, the government in 1991 appointed a Committee headed by Professor Shem O. Wandiga, tasked with the role of “reviewing the university students’ loan scheme in a bid to get rid of some problems it has faced since it was started in 1974.” In its report, the Wandiga Committee noted, “there is no justification on using public funds to pay for students personal

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93 UON School of Journalism, The Anvil Newsletter 26 February 1991
94 Ibid; Professor Wandiga was the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration at the UON
95 “University Loan Plan Reviewed” The East Africa Standard 26 June 1991, 1
The Committee thus recommended the formation of an independent body, delinked from the universities and the Ministry of Education, which would be “responsible for lending the money and recovering it from students.” The body formed had to perform its role more effectively unlike the Ministry of Education that had “failed to recover money loaned to students for the last 16 years.” The Wandiga Committee also endorsed the recommendations made in 1988 by the Kamunge report calling for cost-sharing in the provision of university education and the removal of personal allowances popularly known as “boom”.

The government moved with speed to implement the Wandiga recommendations, and in the process partially implemented the Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988. Among the reforms implemented included restructuring the loan application process by applying means testing to arrive at the most needy students who required government support. Previously, students qualified for equal amount of loan regardless of their social-economic background. Instead of applying for loans from the campuses as was previously the case, students now would apply for the loans from their home districts and have the loan application forms endorsed by the local chiefs/administrators. The government expected the local chief to know the people living in their precinct and thus was in a better position to authenticate the validity of the information in the application form asking about the student’s social-economic status. The other reforms instituted included the abolition of free meals and the introduction of a Pay as you Eat (PAYE) system that required students to purchase their food in a cafeteria system. Lastly, the government abolished the unrestricted stipend the “boom” which had essentially been part of the loan advanced to students but had all along been treated as free cash. Otieno notes that students used

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96 Ibid
97 “University Loan Plan Reviewed” The East Africa Standard 26 June 1991, 1
98 Ibid
the “boom” to finance leisure activities including buying music systems, cinema, and other forms of entertainment. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the government paid students a “boom” of 5,000 shillings per semester.\footnote{Wycliffe Otieno, “Student Loans in Kenya: Past Experiences, Current Hurdles, and Opportunities for the Future,” JHEA/RESA 2, No. 2, (2004):78}

Predictably, university students would not accept the erosion of their privileges. They responded with bitter protests. President Moi responded to student protests by adopting a less radical approach than that recommended by the Wandiga and the earlier Kamunge Committee, by directing the reinstatement of the “boom”.\footnote{“Role of the World Bank in higher education saga,” \textit{Nation}, 30 July 30, 1995} Moi’s intervention was a political move intended to show his sympathy with the students and to divert blame for the painful austerity measures, which he attributed to the conditionality of the “insensitive” donors. The reinstatement of “boom” however was a temporary measure since eventually all the government policies were implemented. Despite reinstating “boom” the government stood its ground on the question of cost sharing and introduced a yearly fee of 6,000 shillings per student and a Pay as You East (PAYE) cafeteria system.\footnote{\textit{Kenya Development Plan 1994-1996}} Although the 6,000 shillings fee was minimal amount compared to the value of the government subsidy per student, still it constituted an important step towards implementing the cost sharing policy. The government, however, did not act on the Wandiga Committee recommendation for the creation of an independent body that would administer a revitalized student loans scheme.

The piece meal reforms implemented in 1991 did not satisfy the World Bank, which refused to release the loan money that the universities desperately needed. The World Bank demanded that the government should stop university subsidies completely and to charge tuition at market rate of 120,000 shillings per year and stop subsiding catering service that enabled the

\begin{tabular}{l}
\textbf{101} “Role of the World Bank in higher education saga,” \textit{Nation}, 30 July 30, 1995 \\
\textbf{102} \textit{Kenya Development Plan 1994-1996} \\
\end{tabular}
students to purchase affordable food.\textsuperscript{103} The Bank also demanded an effective loan recovery mechanism and a follow-up of all past defaulters. Due to the ineffectiveness of the loan recovery mechanism, more than half of the loans had since fallen under the “Limitations of Actions Act, which bars legal action against civil debts not recovered within six years of falling due.”\textsuperscript{104} By 1993, the Ministry of Education had recovered only 250 million shillings out of nearly 2 Billion shillings loaned to students since 1974. Majority of those who were repaying the loans were teachers and civil servants. The World Bank, however, had an uncompromising stand that the government had to recover all loans from former students.\textsuperscript{105} Certainly, the government could have done a better job by putting in place an efficient loan recovery mechanism. However, requiring students to pay the full cost of their education as the World Bank demanded was unrealistic and politically risky.

The consequence of the university expansion at a time of economic downturn was deterioration of facilities. In a media interview, Professor Jalang’o Akello of the department of Electrical Engineering at the UON observed that academic standards had deteriorated drastically over the years due to inadequate learning materials; and that libraries at all the universities were congested and did not have enough books. Furthermore, Akello noted that more than 100 students were now sharing laboratories, which had been built for 35 students, while “lecturers have been forced to buy pieces of chalk as the university has failed to supply them at the right time.”\textsuperscript{106} Another lecturer, Mr. Bichage Ndemo of the Department of Literature stated that “it takes us as long as two weeks to duplicate course outlines for students.”\textsuperscript{107} The appalling conditions at public universities affected the morale of the members of faculty and other staff. As

\textsuperscript{103} “Which Way Ahead for Universities,” \textit{Nation Editorial}, 14 January 1995
\textsuperscript{104} “New Bill Seeks to Enhance Recovery of University Loans,” \textit{The East African} 26 June-July 1995,
\textsuperscript{105} “New Body to Recover Loans,” \textit{The Standard}, 23 June 1994
\textsuperscript{106} Athanus Tuiyot, “Dons attack low salaries” \textit{The Standard}, 28/1/1995
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid
David Aduda pointed out in a newspaper commentary, “university lecturers were disillusioned by poor remuneration, lack of facilities including office space, inordinate promotion and haphazard appointments.”

With Kenya’s return to multi-party politics in 1992 in the face of numerous grievances among academic staff such as low salaries, political interference, and dilapidated facilities members of the academia seized on the new open political climate to form the Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU). According to Dr. Korwa Adar, the founding Chairman of UASU, the academics needed an organization that would “advocate for academic freedom, the depoliticization of the academic institutions, the promotion of academic standards and development, and the advancement of the general welfare of its members.”

Although Moi’s government had succumbed to local and international pressure to allow multipartism, the dictatorial structures of the single party system remained in place, allowing the government to continue with its repressive ways even in a politically liberalized environment. Thus, the government refused to allow the registration of the UASU. The refusal by the government to register UASU revealed Moi’s long-standing apprehension and suspicion of academics. This was the second time that Moi had banned an academics organization. The first time was in 1980 when he deregistered the original UASU. When he deregistered UASU in 1980, Moi was busy consolidating his rule by enacting repressive measures to transform himself into an absolutist president. The internal pressure and the changed global political climate following the end of the cold war had forced Moi to embrace pluralistic politics in 1992. Even then, the immense constitutional powers that he had amassed to himself sustained Moi’s dictatorship. It is by use of

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108 David Adunda, “Apathy grips State varsities,” *Nation* 30 March 1996
his immense powers that Moi denied UASU registration. In denying UASU registration, the Registrar acting on behalf of the government stated:

The Union is used for unlawful purposes and as such peace, welfare and good order in Kenya would otherwise be likely to suffer prejudice by reason of the Union's registration as a Trade Union by persons purporting to be officials of the Union who have deliberately contravened Section 29(A) of the Trade Unions Act.\textsuperscript{110}

In order to pressure the government to register their organization, the lecturers of the four public universities went on strike on November 29, 1993 until September 28, 1994.\textsuperscript{111} It was the first time in Kenya's history that the academics collectively paralyzed the universities. The government responded to the lecturers strike by arrests and other forms of intimidation. The government was in firm control of universities since the President served as the Chancellor of all public universities. Additionally, the Vice Chancellors of public universities were presidential appointees and therefore served the interests of the government. Thus, doing the bidding for his superiors, the Vice Chancellor of the UON wrote a warning letter to the striking lecturers stating, “the University . . . will not hesitate at any time, to invoke all necessary authority, including the state security machinery to enforce the law under which it is empowered to operate, especially within the university precincts.”\textsuperscript{112} The UON was the oldest and the largest university in Kenya and therefore the hotbed of lecturers’ politics. The government went ahead to deploy security personnel within the premises of the public universities as the pressure to register the UASU intensified. The state also resorted to divide-and-rule tactics by recruiting some of the academics to work for the state security service to spy and report on their colleagues and union leaders. According to Korwa, “many of the so-called academic loyalists or pro-establishment academics

\textsuperscript{110} Cited in Korwa Adar, 188
\textsuperscript{111} Korwa Adar, 189
\textsuperscript{112} Quoted in Korwa Adar, 194
frustrated the efforts of their colleagues on the issue of the registration of the UASU.”¹¹³ After an eleven-month standoff, the government crushed the lecturers strike when it dismissed the entire leadership of UASU from their positions. According to Korwa, “a total of twenty-three lecturers were dismissed. Most of them are now involved in either part-time teaching in private universities or in research. A few have acquired employment outside the country.”¹¹⁴

In addition to loss of qualified and experienced faculty, the lecturers strike led to the disruption of university calendar with the students taking inordinately longer time to complete their programs. Stephen Mutula succinctly summarized the conditions of public universities in Kenya in the 1990s when he affirmed that they had “deteriorated in all dimensions- facilities, quality of teaching, and research, library facilities, overcrowding in halls of residence, student riots, and staff disillusionment and activism.”¹¹⁵ Mutula further observed that “the lecturers who have questioned the university administration or the government on the fast deteriorating conditions at the universities have had their promotion deferred; some have been jailed on framed charges; while others have been removed from their jobs.”¹¹⁶

The expansionist policies of President Moi did not just affect the public universities but also private universities as well. Paradoxically, the declining conditions at the public universities catalyzed the expansion of private universities and contributed to their rising prestige and stature as centers of excellence. Wycliffe Otieno and Daniel Levy have remarked on the growing importance of private university universities in the 1990s. According to Otieno and Levy, the lecturers’ strike of 1993-1994 “left a serious dent in the reputation of public universities.”¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Korwa Adar, 194
¹¹⁴ See Foot Note 70 on Korwa Adar, 194
¹¹⁶ Ibid
Consequently, private universities turned into “credible alternative for professors as well as for students.” As they concluded “disorder of public places contributes also to more modest class families being willing to pay the fees for non-elite private places.” That Kenyans were now ready to pay astronomical fees in private universities spoke not just about demand but also a shift in attitude about the government’s role in financing university education. Due to the failure of the government to provide adequate resources to public universities, there was a growing public view that welcomed private financing in provision of university education.

The most important institution in rehabilititating the image and credibility of private universities was the Commission for Higher Education (CHE). The establishment of the CHE in 1985 provided the government with a framework to regulate and evaluate the private universities. The CHE demanded high standards from private universities and placed stringent accreditation standards. A 1994 Nation Newspaper report on private universities noted the role played by CHE in ensuring that private universities maintained high standards:

The Commission inspects the institutions and ensures that they have enough and qualified teaching staff at the right facilities and enough land. The stringent standards demanded by the Commission ensured that only those institutions which were committed to offering high quality education were licensed. Those who have the appropriate facilities are given a letter of interim authority and can start operations and then start improving so as to get a charter to award their own degrees. The Commission has set the pace in Africa and is already assisting Zimbabwe to set an accreditation system for private universities.

Prior to the establishment of CHE, no institution of higher learning in Kenya had authority to offer its own degrees. All private universities derived their authority to prepare for degree work from foreign universities. The first private university in Kenya to gain accreditation from CHE and therefore a charter to award its own degrees was the Seventh Day Adventist

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118 Ibid 13
120 “The force behind the sound footing,” Nation 7 May 1994, 13

By 1999, five private universities had received full accreditation from the CHE. Besides the UEAB, the private universities accredited in the 1990s included: Catholic University of East Africa awarded a charter in 1992, Daystar University in 1994, Scott Theological College in 1997, and United States International University in 1999. Before their accreditation, most of these universities specialized in religious studies but diversified to secular fields following the liberalization of higher education in 1985.

The accreditation by CHE raised the profile of the private universities leading to more public interest. In addition, the public saw the “orderly” private universities as offering better quality education than the “chaotic” public universities. According to Nation Newspapers:

Private universities have come of age earlier than had been expected. For a long time they lived in the shadow of public universities which were then powerful, rich and maintained high standards. However unpredictable semester dates caused by massive double intakes that were not matched by expansion of facilities and staff led to the gradual eroding of the academic standards in public universities. The lecturers strike that threw the universities’ academic programmes into disarray dealt state universities the final blow. This put private universities in the frontline as they are now being called upon to fill the void created by the mess in state universities. The principals of the private universities all report without exception of a high number of first year applicants who qualified to join public universities but would prefer to join private institutions and pay fees which cannot compare with public universities.

The attractiveness of private universities also stemmed from their affordability compared to overseas universities. They offered “quality education at about 10% of what it would cost overseas. So students can get the best international education locally at a cost ranging between Sh.70,000 and Sh.140,000 while they paid over sh. 1 Million if they went abroad for the

121 “Baraton Leads while the others follow,” Nation, 6 March 1993, 13
122 Commission for Higher Education http://www.che.or.ke/status.html
123 “Private Varsities beat Expectations,” Nation 7 May 1994, 13
same.”124 Due to the improving quality of education at private universities as compared to that of public universities, employers began to “prefer them over others when it comes to job opportunities.”125 It was thus clear that public universities were losing to private universities in so many ways. The government decided to act to clear the mess at public universities, demanding that they streamline their activities and “conduct themselves in a businesslike manner by adopting a more entrepreneurial approach to running their activities.”126 Universities were now expected to take measures to prevent escalation of further deficits including engaging in revenue generation activities, sound financial management practices and stringent expenditure controls.127

The most significant management reform for universities was the new expectation of revenue generation. Henceforth, universities had to begin looking for ways to generate their own revenue in order to reduce dependency on the government. The more important reform however, was the implementation of the 1988 Kamunge report recommendation and the Sessional Paper No. 6 on university financing. Although the government had initiated some piecemeal reforms in 1991 that led to the introduction of a 6,000 shillings tuition fee per annum for every university student, still the World Bank demanded the implementation of more concrete reforms. Thus, in 1994 President Moi appointed a task force headed by the Chief Executive of the CHE, Professor Joseph Mungai, to review the needed university reforms.128 The Mungai Committee report whose contents were never released to public made some crucial recommendations that led to some far-reaching reforms of Kenya’s public universities. Most of the Mungai Committee recommendations, however, rehashed the earlier recommendations contained in the Kamunge

124 “Private Varsities beat Expectations,” Nation 7 May 1994, 13
125 Ibid
126 “Varsities told to seek financial self-reliance,” Nation 3 September 1994, 15
127 Ibid
report and the Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988. This time though there was some urgency on the need to implement the recommendations. The government wasted no time in the implementation of the Mungai Report. In 1995, the government “increased the tuition fee for university students from 6,000 shillings to 8,000 shillings.”

In addition, the government finally abolished the student stipend “boom” just as the parliament passed the Higher Education Loans Board Act in July 1995, which created the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) that took over the operations of the former university loan scheme. The HELB would now decide who qualifies for higher education loans, dispense the loan money, determine the interest, and undertake recovery efforts from the former students.

Unlike in the past where every student automatically received loans, the new HELB would use means testing to determine the most eligible cases to qualify for student loans. In order to ensure compliance in loan repayment the Higher Education Loans Board Act required:

…employers to inform the board of any loanee employed by them within three months and then deduct any amount they will be advised by the loans board every month. Failure to deduct and remit the money will attract a five percent penalty of the money due to the board."

The Higher Education Loans Board Act exempted the new body from the Limitations of Actions Act, which in the past had frustrated loan recovery. The parliament wanted HELB to become efficient in loan recovery in order to create a revolving fund thus become less reliant on government grants.

In the short run, however, the Board would receive “public funds granted through parliament but will be expected to raise and generate income through endowments,

129 “New Bill Seeks to Enhance Recovery of University Loans,” The East African, 26 June-3 July 1995
130 “Drastic changes in varsity loans fund,” The Nation, 25 July 1995,1
131 Ibid
132 Ibid
donations, and investments. It will have power to borrow from financial institutions but it will have to insure all its debts.”

The Ministry of Education officially formed the HELB in August 1995 with Professor Chacha-Nyaigotti Chacha, the Principal of the Kisii University College, as its Chief Executive. By establishing the HELB, the government had made an important step in fulfilling the World Bank condition of creating an effective loan recovery mechanism. Soon, in September 1995, the World Bank made an announcement stating that it would release 2.7 Billion shillings to support public universities in Kenya. After the release of the loan, Simeon Lesirma, the Permanent Secretary for Education, expressed his optimism that “support by the World Bank coupled with the new financing strategy by the government will enable the universities to balance their operating budgets in future.” According to Lesirma, “proper management of the student loan scheme was one of the bank’s conditions for releasing the loan. The recent establishment of the board and the restructuring of the students’ loan scheme has received positive response from the bank.”

After the formation of HELB, the government announced a raft of new measures that anchored cost sharing in the university financing policy thus:

Out of the KSH120, 000 ($2,180) the government estimates to be the current cost of putting a student through university, it will pay out Ksh70, 000($1,270) directly to the universities in the form of grant. Of the balance the government will provide a maximum of ksh42, 000 ($763) in the form of a loan to each student to be repaid with interest. Each student is then expected to pay a further ksh8000 ($145) as a direct tuition fee. Under the new scheme the government loan will not be automatic as with the previous university loan. Students will have to fill application forms that will enable the HELB to discover the applicant’s or his family’s financial status and this information will be used to determine the amount lent to each student.

133 “Drastic changes in varsity loans fund,” The Nation, 25 July 1995, 1
134 Quoted in “World Bank to lend Sh2.7b,” Nation 14 September 1995
135 Ibid
136 “Tough New Fees Plan for Kenyan Varsities, but will it work?” The East African 7-17 October 1995
Despite the cost sharing, the government would continue to pay a substantial portion of the student tuition costs while the HELB provided loans to the needy students who could not afford the fees charged. The government provided the HELB with an initial Ksh880M ($16M) that it would disburse in form of loans. Initially the HELB faced difficulties in identifying the genuine cases of need due to student falsification of their social-economic status in the loan application forms. This made politicians begin demanding the disbandment of the body, accusing it of favoritism in the manner that it awarded loans.\footnote{137} Over time, however HELB overcame these difficulties and became more successful in loan recovery effort than its predecessor had been.

One effect of the cost-sharing reforms in university education was a slight decline in student enrolment in the middle of the 1990s. The World Bank had demanded the government to control the number of students admitted in public universities to prevent the kind of escalation in enrolment seen in the previous years. Beginning from 1991, the government limited the first year intake to about 10,000 students per year.\footnote{138} Due to this limited intake, the total enrolment in 1996/97 academic year dropped to 37,973 from 40,065 students enrolled in 1995/96.\footnote{139} Nevertheless, the decline in enrolment was only temporary.

Despite the cost sharing measures, universities were still saddled with the burden of limited resources due to the declining government budget allocation to education.\footnote{140} The cost-cutting measures that the government had implemented in the 1990s required public universities to become more independent from government financial support by generating their own

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\item \textsuperscript{137} See Muliro Telewa, “Raila attacks varsity board,” \textit{Nation} 24 November 1996; “Loans board comes under fire: Members call for its disbanding,” \textit{Nation} 6 November 1996
\item \textsuperscript{138} Kenya Development Plan 1994-1996
\item \textsuperscript{139} Kenya Economic Surveys of 1995, 1996, and 1997
\item \textsuperscript{140} See Crispus Kiamba, “Privately Sponsored Students and Other Income-Generating Activities at the University of Nairobi,” \textit{JHEA/RESA} 2, No. 2, (2004) 53-77
\end{enumerate}
revenue. Thus, it became important to implement one of the 1988 Kamunge report recommendation that “Public universities should also be encouraged to enroll qualified self-sponsored students.” Self-sponsored students paid the full cost of their education and did not receive any form of government subsidy. In 1995, the Kenyatta University became the first public university to admit self-sponsored students to pursue postgraduate diploma in education. Soon other universities began to admit self-sponsored students.

The introduction of self-sponsored students (also known as the parallel program) created two streams of students in public universities. The first stream constituted students admitted through the regular program by the universities Joint Admissions Board from the list of the best performing students in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (KCSE). The second stream was the self-sponsored students (parallel program) who paid the full cost of their education and did not receive any form of government subsidy including the HELB loans. The self-sponsored students had attained at least a grade of C+ in the KCSE, which qualified one for university admission but had failed to gain entry into the regular program due to stiff competition. Introduction of the parallel program opened an opportunity to access university education to thousands of qualified students who had in the past failed to gain entry due to the stringent admission policy. With the introduction of self-sponsored program, the elitist policy had come full circle since both the top students and average ones had opportunities. Universities no longer were a preserve of the brilliant cream of high school graduates.

Further expansion in universities had happened in 1994 when the government elevated the Jomo Kenyatta University College of Agriculture and Technology (JKUCAT), hitherto a

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141 The Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond, 22 March 1988, 71
143 HELB began awarding loans to self-sponsored students in 2008
constituent college of the Kenyatta University to a full university called the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT).\textsuperscript{144} In 2001, Moi also elevated the Maseno College, formerly a constituent college of Moi University to a full university.\textsuperscript{145} The introduction of the parallel programs coupled with the increase in universities reversed the trend of declining enrolment that had begun to set in since 1996. In 1998/99 academic year, university enrolment showed an upward trend, reaching 42,913 undergraduate students and 3,288 postgraduate students. This number excluded self-sponsored students. The total enrolment in private universities was 4,043.\textsuperscript{146} Kilemi Mwiria and Njuguna Ngethe have provided statistics regarding the enrolment in parallel programs at the public universities noting:

Since the 1995 inception of the Kenyatta University self-sponsored postgraduate diploma in education, over 2,000 students have benefitted from it... The University of Nairobi had a parallel-degree enrolment of 6,410 students from 1998 to 2002; Moi University had 3,799; JKUAT, 605; Maseno 230 and Egerton 328 students.\textsuperscript{147}

By the time Moi left office in 2002, parallel programs had become an essential component of Kenya’s public universities, benefitting thousands of students who otherwise would never have attained university education. Parallel programs, like other university reform policies introduced by Moi’s government, led to the opening up of university access to a considerable number of Kenyans than was the case during both the colonial and Kenyatta’s era. What is intriguing is the fact that university expansion occurred at a period of severe economic constrains characterized by demands from the western donor community for the government to reduce spending. President Moi carries the greatest credit for university expansion due to the level of personal interest and involvement in the matter. In the twenty-four years of Moi’s rule,

\textsuperscript{144} See http://www.jkuat.ac.ke/about/history.php, “History of Jomo Kenyatta College of Agriculture and Technology (JKCAT)”
\textsuperscript{145} See http://www.maseno.ac.ke/index3.php?section=admission&page=i_aboutus-Maseno History
\textsuperscript{146} Stephen Mutula, 111
\textsuperscript{147} Kilemi Mwiria et. al., 99
university enrolment expanded from about 7,000 students in 1978 to about 60,000 in 2002. University expansion became the most significant legacy of Moi’s rule and the reforms initiated by his government set the stage for further growth in the subsequent period.
CONCLUSION

The process of democratizing university access in Kenya between 1949 and 2002 proceeded unevenly because of the changing economic and political dynamics that conversely affected university policies. Access to university education during this period was intertwined with political, economic and policy shifts as various governments that ruled the country responded in their own unique way to public demand for university opportunities. The main policy trends in this period included: the inter-territorial concept of 1949 to 1970; the transitional period of 1970 to 1978 characterized by competition between the forces that demanded increased university access versus the elitist and conservative bureaucrats who preferred limiting access; and 1978 to 2002, a period of rapid university growth.

The inter-territorial university policy, initiated by the British imperial government in the 1940s was part of the colonial reform efforts aimed at addressing the social welfare needs of the colonial subjects. The colonial reforms were a reaction by the British to increased political assertiveness in the colonies reflected in the intensification of African nationalism and the changed opinion about colonization following the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. The British wanted to reform the colonial system to create a new kind of imperial partnership with the subject people in the post Second World War world.\(^1\) The centrality of universities in the new reform efforts were expressed in February 1943 by Oliver Stanley, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who stated that he considered university education as “one of the most important questions in connection with the post-war reconstruction and development of the

Colonial Empire.” In the same year, Stanley appointed the Asquith Commission, which in 1945 produced a blueprint for how universities would be developed in British colonies. On East Africa, the Asquith Commission recommended the inter-territorial provision of university education at Makerere University College in Uganda.

The Asquith idea of inter-territorial provision of university education in East Africa through Makerere, eventually came to dominate the higher education discourse for the rest of the colonial period and the immediate post-independence era in East Africa. While the changing political circumstances of the 1950s and early 1960s characterized by African nationalism and decolonization contributed to the establishment of additional university colleges in Kenya and Tanganyika, the spirit of inter-territorial cooperation continued to influence university policies in East Africa. Initially, the inter-territorial university policy, which opened university opportunities to Africans in East Africa, faced intense opposition from European settlers in Kenya. The settlers preferred provision of technical education to Africans instead of the liberal education, which they described as contributing to the moral degeneration of the African.

The Colonial Office, however, insisted on the implementation of the university policy as articulated by the Asquith Commission report. The inter-territorial concept of the Asquith Commission received the endorsement of the two working parties on higher education appointed in the 1950s by the Colonial Office to plan for the future development of university education in East Africa. The first Working Party led by Alexander Carr Saunders visited East Africa in 1955. In endorsing the inter-territorial plan, the Carr-Saunders Working Party stated that the future development of higher education in East Africa would be based on the “fundamental principle

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3 KNA/AV/12/228, “Higher Education,” File contains the 1949 Third Report on higher education in East Africa (44) by the Inter-University Council Delegation to East Africa that visited between July-August, 1949
that higher education is indivisible, that it is in the truest sense inter-territorial, that it must be so
planned as to meet the collective needs of the East African territories." \(^4\) The Carr Saunders
Working Party advanced an economic rationale that justified inter-territorialism arguing that
since East Africa was a poor region, “neither on economic nor on educational grounds can there
be any valid argument for separate and self-contained higher education systems.” \(^5\)

The inter-territorial concept crystallized following its approval by the second Working
Party, led by J. F. Lockwood that visited East Africa in 1958. The task of the Lockwood
Working Party was to develop a plan for the establishment of additional higher education
institutions in East Africa as recommended by the earlier Carr Saunders Working Party. The
Lockwood Working Party made substantial recommendations that left a lasting impact on higher
education in East Africa. The Working Party recommended the elevation of the new Royal
Technical Institute in Nairobi to a University College and proposed that Tanganyika should get a
university college in the near future. The Lockwood Working Party insisted that all university
colleges in East Africa had to be inter-territorial in character. Thus, it recommended that the
future of inter-territorial cooperation would be achieved by “pursuing the idea of associating the
several colleges in the framework of a single university.” \(^6\) A single university idea was
especially necessary since the special relationship scheme between the East African university
colleges and the University of London was a temporary arrangement. The Working Party
therefore noted that once the special arrangement expired, the East African university colleges
would associate in a single university arrangement. The group argued that a single university
arrangement was an economically rational idea, which unlike a territorial university, would
receive financial support from the entire East African region. More importantly, the Working

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\(^5\) Ibid.
Party observed that a single East African university would protect against “needless and expensive duplication” of programs in territorial university colleges.7

The period after the release of the Lockwood Working Party report in 1958 saw the conversion of the Royal Technical College into a constituent college of the University of London called the Royal College, Nairobi, in 1960, followed by the establishment of the University College, Dar-es-Salaam in 1961. The foundation of the University College, Dar-es-Salaam came earlier than the Lockwood Working Party had planned due to the intensity of demands from Tanganyika for the immediate establishment of a university college in its territory. The Working Party had planned that Tanganyika would get a university college in 1965. Within three years of the release of the report of the Lockwood Working Party, all of the three East African British territories had their own university colleges. Although new university colleges were founded in Kenya and Tanganyika as constituent colleges of the University of London, this was a temporary measure, awaiting the establishment of the umbrella federal University of East Africa. The University of East Africa (UEA) came into existence in June 1963, with all the three university colleges in East Africa becoming its constituent colleges.

It is remarkable that the Colonial Office pursued the inter-territorial university policy in the late 1950s and early 1960s even though it was preparing to grant the East African territories their independence. In fact, the UEA came into existence in June 1963, when Uganda and Tanganyika had already gained their independence with Kenya scheduled to achieve its freedom later that year. It is also interesting that African nationalists who were conducting their political agitation along territorial lines supported the colonial inter-territorial policy on higher education. Bethwell Ogot has argued that African nationalists viewed the inter-territorial university arrangement as an integral part of the East Africa Federation movement and an essential

instrument for promoting a pan-East Africa consciousness.\textsuperscript{8} It is however uncertain how an inter-
territorial university policy would enhance East African consciousness and lead to the
achievement of an East African federation when African nationalists were agitating for territorial
independence. The failure to achieve an East African federation during independence came to
haunt the long-term sustainability of the UEA.

The UEA, which epitomized the colonial inter-territorial policy, lasted for less than a
decade. The inter-territorial policy collapsed a few years after its formalization through the UEA
because it was inconsistent with the aspirations of a free and independent East Africa. The inter-
territorial principle that was crafted by the Asquith Commission in the 1940s sought to establish
a few university colleges in Africa, which would produce a new class of educated Africans who
the Colonial Office hoped would “lead the process of colonial development.”\textsuperscript{9} As Andrew
Barnes, argues, the establishment of universities in Africa was a step by the colonial
governments to keep African colonies in the fold. The university colleges would serve as centers
where the imperial powers would cement alliances with westernized African elites.\textsuperscript{10} Access into
the hallowed colonial university colleges therefore had to be limited to the cream of the African
society. This small class of educated Africans was intellectually and culturally withdrawn and
alienated from their own indigenous knowledge systems and societies. Since the inter-territorial
policy aimed at the production of an elite class, it went contrary to the principles of
democratizing access to university education. At its core, inter-territoriality aimed to control the
numbers and the kinds of Africans who accessed university education and ultimately entered into

\textsuperscript{8} Bethwell Ogot, \textit{The Challenges of History and Leadership in Africa: the essays of Bethwell Ogot}, (Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, 2002) 600
either the private or the civil service while at the same time checking against the proliferation of the financial costs that went into supporting university education. When the British succumbed to the demands for independence, they transferred power to the inter-territorially produced African elite class who were their allies.

Not only were the African elite class expected to serve the revamped imperial system of neo-colonialism after independence but also they provided the bulwark needed by the western nations in the ideological war against the spread of communism in East Africa. The Soviet Union had begun to make its ideological forays in Africa from the beginning of the 1960s by providing Africans with opportunities to study in Russia. Since Britain was not ready to let its East African territories slip under the USSR influence, the inter-territorial concept therefore came in handy as a means of advancing academic imperialism to prevent East Africa from coming under the communist influence. Ironically, Britain was also wary of the growing influence of its ally, the United States of American in East Africa. The United States was keen on expanding its influence among the newly independent nations of Africa as reflected by its involvement in providing university opportunities to African students in its universities. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, as decolonization process gathered pace, thousands of East Africans, especially Kenyans were awarded opportunities to study in the United States. At the same time, the former British West African colonies of Nigeria and Ghana were reversing the British colonial university heritage by establishing new universities modeled along the American land-grant universities.\textsuperscript{11} The interest of the Americans and the USSR in Africa was threatening the British academic and ideological heritage in the continent. To maintain its grip on its East

African territories, Britain sought to control the UEA. The UEA provided the British with an opportunity to perpetuate its academic and ideological control in East Africa in the postcolonial period.

The African nationalists who supported the British university agenda failed to realize that the basis of the inter-territorial policy was essentially to advance the neo-colonial agenda in the post-independence period. In fact, not only did the African nationalists back the inter-territorial idea but they were also enthusiastic supporters for the adoption of British A-level system that was introduced in East Africa in 1961. African nationalists supported the Colonial Office plans for A-Levels when, interestingly, some European officials and Americans were opposed to the creation of another sorting and selection barrier that hindered access to higher education. The introduction of the A-Levels like the inter-territorial idea aimed at ensuring the maintenance of British academic ideals in the post-colonial period.12

With Kenya’s independence in 1963, the realities of freedom made the execution of the inter-territorial single university policy difficult. The East African nations achieved their independence on territorial basis, which adversely affected the inter-territorial university coordination through the UEA. Soon, the newly independent East African nations began to violate the principle of non-duplicity and economic rationality that justified the inter-territorial university policy. The main culprits in this regard were Kenya and Tanganyika who sought to

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In its 1961 manifesto, the nationalist party KANU, supported the Colonial Office plan to establish a federal University of East Africa and welcomed the introduction of A-levels. Ironically, the introduction of the A levels was opposed by the Principal of the Royal College J. M. Hyslop who argued that it would prevent Africans from accessing higher education. Similarly, Gay Hunter who led a manpower survey argued against the introduction of the A-levels because it would hinder the higher education achievement of the Africans and therefore undermine the Africanization of the civil service.
expand the university colleges located in their territories by developing a wide range of expensive programs such as medicine, pharmacy and engineering. The flagrant disregard of the non-duplication principle infuriated Ugandans because much of the donor funding was diverted to develop new programs at the university colleges in Kenya and Tanzania at the expense of Makerere. Ugandans therefore viewed the UEA arrangement as aimed at stunting Makerere’s growth while advancing development at university colleges in Kenya and Tanzania. By 1965, it had become obvious that UEA would not last for long.\textsuperscript{13}

The disregard of the non-duplication principle, however, should be seen as an involuntary rejection of a colonially imposed inter-territorial policy that limited access to university education. From the beginning, the implementation of the inter-territorial policy was justified on an erroneous presupposition that the demand for university education in East Africa was low and would remain low in the foreseeable future. Since the late 1950s, the number of Kenyans seeking higher education had grown steadily. By the time of independence in 1963, there were over 3000 Kenyan students abroad compared to only 500 in East African university colleges. By the end of the 1960s, the demand for university education had skyrocketed due to the progress made in basic education. Local communities in Kenya had taken advantage of the Harambee (self-help) movement to build many primary and secondary schools, to supply universities with qualified students.\textsuperscript{14} By the late 1960s, it was clear that the inter-territorial policy, as represented by the UEA, had failed to meet the national interests of respective East African countries.

The dissolution of the UEA and the establishment of the UON and its constituent college, the KUC in 1970, created an opportunity for Kenya to respond to the increasing demand for university education. For about two years, between 1970 and 1972, the new enrollments at the UON and KUC expanded at an average rate of twenty-nine percent. During this period, student enrolment increased from about 2,000 in 1970 to about 4,000 in 1972. Nevertheless, the increase in enrollment stagnated to about 5,000 students beginning from 1973 and the slowdown persisted until 1978, when President Kenyatta died. The decline in enrolment was an indictment of the elitist ideology that underlay the discarded inter-territorial single university idea. The policy makers in Kenya were products of the elitist ideology that conceived the role of universities as that of producing senior level civil servants and corporate heads in the private sector. Since the demand for this elite class was small, the Kenyatta government, just like the colonial government sought to limit the number of students who accessed university education. Policy makers in Kenyatta’s government saw democratization of access to university education as a waste of scarce resources. Not surprisingly, when the World Bank demanded the control of expenditure on education the government targeted universities for the cut. Beginnings from 1973, universities were under persistent pressure to limit the rate of expansion. The University Grants Committee (UGC), which was dominated by government bureaucrats, decried the high rate of student expansion at the UON and KUC. Thereafter, the government did not provide the required resources that would have enabled universities to expand. In 1974, the government implemented a long held idea of university loans, which was another cost cutting measure.

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15 *Kenya Economic Survey, 1973*

The total number of students at the University of Nairobi in 1970 was 2,240 out of whom 1,014 were Kenyans. By 1972, the total number of students was 3,445 out of whom 2,553 were Kenyans.

In the meantime, the ever-increasing number of qualified A-Level graduates continued to demand admission at the UON and its constituent KUC. These demands haunted Josphat Karanja, the Vice Chancellor of the UON, who pleaded with President Kenyatta to intervene and direct the Treasury to increase its budget allocation to universities. Kenyatta, however, ignored Karanja’s pleas.

Kenyatta’s apparent neglect of universities was compounded by the growing student militancy and radicalism. Student radicalism was an outgrowth of their involvement in the evolving power struggles in the immediate postcolonial period. Students were opposed to Kenyatta’s growing authoritarianism as he sought to deal with the political elements who opposed his alignment with the western powers and their capitalist ideology at a time when many African countries were experimenting with different variants of socialism and communism. The drift to the West appalled some of Kenyatta’s compatriots in the liberation struggle such as Oginga Odinga, Bildad Kaggia, and Ochieng Oneko. These nationalists were alarmed that due to his associating with the West, Kenyatta was failing to address inequalities and dispossession of the African masses. To the students, it was as if Kenyatta was promoting neo-colonial capitalist interests of the West to the detriment of the masses. The group of nationalists who opposed Kenyatta’s policies preferred the more egalitarian socialist ideology as a means of dealing with social inequalities. This group was the radical wing within the ruling party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU).

By 1965, Kenyatta had consolidated his grip on power when the members of the equally conservative opposition party the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) dissolved their party and joined KANU. With a boost from KADU, Kenyatta turned the heat on the rebellious wing within KANU to force them out of the party. When the KANU rebels led by Jaramogi
Oginga Odinga left the ruling party, they quickly founded a new party the Kenya Peoples Union (KPU) in April 1966. The formation of the KPU marked the turning point in Kenya’s politics. Kenyatta seized on the new threat to his power to transform himself into an authoritarian leader who brooked no dissent. The KPU leaders were harassed by the state as parliament passed laws to prevent defections to the new party. Those who defected to the KPU lost their parliamentary seats and by-elections called to fill their supposedly vacant offices. With state repression at its peak, university students emerged as a voice that dared to challenge Kenyatta authoritarianism. Students supported the opposition politicians and offered them the audience that they lacked among the public due to state repression. For daring to challenge Kenyatta, students paid dearly. From the late 1960s, clashes between students and the government became frequent. Consequently, Kenyatta’s government resorted to shutting down universities whenever students staged protests. Student protests against government policies continued in the 1970s.

Students also directed their anger against the university administration to protest deteriorating facilities and overcrowding especially at the halls of residence. Students considered the university administration as an appendage of the state, more so because the appointment of Josphat Karanja as the first Vice Chancellor of the UON was irregular. Prior to his appointment Karanja had served as a diplomat and had no experience in university administration. Karanja’s appointment was viewed as an extension of Kikuyu ethnic chauvinism to protect Kenyatta’s authoritarian presidency. Kenyatta bypassed more qualified and deserving people when he appointed Karanja to head the UON. Nevertheless, Karanja did his level best to develop the UON at a time when the government had decided to limit university expansion. Yet, Karanja could not satisfactorily address the student demands for better facilities because of the Treasury’s failure to provide adequate finances. Karanja also had to deal with increased demand
for access to university, but he could not expand enrolment to meet demand due to scarcity of resources. Student protests against the state and the administration peaked in 1975 following the assassination of J.M. Kariuki, a popular politician and a strong critic of Kenyatta government. In the subsequent period, Kenyatta moved to further curtail academic freedoms at the university by detaining anti-establishment members of faculty such as Ngugi wa Thiongo. The increased interferences from the state served to worsen the relationship with the students. By the time of his death, Kenyatta had a strained relationship with university students.

Upon coming to office in 1978, President Moi began the process of reforming the entire education system including universities. Moi was committed to breaking the elitist university ideology by democratizing access partly as a means to deal with regional and ethnic inequalities in Kenya. In 1981, Moi took an important step in university reform when he appointed the Mackay Commission charged with the responsibility “to prepare detailed plans and recommendations on how the decision of the government to establish a Second University should be carried out.”17 The Mackay Commission was dominated by academics in contrast to Kenyatta’s regime in which government bureaucrats dominated teams that were appointed to investigate university matters. The Kenyatta era university commissions such as the University Grants Committees of the early 1970s and the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (Gachathi Commission) of 1976 were mainly concerned with cost saving than advancing access to universities. The Mackay Commission, on the other hand, paid little attention to costs and instead set on making recommendations that would ease access to university. It is instructive that Moi did not appoint a British or any person who was a product of the British education system to chair the Presidential Working Party on the Second University.

17 Second University in Kenya: Report of the Presidential Working Party (Foreword Section)
Instead, Moi appointed C.B. Mackay, a Canadian scholar and university administrator to chair the Working Party. It is clear that by appointing Mackay to chair the Working Party, Moi wanted to disabuse the Kenya’s education system of the British influences. The outcome of the Working Party proved that Moi’s mission in appointing the Mackay’s Commission was to transform the education system from the elitist British colonial heritage to a more democratic system. In the end, the Mackay Commission went beyond addressing the issue of the establishment of a second university as spelt out in its original mandate; it recommended an overhaul of the entire education system to orient it to that of North America. Moi accepted the Mackay Commission recommendations.

Kenya began implementing the new 8-4-4 education system in 1983, a process that continued in phases until 1990 when the first cohort of the new education system was admitted into the universities. The other major recommendation of the Mackay Commission was that of establishing a second university. The 1984 establishment of Moi University as the second university did not satisfy Moi’s desire for additional universities. Soon after the establishment of Moi University in 1984, Moi announced that the Kenyatta University College would be elevated to a full university in a year’s time. In the same year, the Cabinet approved the appointment of a committee to explore the possibilities of converting Egerton College into a university. Kenyatta University College became a full university called Kenyatta University in 1985 while Egerton became a constituent college of the University of Nairobi in 1986 and in 1987 became a fully-fledged university. In a span of three years, from 1984 to 1987, Kenya added three new universities to bring the total number of universities to four. As universities expanded, the number of student enrolment correspondingly increased. When Moi came to office in 1978, Kenya had about 7,000 students enrolled at the UON and KUC. By 1984, this number had
increased to 8,000 before reaching 21,635 in 1989. Following the double admission of 1990, the total enrolment almost doubled to 40,000 students. Further expansion in universities took place in 1994 when the government elevated the Jomo Kenyatta University College of Agriculture and Technology (JKUCAT), which was a constituent college of the Kenyatta University, to a full university called the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT). In 2001, Moi also elevated the Maseno College, formerly a constituent college of Moi University to a full university.

The university expansion of the 1980s and 1990s came at a high cost that necessitated fundamental financial reforms. The expansion program required investment of enormous resources that the country lacked. The consequence of implementing this program was deterioration of facilities at the universities, overcrowding, and falling academic standards. The government responded by instituting cost-sharing measures that were made even more urgent by the insistence of the international lending institutions led by the World Bank and the IMF for the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). University reforms constituted part of the SAPs that the Bretton Woods institutions prescribed to the government as a precondition to qualify for aid. Other reforms by the government included the creation of the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) in 1985, which created a legal framework for the establishment of private universities. The CHE registered, regulated, and evaluated the private universities. By demanding high standards of operation, the CHE played a big role in rehabilitating the image of private universities and making them prestigious institutions of higher education.

18 Kenya Economic Survey 1989, 148
19 Kenya Economic Survey 1991, 158
20 See http://www.jkuat.ac.ke/about/history.php, “History of Jomo Kenyatta College of Agriculture and Technology (JKCAT)”
learning. By the 1990s, Kenyan middle and upper classes preferred private universities to the “disorderly” and financially wretched public universities.

The cost-sharing measures that began in a piecemeal fashion in the early 1990s culminated in the establishment of a Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) in 1995 that took over the role of disbursing and recovering student loans from the Ministry of Education. Following the formation of HELB, students were not guaranteed loans as before because the new body used means testing to determine the most deserving cases to qualify for loans. After a short period of teething problems, the HELB became a very efficient body in carrying out its mandate.

The other innovation of the mid 1990s was the introduction of self-sponsored programs also popularly known as parallel programs. Beginning at the Kenyatta University in 1995, parallel programs quickly spread to other public universities. The students under the parallel programs paid full cost of their education; they neither received any form of government subsidies as the regular students nor the HELB loans. The parallel programs admitted students who had attained the minimum grade for university admission of C+ but due to limited opportunities could not gain admission like the regular students. The introduction of parallel programs and the development of private universities brought the elitist legacy to a full circle. Now, universities were no longer a preserve of the cream of the society as before. Many of the deserving students who in the past failed to gain university admission had an opportunity of access.

By 2002 when President Moi left office, Kenya had made great strides in university education with six public universities, over a dozen private universities and with a total university enrolment of more than 60,000 students. This was a great achievement considering that when Moi came to office in 1978, Kenya had only one full university, the University of
Nairobi and its constituent Kenyatta University College with a total university enrolment of about 7,000 students. Moi’s misrule, however, marred his apparent success in democratizing university access. Although Moi had widespread public goodwill and support when he came to power, he soon followed into the autocratic footsteps of his predecessor. Similar to Kenyatta’s era, the university students emerged as the only voice of opposition in a highly suppressed political environment that Moi created. Moi’s government even accused university students of involvement in the attempted military coup of August 1, 1982. In the 1990s, students were involved in the many street protests organized by political dissidents to force Moi to effect democratic political reforms. The effect of Moi’s misrule included increased corruption and general economic decline. The government therefore did not have the kind of resources required to finance Moi’s ambitious university expansion program.

Moi’s authoritarianism was also reflected in his erosion of academic freedoms at the universities. Security forces harassed nonconformist faculty members and many of them were forced out of their positions. The harassment and bad terms of service for the faculty members contributed to the brain drain as many of them left the country for greener pastures abroad. The flight of lecturers led to accelerated erosion of academic standards at the universities.

The transformation of Kenya’s university policy from the late colonial period to the end of Moi and KANU’s rule in 2002 was astonishing. The first twenty years of this period, from 1949 to the late 1960s, however, was dominated by the colonial inter-territorial policy that limited university access. The elitist inter-territorial policy however undermined the university aspirations of the Africans who following the tremendous expansion of basic education in the 1960s demanded corresponding increase in higher education opportunities. Initially, Kenyatta’s government tried to resist the increasing public demand for democratization of access to
university education. This however changed with the coming of President Moi to office in 1978. Moi wanted to stamp his mark on education, by increasing access to universities. For the next twenty-four years of Moi’s rule, Kenya saw a tremendous increase of universities and student enrollment. Thousands of students were able to access university education, which previously was a preserve of the privileged few.
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