

Acknowledgments

EVERY BOOK HAS a genesis. The origins of this work are located in my childhood in Kenya. Growing up in Kitui, and later in Nairobi, I became acutely aware of the political pathologies around me. But I could not understand then and I am still baffled today by the failure of the Kenyan political class to imagine a larger destiny for the country. Once I joined the centers of higher learning, I became more fascinated with this conundrum and vowed to unravel its hidden mysteries. I became, in essence, a student of the state, particularly its postcolonial variant. The entry points for my research and scholarship were human rights and international law because I felt that one had to critically understand the relationship between the state and the citizen, on the one hand, and the postcolonial state and international law, on the other. I still believe that to be the case.

This book is an attempt to understand the dysfunction of Kenyan political society and to gestate a renaissance. That is why the opportunity to spend the 2002–2003 sabbatical year in Kenya was a godsend. I would use my time there to study firsthand the climax of a decades-old struggle to remove from power the Kenya African National Union (KANU), the kleptocratic party that had ruled the country since independence from Britain in 1964. I planned to be the quintessential academic—doing primary research, incubating deep thoughts, collecting empirical data, digesting everything into analytical categories, and dreaming up high theory. Little did I know that academic abstraction and the pure seduction of ideas would not be my lot. My carefully crafted research plan unraveled quickly upon my return to Kenya, when I was drafted into practical politics. As a lifelong reformer, and as chair of the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), the country's leading NGO, I put on my hard hat and went to work to oust KANU. On December 27, 2002, we accomplished that historic mission.

Thus, this book is a personal journey for me that started in my early childhood but is still unfinished. Put in that context, the book would not have been

possible but for all the people in my life who affected it, for good or ill. From all of them I have learned what the book documents. Obviously, it is impossible to mention everyone who has affected me in some fundamental way—nor would it be desirable—but I am compelled to name a few whose influence and help have been more immediate to this project. I do so with some reluctance, knowing that I will inevitably forget some individuals. From them, I seek forbearance. I hope they will take some solace in the recognition of an idea or question that they helped me develop or settle. But I also hope that they understand that all scholarship is social and is produced in an interactive context, even when the writer is seemingly oblivious to the world around him.

Crucial to the work has been the guidance of Willy Mutunga, now with the Ford Foundation in Nairobi. Willy is my earliest and most influential mentor. He is a man who lives his politics and knows how to nurture others. I know because he was my teacher at the University of Nairobi and a fellow cofounder of the KHRC. He served with me there for many years, all with exemplary distinction. Many were the days and nights that we sat and talked endlessly about this project. His political insights, ability to parse through complex ideas, and uncanny facility to marry theory and practice are legendary. I started writing this book in 2002, the year that the National Rainbow Coalition smashed KANU. I completed it six years later. Through it all, Willy was always there, urging me on and improving the book with his critiques of Kenyan politics.

The support of my friends at the Ford Foundation who generously backed the project has also been enormously important. It was Julius Ihonvbere in the foundation's New York office whose excitement about a project on constitutional reform in Kenya opened doors. He spoke with Joseph Gitari, then at the foundation's office in Nairobi, about my research. Both Joseph and Tade Aina, the representative in Nairobi, gave me the grant to support the work. My discussions with them, and especially Tade, helped me clarify many themes. I am also grateful to the KHRC, my own organization, for hosting the grant. I hope they all recognize their fingerprints on the book.

There are many Kenyans who have given a lot to this project in ways big and small. They include ordinary folks, politicians, state leaders, academics, clerics, journalists, professionals, civil society actors, and government functionaries. I will list some of them, but not in any order. They include James Orengo, Paul Muite, Raila Odinga, Betty Murungi, Kiraitu Murungi, Aamin Mazrui, Ali Mazrui, Betty Maina, Koki Muli, Pheroze Nowrojee, Kalonzo Musyoka, Michael Chege, Stephen Ndegwa, Charity Ngilu, John Munuve, Karuti Kanyinga, Davinder Lamba, John Githongo, Jane Kiragu, Katini Ombaka, Maina Kiai, Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, L. Muthoni Wanyeki, Vincent Musebe, Yash Ghai, Steve Ouma, Wanjiku Miano, Njeri Rugene, Judith Mbula Bahemuka, Micere Githae Mugo, Shadrack Gutto, James Gathii, Tirop arap Kitur, Gacheke Gachihi, Wambui Kimathi, Pius Mutua, Joseph Odindo,

Wangethi Mwangi, Mutuma Mathiu, Kivutha Kibwana, Nzamba Kitonga, Mutava Musyimi, P. L. O. Lumumba, and Mwai Kibaki.

A project of this magnitude cannot be accomplished without collegial mentorship and guidance. In this respect, the greatest influence on the book has been John Harbeson, the editor of the series in which this book appears and one of the fathers of the study of Kenya in the United States. He patiently read through several early drafts and provided detailed and structured comments that were critical to the project. Without him, I am not sure the book would have seen the light of day. John is an academic's academic, toiling in the background without demanding credit or attention. To him, I say thank you.

Frank Holmquist, whose work on Kenya can only be described as deeply penetrating and grounded in social reality, was an early and enthusiastic supporter of the book project. He read several drafts of the manuscript and offered insightful commentary that brings the work closer to the politics of resistance. Joel Barkan is another student of Kenyan politics who was a constant source of ideas that clarified many an issue in the book. These giants of scholarship on Kenya offered their time and advice without any limitations. Henry Steiner, one of my closest friends and a colleague with whom I worked at the Harvard Law School Human Rights Program, taught me human rights at Harvard. He has been a source of many clarifying conversations in my development as a scholar. Guyora Binder, my colleague at Buffalo Law School, has been a great source of insightful discussions on postcolonialism over the years.

Many other fellow academics and thinkers have been critical in helping me shape the views herein. They are Henry Richardson, C. Maina Peter, Joe Oloka-Onyango, Antony Anghie, Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Issa Shivji, Leila K. Hilal, Hope Lewis, Tom Wolf, Mahmoud Mamdani, Mohammad-Mahmoud Mohamedou, Obiora Okafor, Roberto Aponte-Toro, Randall Kennedy, Charles Ogletree, Jose Alvarez, Peter Rosenblum, Bill Alford, Martha Minow, Mary Ann Glendon, Ibrahim Gassama, David Kennedy, Adrien Wing, Leonard Reed, Muna Ndulo, Bereket Habte Selassie, Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, and Joel Ngugi.

I owe a debt of gratitude to my research assistants in Buffalo and Nairobi. I am grateful for the work of Bhavjyot Kaur Singh, my brilliant summer intern from Cornell University. I must thank Davis Malombe of the KHRC and Tabitha Kilatya for their diligent and thorough research. Their work was essential to the primary study on which the book is based.

I have spent many fruitful and productive years at Buffalo Law School. Nils Olsen, the dean at Buffalo until December 2007, generously supported this project, as he did all my other work. I also cannot forget to mention the law school's Baldy Center for Law and Social Policy, which supported this project at the beginning. My work at the law school would have been difficult without the professional support of my diligent secretary, Sandra Conti.

I am indebted to Lynne Rienner for believing in this project. This work has been improved by the talents of Shena Redmond of Lynne Rienner Publishers, and Beth Partin, my superb copyeditor.

My family traveled with me to Kenya during my sabbatical year. Lumumba, Amani, and Mwalimu—my three boys—lived in Kenya with us for the year. They attended school there but also took in much of my political work. Athena, my wife, was incredible throughout the project. She read and discussed several drafts with me. In Kenya, she was engaged in the political struggle for reform. In particular, she helped form a women's coalition that became the leading voice for advancing the rights of women in the constitution-making process. Because of her work—and political insights—she has been an extremely important voice in this book. I am deeply indebted to her.

Finally, this book is a tribute to ordinary Kenyans, for whom and by whom the state must be reformed.

—*Makau Mutua*