

FROM MAU MAU TO NDEFFO: FAILED EXPECTATIONS OR SQUANDERED OPPORTUNITIES?

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CITATION: Kanyingi, B. w., Matheka, R. & Mwangi, J. M (2015), From mau mau to ndeffo: Failed expectations or squandered opportunities?.*European Journal of Business Management*, 2 (6), 1-11.

Abstract

Studies on the Mau Mau struggle for land are inclined on overlooking the role played by Mau Mau veterans in acquiring land through individual contributions after Independence. In most existing literature, Kenyatta's government was perceived to have allocated land to Mau Mau veterans and supported them financially under Nakuru District Ex- Freedom Fighters Organisation. Based on oral testimonies, secondary and Archival sources, this article examines how Mau Mau in the White Highland formed an organisation. It also considers whether they received material gains from the government after its formation. The article concludes by stressing the significance of NDEFFO in resettling over 5500 freedom fighters. In addition, the Kenyan government did not allocate those pieces of land freely since the fruits of independence did not trickle down to the Mau Mau veterans.

Key Words: *Betrayal, Failed expectations, Mau Mau, NDEFFO, Land issues*

1. Introduction

The Kikuyu, who were against land alienation, resolved to wage war against the British in Kenya. The group that was agitating for lost land and freedom was named Mau Mau. As they were fighting for land and freedom, they hoped that after Kenya attained her independence, they would receive huge chunks of land and other material gains. However, President Kenyatta only gave them a mere handshake. Mau Mau Veterans were shocked by Kenyatta's statement, "there was nothing free"; and how land redistribution fell victim to political mechanization and patronage by political leadership. This ended but benefiting powerful elites and former aides of colonial administration. Mau Mau Veterans, to emancipate themselves from poverty and landlessness formed an organization called Nakuru District Ex-Freedom Fighters Organisation (NDEFFO). The continuous cry of forlorn NDEFFO members to the state, "We have been forgotten" was an illustration that their expectations were not realised.¹ Having been ex-freedom fighters, they had many expectations and felt unique among other Kenyans for their actions to emancipate Kenya from the chains of colonisation.

Since colonial times, the name 'Mau Mau' was perceived differently. According to Paige², there was no consensus on the etymology of the term Mau Mau. From the Mau Mau she interviewed, the name did not have a meaning. According to Caroline Elkin, the term appeared in British colonial sources in 1948. The coining of the word 'Mau Mau' was a way of portraying this group as baseless and with no ideology. Europeans did this with an aim to exonerate themselves from the guilt of having created social, economic and political frustrations in Kenya.

¹ E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo. "The Production of History in Kenya: The Mau Mau Debate" *Canadian Journal of African Studies*. Vol. 25, No. 2 (1991), pp. 304-307

² E, Paige. *From Freedom Fighters to Terrorists: Women and Political Violence*, (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), pp.94-98.

Through this, other Africans who were non-Kikuyu would see the organisation as baseless. The Mau Mau was portrayed as a movement of the Kikuyu, and so, it lost its national status. According to Furley,³ the official version that was used was, “Mau Mau was a tribalistic outbreak led by ambitious Kikuyu....” With such claims, the British government succeeded to demonise the organisation, making some communities not to join. According to P. E. D Wilson, a Senior Labour Officer in Rift Valley, the Mau Mau was entirely a Kikuyu affair whose objectives were anti- Europeans. He argued that the Mau Mau was bound to happen when Africans were working away from home. Wilson was in view of creating community centers in Nakuru, Dondori so that Africans could amuse themselves rather than have imaginary grievances.⁴ In independent Kenya, some scholars and administrators hold similar viewpoints as the colonialists, downplaying the Mau Mau grievances that have impacted their lives even to date. Mau Mau agitation for land was and is perceived as a way for the Kikuyu community to self-advance. Consequently, the land allocation remains highly politicized until today.

NDEFFO members believed in the power of the oath even during the interviews. They were cautious not to spill the secrets that bound them, indicating how fatal the consequences for breaking the oaths were. NDEFFO members, women and men, remembered how they took the oath and swore to fight for *Ithaka*. They also recall how their colleagues died while holding the soil as a symbol that they died fighting for it.⁵ Oath taking was an ongoing process, and some recall how they had taken more than one oath. The more one took, the more he was committed to the course of the organisation. Therefore, oath bounded the community, men and women together. Kanji narrated how as a small boy, he became accustomed to monitoring the movements of British soldiers and then report his findings to the Mau Mau. Apart from monitoring, children were used as spies amongst the Kikuyu and Europeans.⁶ Women narrated how they provided food, indigenous medical supplies, homemade weaponry and intelligence to forest fighters. Apart from this, they were left as the custodians of the family where they were supposed to provide for them. Initially, the British saw women as a passive wing. However, with time; they discovered that women were as dangerous as the men. The women interviewed recalled how their lives were hard in the villagisation program and camps; some recall how the “Johnnies” mishandled them.⁷ During Mau Mau revolt, some women were more violent than men.⁸ Some forced their husband to the course, and this made the British intelligence realise that women were no exception. When a woman was caught infringing the laws placed during the emergency, she was subjected to the same rigorous punitive process just like men.⁹ Those who were leaders in the forest like Brigadier Gathiani and Major Wanyeki recalled how they withstood the cold conditions. It is the death of their comrades that made them persevere through harsh conditions.¹⁰ The high expectations after the war also motivated them.

³ W. Furley ‘*The Historiography of Mau Mau in B.A, Ogot, Politics and Nationalism in Colonial Kenya* (Nairobi: East Africa publishers,1992), pp 103-105

⁴ Rongai Valley farmers Association, file no. Gen. 5, folio 34

⁵ FGD, held on 28/03/2014 at Lusiru farm; members freely discussed their experiences before and during the period of emergency

⁶ Kanji, OI, held on NDEFFO Farm on June 26, 2014

⁷ Some women narrated the ordeals they encountered when they met Johnnies on the way, some were beaten, others raped etc. The word Johnnies: Was a nickname that the Mau Mau collectively bestowed up members of the British army.

⁸ Women were also among the forest fighters and men interviewed admired their prowess. Women also underwent extreme cruelty in the Pipeline camps in the hands of interrogators just like men

⁹ A, Presley, ‘The Mau Mau Rebellion, Kikuyu Women, and Social Change’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 22:3, (1988), 502-527

¹⁰ Gathiani, OI, (Mau Mau Brigadier) and Major Wanyeki held on 28/03/2014, 24/04/2014 at Lusiru farm and Engashura farm respectively.

The British government, in order to curtail the progress of the Mau Mau, burnt down the Kikuyu grass thatched houses. They destroyed their houses and livestock and further incapacitated the movement. In the vigillisation, any person suspected of feeding the Mau Mau was brought at the centre of the village, shot or beaten to death with a club. The bodies of the dead forest fighters were brought to the villages and women were forced to carry them chanting as a sign that anybody who was against the British would serve as an example to others. The British government was more than determined to eradicate Mau Mau. Later, British created the Community Development Department that later established the women's club.¹¹ The women's club was supposed to offer food and other services to women who were not sympathisers of Mau Mau. If a woman was sympathetic to Mau Mau, she lost such privileges. It meant a hard life for her family.¹² The Mau Mau period was further exacerbated by the famine of 1955-1956, which made many Kikuyu women renounce the Mau Mau.¹³ According to FGD, it was also hard for women to venture out of the village.¹⁴ Those women who were lucky to go out to the farms recalled how they sometimes met with the "Johnnies¹⁵"; and how some were beaten while others were raped.¹⁶ Despite all the atrocities that women went through; they remained instrumental in the functioning and sustainability of the movement.¹⁷

In 1952, Governor Evelyn Baring was relentless to incapacitate the Mau Mau leadership.¹⁸ It resulted to the arresting of the Mau Mau leaders, including Jomo Kenyatta.¹⁹ The arrest of the leaders exacerbated the situation; violence increased. Many hardcore Mau Mau were brought in from the forest; they plotted a riot, but Governor Baring instructed their immediate transfer to another camp.²⁰ The state of emergency was lifted in 1960. However, it was only a political rhetoric delivered for the political elites but failed to meet the expectations of freedom fighters on land. Respondents commonly agree that it is misleading to state that Mau Mau achieved their goal of land reclamation.²¹ As Kenya attained her independence, the British sympathizers and the home guards had already grabbed the land left behind by Mau Mau. This was supported by oral testimonies where Mau Mau veterans under NDEFFO, who had land in Central Province found their lands grabbed. Concerning this, they moved to other areas in search of land.²² The land to the Kikuyu, in general, meant survivor and adulthood.²³ The land was observed as a

¹¹ Women clubs or 'Maendeleo ya wanawake' was established by British government in an attempt to eradicate the Mau Mau cult. If a woman remain sympathetic to the Mau Mau she lost the privileges of the club

¹² Women who never corroborated did not receive the ration to feed their children.

¹³ A, Presley. *Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion, and Social Change in Kenya* (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1992), PP. 165-166.

¹⁴ Women were going to the farms for various reasons, other went to collect firewood.

¹⁵ British soldiers were referred as such by the Kikuyu

¹⁶ FGD, NDEFFO Members held on 28/03/2014 at Lusiru farm; members freely discussed their experiences before and during the period of emergency

¹⁷ FGD, held at Lusiru Farm on 28/03/2014 and Engashura farm on 3rd April 2014 respectively with selected NDEFFO Members.

¹⁸ Baring arrived in Kenya ten days after the assassination of Chief Waruhiu. His approach was to incapacitate the leadership to weaken the entire movement. He adopted Operation Jack Scott and also instituted the state of emergency in 1952

¹⁹ Elkins noted that the arrest of the leadership exacerbated the situation. This is contrary to Baring idea to weaken the entire organisation

²⁰ Gathiani, OI, (Mau Mau Brigadier) held on 28/03/2014 at Lusiru farm

²¹ 50 years since Kenya attained her independence, Mau Mau veterans are still requesting government to award them land since they fought for it.

²² Muthua, Njoroge, Ndiritu, OI, and others freedom fighters recounts how they found their land in Central Province taken away after coming from the forest by home-guards (3/04/2014).

²³ Land to the Kikuyu community is a source of livelihood, until today land is valued as such.

resource and for any Mau Mau Veterans to prosper; land was essential since they were not educated even by African standards.²⁴

Kenyatta's ascendancy to power made former Mau Mau fighters assume that they would get jobs in government; however, the government criterion for employment was education. Paul Ngei, in 1963 tabled a motion in parliament, seeking member's approval to have a programme of assisting ex-detainees to make them fit for the country's economy and employment.²⁵ However, members amended the motion, asking the government to investigate and take measures to assist the children and widows who were left destitute due to imprisonment and the state of emergency in 1952. However, after the motion was amended, it became vague; Mau Mau veterans perceived that it would not influence their lives.²⁶ The land question and other packages for Mau Mau raised in parliament ended prematurely, perpetuating the sufferings among Mau Mau veterans, their children and grandchildren. To their offspring's, this was exacerbated by lack of adequate and proper education.²⁷

The Mau Mau veterans were forgotten immediately Kenya attained her independence. The independent government forgot them as soon as the newly political elite were elected. The Mau Mau veterans believed they had a right to be compensated by being given land and other material gains since they shed blood for the nation.²⁸ By 1968, most of them were staying in their relatives homes. Others were living as *Ahoi* (peasants) in different places in Kenya. According to Wanjage Kimani, the sons of former loyalists assumed various offices since at the height of the war; they went to school, thus reaping the benefit of independence. On the other hand, Mau Mau children were struggling to get daily meals.²⁹ The Mau Mau veterans felt betrayed by the Kenyatta government they had assisted to put in place. Kenyatta whom they called *muthee* (elder) used Mau Mau history to maintain the status quo and in turn took a bigger share of the national cake, disregarding the poor and landless former Mau Mau fighters.³⁰ Buijtenhuijs argued that ex-freedom fighters were collecting some crumbs falling from the loaded tables of the Kikuyu elites.³¹ In addition, Kanogo argued that the government did something for some of them, for example, the Mau Mau were encouraged to form companies such as NDEFFO with political backing.³² Kanogo failed to realise that opening of the company was free to all Kenyans, political support was by word of mouth, and the government did not contribute any amount to their welfare.

The political condemnation and different views of the Mau Mau amongst scholars gave Mau Mau a new face that instilled an urge for research to understand them better. The urge led to the rekindling of Mau Mau memory. Due to public debates and political confrontation on different issues, the few Mau Mau in Nakuru saw a need to utilise the chance and request for the formation of NDEFFO. The purpose was that they could rebuild their

²⁴ Education was key to government employed, without education one could not secure proper job, therefore uneducated Kikuyu had to rely on land for wellbeing.

²⁵ Hansard (Kenya Parliament First and second sitting in 23rd July 1969 and 29 November 1963).pp16-29-1645

²⁶ NDEFFO members means Mau Mau Veterans who were settled by NDEFFO company

²⁷ FGD held at Lusiru Farm on 28/03/2014

²⁸ Gitege and Lingoli, OI, held on 24/04/2014 and 16/05/2014 at Engashura farm.

²⁹ FGD held at Lusiru Farm on 28/03/2014.

³⁰ FGD, held at Lusiru Farm on 28/03/2014 and Engashura farm on 3 April 2014 respectively with selected NDEFFO Members.

³¹ R. Buijtenhuijs, *Mau Mau: Twenty Years after the Myth and the Survivors* (The Hague: Mouton, 1973). P.111

³² T. Kanogo., Review Article, *Kenya Historical Review*, 5 No.2 (1977), p.400

lives after coming out of hardships in detention camps.³³ Although Kenyatta government was against the Mau Mau Association, the then MP for Nakuru, Honourable Mark Mwithaga, was relentless to ensure that the freedom fighters were allowed to buy land in the Rift Valley.³⁴ He drafted and presented a motion in parliament to ensure Mau Mau under NDEFFO got the government approval to purchase the land they were seeking. Some scholars like, Clough, Frank Furedi hold that the waning popularity of Kenyatta made him play the godfather of the Mau Mau. He did it to attract the Kikuyu support; therefore, his first approach was to use Mau Mau and turned it to the bulwark of Kikuyu nationalism. He made the house of *Mumbi* and *Gikuyu* feel threatened by other communities, especially on the issue of land.³⁵ Through such political gimmicks, NDEFFO was formed. The literati approach was perceived by Mau Mau under NDEFFO as propaganda to downplay their determination and hard work to acquire these lands.³⁶

2. Kenyatta Government's Initial Approach to Landlessness

Fifty-two years after independence, the land question is still at the center of Kenyan politics. The appeal for physical space, 'our land' among Mau Mau veterans has increased over time. After the colonial control, the former White Highlands were highly regarded because they were fertile and guaranteed the continuation of the economy if well managed by the independent government. For continuity of agriculture, the government sought to promote a class of middle-level African farmers who could maintain the previous standards. In so doing, the land hunger amongst the poor Africans was not tackled.³⁷ Land hunger contributed to the massive movement of landless Mau Mau in search of abandoned or unmanaged farms, leading to land rush all over the country. It resulted in the arrival of the high number of ex-Mau Mau from different parts of Kenya to the Rift Valley. The Kikuyu were convinced that if other ethnic group claimed the Rift Valley they would have little to claim. To establish themselves in the Rift Valley, the Kikuyu adopted a system of private property, some Kikuyu preferring land to be transferred to those who could afford rather than being freely distributed.³⁸ The preference by some Kikuyu was not all-inclusive considering the situation of the forlorn Mau Mau veterans who by then were coming out of detention camps, prisons and other concentration camps without any resources.

It became apparent to the landless Kikuyu that the government settlement scheme programmes were not going to accommodate most of them; therefore, they began to form cooperatives to pool resources together. They began by making down payments to purchase the European farms. By 1965, 349 co-operatives were registered. The co-operatives were the cheapest way to deal with the settlers. Secondly, they could get loans from the Land Bank/AFC. However, to follow up on the situation of the companies formed, the 1966-1970 development Plans stated that

³⁴ Mwithaga, OI, in Nakuru Town, held on 23/7/2014

³⁵ J. Ogunde. *The Nation and Narration, 'The truth of the Nation and the changing Image of Mau Mau in Kenyan Literature* in E.S. Atieno and J. Lonsdale in *Mau Mau And Nationhood*. (Oxford: James Currey Ltd, 2003), pp.276-278

³⁶ Kagechu, Gacheru and Njenga Njoroge, OI, held at Engashura farm on 20/06/2014

³⁷ G. Wasserman, *Politics of Decolonization: Kenya Europeans and the Land Issues 1960-1965* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp.18-20.

³⁸ C. Leys. *Under-development in Kenya; The Political Economy of the Neo-Colonialism (1964-1974)*. (London: Heinemann, 1975), pp.57-60

..... A number of farmers have gone heavily into debts to purchase both farms and loose assets...still lacked the sufficient working capital to generate loan repayment... Very few of them had the skills and experience required for the complex task of running mixed farming...³⁹

In addition, The Development Plan of 1966 -1970 stated that the primary aim of the settlement schemes had been largely attained and that the pressure of the landless had been contained. Therefore, no more settlement was to be provided. The Development plan failed to realise that landlessness was inevitably growing considering that the poor who had no money to acquire land were not considered. The main aim of the settlement schemes as per the government was to ensure that they generated revenue to service the loans and realise economic development, but not to ensure that all landless people were settled. It meant that, Mau Mau were never given any special considerations.

3. Antecedent to the Formation of NDEFFO

According to James Ogunde, the period from 1965 to 1975 was a period Kenyan leadership tried to erase any memory of the Mau Mau.⁴⁰ Kenyatta's government did not make serious efforts to compensate ex- forest fighters. A forest Brigadier, Kingori Gathiani and Major Wanyeki recall how they were paraded at Kasarani for jobs; however, some of the Mau Mau fighters were assigned menial jobs such as Municipal Council Askaris, which was contrary to their expectations. The Mau Mau had expected that their government was to welcome them as heroes and allocate them best land and jobs after emerging from hideouts. The government/ however, neglected even their efforts to form organisations. It feared that such an organisation would turn political; thus suppressing their initial plea to create an organisation.

The government only recognised Mau Mau when they served a particular purpose, for example, the people whose former activities Kenyatta criminalised were his 'friends.' It was due to changes in the country's politics.⁴¹ From 1966, the relationship between the President and the Kikuyu was cordial, for example, President Kenyatta action in 1969, forcefully invited the Kikuyu community to take 'tea' in his Gatundu home.⁴² By taking the 'tea' with *Muthee*, they swore loyalty to him that *Uthamaki ndukanaume nyumba ya Mumbi* that means that the leadership should never leave the house of *Mumbi*.⁴³ The Kikuyu were unbound to approach *Muthee*, therefore enjoying political good will.⁴⁴ The Mau Mau veterans' ally of the President in Nakuru saw a need to exploit cordial relationship and resettle 'their people' who were gathering in the Rift Valley.

³⁹ *Development Plan 1966-1970*, pp.54-55

⁴⁰ J. Ogunde. *The Nation and Narration, 'The truth of the Nation and the changing Image of Mau Mau in Kenyan Literature* in E.S. Atieno and J. Lonsdale in *Mau Mau And Nationhood*. (Oxford: James Currey Ltd, 2003),pp.270-272.

⁴¹ FGD, held at Lusiru Farm on 28/03/2014 and Engashura farm on 3rd April 2014 respectively with selected NDEFFO Members.

⁴² Ogot, B A. *My Footprints on the Sands of Time: An Autobiography* (Canada: Trafford Publishing, 2006), pp.232-233

⁴³ FGD, through personal testimonies, members recall how they were taken to Gatundu in 1969 to take that oath of allegiance to the community. The oath was administered to Kikuyu community Kenya wide.

⁴⁴ Kenyatta was an enigma and referred as *Muthee*, an elder whose decision was final.

The idea of forming an organisation was coined by Kimunya Kamana in 1966 while working as a deputy officer of housing in Nakuru.⁴⁵ In his oral testimonies, he narrated that the idea emanated from the President speech when he announced that there was nothing for free. Therefore, Kimunya decided to meet Mau Mau, who were in areas like Njoro, Gilgil, Naivasha and Nakuru town and form an organisation. He sought help from famous people within a locality for instance in Njoro; he consulted Kariuki Kabuba and Foro wa Gicheru. Together, they opted to bring together freedom fighters and share with them the idea. The pioneer to contact more people, formulated proforma's to be filled by Mau Mau veterans who were oath-bound. For one's name to be written on the proforma, he/she was supposed to pay registration fee of Ksh.20. The money collected was deposited in Kenya Commercial Bank. They made copies of the bank slips and sent to DC. Kimani. Since Kimunya was working in the Municipal Council of Nakuru, he was able to maneuver his ways in Kenyatta government. He went to Statehouse (Nakuru) to seek permission to form Nakuru District Ex-Freedom Fighters Organisation. When presenting the idea to the president, Mbiyu Koinange a close ally of Kenyatta disagreed with the idea because he feared the Mau Mau Veterans.⁴⁶

After the refusal, NDEFFO members had to try another approach to convince the President. Their plan to meet the President to convince him of their need for land remained futile for many months. As the freedom fighters were seeking Presidential assent, they were collecting monies and identifying best European lands in Nakuru. Later on, pioneers urged Nakuru Member of Parliament, Mark Mwithaga to arrange a meeting with the head of state. They also planned to perform a concert for the President. The concert was intended to make the President recall how they suffered and how their lands were appropriated by home guards, leaving them with nothing.⁴⁷ The plan to meet the President was highly rejected by some prominent people like Peter Kenyatta and Charles Njonjo, who were interested in acquiring Engashura farm. Mwithaga recalls how they were bitter with him associating with paupers.⁴⁸

Mwithaga's request to meet the President at Gatundu was accepted. On reaching Gatundu, they found Rift Valley elites headed by Kuria, Ndolo, who were also interested in buying vacated European land in the Rift Valley. The rich group had brought goodies such as goats, honey and other presents to Kenyatta. These items were used to lure and persuade him to let them buy vacated land in the Rift Valley. They argued that, they would create jobs for landless Kikuyu if allowed to buy those pieces of land. The President declined their request, telling them that Kenya was not "as small as a palm of a hand." He directed them to search for another land elsewhere to buy since Engashura was for Mau Mau veterans. As they had planned, they performed a concert to remind Jomo Kenyatta how Mau Mau were fighting in the forest; they used dreadlocks, tattered clothes, wooden swords,11 fireworks and wooden guns. During the concert, they used Kikuyu *Thimo* (proverbs) which gratified the president a lot.

By the time NDEFFO members were meeting the President, they had raised Ksh.800, 000 that was under the custody of PC. Nyachae and DC. Kimani. The President was amused, and he told Vice President Moi in Kikuyu

⁴⁵ Kimunya, OI, held in Nakuru town on 26th July 2014

⁴⁶ Kamana, OI, (former Member of Parliament of Nakuru) held in Nakuru town on 26th July 2014

⁴⁷ Muthua, Njoroje, Ndiritu, OI, and others freedom fighters recounts how they found their land in Central Province taken away after coming from the forest by home-guards (3/04/2014).

⁴⁸ Mwithaga, OI, with former MP of Nakuru from 1966, held on 23/7/2014 at Nakuru Town.

language “*Tumundu tutu twina mbia nyingi muno*” (these people have a lot of money). Members chose to call their company NDEFFO, a name with “Freedom Fighters” hoping to receive assistance from the President. The President, however, never helped them financially, although he shielded them from competition from powerful home guards and government officials who were interested in the same land they were eyeing. Jomo Kenyatta was fascinated by the idea of the Mau Mau forming an organisation because his idea that “nothing was for free” was adhered by them. Afterwards, Kenyatta promised to get more involved with NDEFFO issues. Kimunya Kamana hired 18 tractors to plough the Elbohezer land because he had refused to sell the land to them. The ploughing of a European farm without permission was published in the media “Mau Mau were taking over European farms.” The news was published by the Nakuru Press house by the weekly news. It created a heated debate and mixed reactions. Mwithaga was well conversant with what was happening, he hurriedly asked the then speaker Humphrey Slade to allow him table a motion in parliament as a matter of national importance to address the issue of Mau Mau invading European farms. Due to this, the President sent the minister of lands Jackson Angaine and Minister of Co-operative and Social Services, Ronald Ngala to solve the situation.⁴⁹

4. Registration of NDEFFO

The initial name of the organisation mentioned was Nakuru District Ex-freedom fighter’s organisation without abbreviation. Due to political bickering, Moi and Njonjo were against the formation of NDEFFO. They saw it as a way of Mau Mau regrouping under the umbrella of Nakuru District Ex-freedom Fighters Organisation (NDEFFO). In this regard, Mwithaga held a meeting in Nakuru with Kimunya Kamana and others, changing the name to NDEFFO Company so that it could have an economic outlook. By calling it, “NDEFFO Company Limited” without mentioning what the abbreviation meant was much favoured by politicians. Later on the pioneers decided to register it under the company law, therefore, becoming more economically oriented. Mwithaga was driven by what he saw as; “the problems of ex-freedom fighters who came from either detentions or forests with nothing apart from humiliation,” Therefore, he formed the organisation with a social and economic motive.⁵⁰ Some scholars like Clough hold that NDEFFO was established for political reasons; however, Mwithaga argued that they constituted NDEFFO for Nakuru Mau Mau Veterans. By doing that, he wanted to keep a legacy that Nakuru, centre of White Highlands, there were Mau Mau living within them.

NDEFFO was formed to emancipate the landless Mau Mau from poverty. The Kikuyu community since pre-colonial period relied on land. They saw it as the source of wealth. Mwithaga, therefore, wanted NDEFFO to be registered for the economic benefits of the members. Forming a group and raising Ksh. 800, 000, was a way of showing the government that the Mau Mau was self-sufficient and did not rely on the government support. Later on NDEFFO was registered as a company on 6 March in 1968, under the Companies Act (Cap. 486) by the Assistant Registrar of Companies O.M. Sameja. As per its Memorandum of Association, NDEFFO Company had many objectives.

⁴⁹ Mwithaga, OI, held at Nakuru Town on 23/7/2014

⁵⁰ Mwithaga, OI, held in Nakuru town on 23/7/2014

5. Conclusion

The Mau Mau veterans were in a dilemma when the President denounced their plea. They felt their post-colonial government betrayed their expectation for land. With the formation of NDEFFO, Mau Mau felt relieved and expected material gains from the government. The metamorphosis from Mau Mau to NDEFFO was not easy since some government officials saw it as Mau Mau regrouping. NDEFFO farms were bought from personal contributions and Kenyatta, and subsequent governments did not in any way support the Mau Mau veterans. The company aimed to buy land and settle members. After that, members could use the title deeds or their shares to acquire loans to advancing themselves. NDEFFO was to be a historical place for Mau Mau, "If you go to there you will find Mau Mau Veterans who served in different cadres in Mau Mau wars." The failed expectation had profound effects in contemporary Kenya. The Mau Mau veterans expected the government to allocate land freely to them and their children. It is therefore, prudent for the government to identify real Mau Mau freedom fighters and compensate them to end the continued land struggle.

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