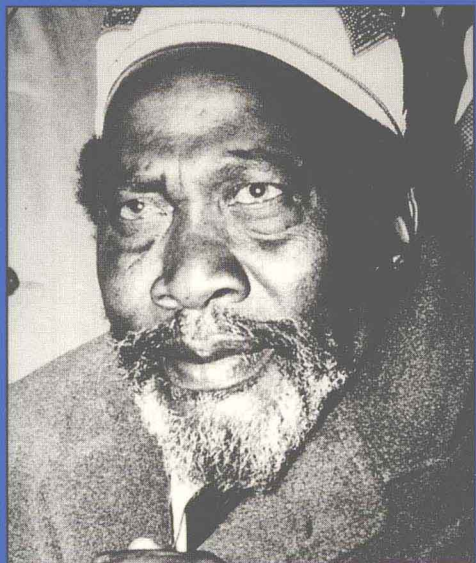
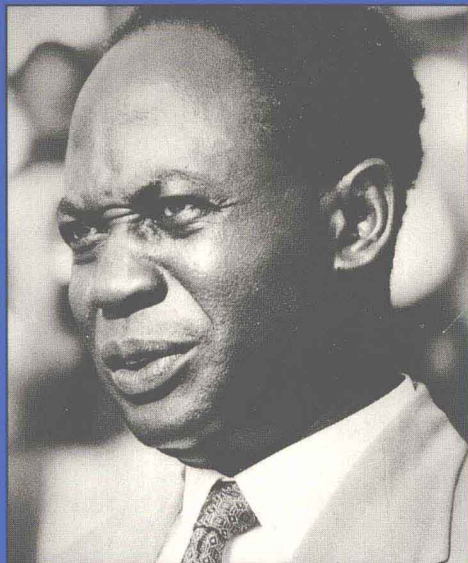


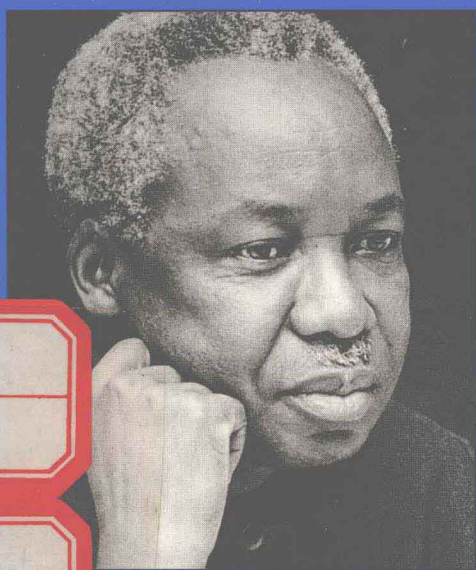
AFRICAN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP



Jomo Kenyatta



Kwame Nkrumah



Nyerere

**Jomo Kenyatta
Kwame Nkrumah
and
Julius K. Nyerere**

by
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Foreword by
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DEDICATION
FOR
GLORIA (MAMA), PHILIP, SAM, ROSE-ABENA,
AKWASI, JR., and KWADWO:

with the hope that they will each have a deepened understanding of African history and politics; and for YVETTE, with appreciation for her warm companionship and scholarly guidance in the area of politics!

FOREWORD

John Mukum Mbaku
Professor of Economics,
Weber State University, Ogden, Utah

LEADERSHIP FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY, LEARNING FROM THE PAST

Available evidence now indicates that the quality of life for the majority of Africans has either not improved since the 1960s when the African countries began to gain independence or has done so only marginally. Many researchers believe that only drastic measures and radical changes in leadership can arrest the deteriorating economic and social conditions in the continent and allow for significant improvements in the living standards of the people.¹ World Bank and United Nations data show that most of the world's poorest countries today can be found in Africa. Mass poverty and deprivation are quite rampant in sub-Saharan Africa, and in recent years, the situation has reached a critical level. In the Sahel, for example, "starvation and malnutrition are continuing to reduce the productive capacity of the area's economies."²

During the last four decades, many developing countries have made significant improvements in the welfare of their citizens. In addition to the fact that many of these countries have achieved food security, they have been able, through strong economic growth, to significantly lower infant mortality and illiteracy rates, and generally improve the quality of life of their citizens. The move toward higher levels of economic and human development has not been universal. In addition to the fact that many countries in Africa have not achieved food secu-

rity, historically deprived and marginalized Africans continue to live in poverty and suffer from very high levels of material deprivation. In fact, according to an International Human Suffering Index constructed by the Population Crisis Committee of Washington, D.C., of the ten countries with the highest levels of human suffering in 1987, nine of them were in Africa.³ According to data from the World Bank, Africa experienced little or no economic growth during the period 1980-1990. The subregion, sub-Saharan Africa regressed economically during this period. On the other hand, East Asia and the Pacific area registered an impressive growth rate of 6.1% and South Asia, a rate of 3.1%. North Africa, which is usually included in the Middle East for statistical purposes, also performed poorly, achieving a growth rate of -2.4%.⁴

Using the Human Development Index (HDI), the United Nations' newly developed measure for human development, one can see that Africa is still the poorest region of the world. Of the poorest thirty-three countries in the world today, more than 80 percent of them can be found in Africa.⁵ The question to ask, of course, is: Why have African countries failed to make significant improvements in the welfare of their citizens in the post-independence period? Several reasons have been advanced to explain the inability of the continent to advance economically. External and internal obstacles to development have been identified. External constraints to human development in Africa include the global economy which is said to discriminate against producers of primary commodities, the economic policies of the industrial market economies, and natural disasters. Among the internal constraints to development are high levels of bureaucratic and political corruption, high rates of population growth, political violence and institutional instability, poorly developed economic infrastructures, low rates of savings, dependence on primary commodities and on the markets of the industrial market economies, and unmanageable external debt.⁶

In recent years, it has become evident that institutional arrangements in a country have a significant impact on the behavior of entrepreneurs and subsequently on economic growth and development. The incentive system within a society, which is determined by the country's institutions, has a significant effect on the behavior of participants in markets and their ability to create the wealth needed to eliminate poverty and improve living conditions for the people. Thus, a country's laws and institutions, and the leaders who must interpret and enforce these laws are very important for economic growth and development. One can view the internal obstacles to development

given above as symptoms of poorly designed and nonviable laws and institutions and of poor leadership. Many African countries adopted weak, inappropriate and poorly constructed constitutional rules at independence and thus were unable to provide the proper incentives for entrepreneurial activities in the postindependence period. In addition, the indigenous elites who captured the apparatus of government after independence manipulated these relatively weak laws and institutions to enrich themselves at the expense of the rest of the people. Eventually, postindependence political economy in the continent came to be dominated by high levels of opportunism, including "rent seeking" (seeking bribes), as interest groups and political coalitions subverted the rules to redistribute income and wealth in their favor and at the expense of the rest of the people. Basically, unscrupulous national elites used a government's power to intervene in the economy, merely to enrich themselves while impoverishing the bulk of the people.⁷

The end of the Cold War and the subsequent cessation of super-power rivalry has offered Africans an opportunity to reexamine their institutional arrangements and provide new structures for development in the coming century. To prepare for the twenty-first century, Africa must undertake effective institutional reforms to provide each society with efficient and viable institutions. In addition, corrupt, uncaring, dictatorial, racist, opportunistic and incompetent leaders must be replaced by individuals who are willing and able to provide the leadership that Africa needs for sustainable economic and human development in the new century and beyond. Recently, research on Africa and its development problems has focused on the issues of constitutional discourse and *leadership*. It is fitting that in attempting to help provide the leadership needed to lead the African peoples into the new century, Professor A. B. Assensoh has chosen to start with a look at some of Africa's most important and controversial leaders. This book provides the cornerstone on which to build a proper research agenda on the question of political and economic leadership in Africa. It examines the lives and political careers of three of Africa's most illustrious, flamboyant, and tenacious indigenous leaders: Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana.

Nkrumah, Nyerere, and Kenyatta fought hard and effectively for the freedom of Africans. Their struggles resulted in the granting of political and economic autonomy by Britain to three of its colonies in Africa and provided the impetus for the subsequent decolonization of other European territories in the continent. Unfortunately, for all three leaders, they inherited state structures and economies that were not

designed with African interests, aspirations, objectives, traditions, customs, and well-being in mind. During the struggle for independence, it was generally believed that capture of the apparatus of government by indigenous elites would improve the ability of the state to eliminate mass poverty and deprivation. The colonial state and its economic system, however, were not designed to improve African participation in development. Instead, colonial institutions were structures of exploitation and despotism, designed primarily to maximize European objectives.⁸ Decolonization was supposed to provide the opportunity for the reconstruction of the state and these institutions to provide Africans the opportunity to participate effectively in postindependence development. Unfortunately, the process of decolonization was reluctant and opportunistic, and failed to allow for "fundamental transformation in the economic, cultural, or bureaucratic domains."⁹ In addition to the fact that the Europeans made no effort to adequately prepare Africans for eventual self-rule, they left behind institutional arrangements that were weak, unstable, and not very appropriate for the societies they were supposed to serve. Thus, leaders like Nkrumah, Nyerere and Kenyatta inherited poorly developed and nonviable laws and institutions which were to prove quite problematic in the postindependence period. Three problems were immediately evident after independence. First, there was a severe shortage of skilled indigenous elites to help lead each country into postindependence democracy. During colonialism, the colonial state had intentionally stunted the development of an independent indigenous elite capable of challenging the monopolization of political economy by Europeans. As a result, most of the elites found in the country after independence were usually individuals, like Nkrumah, who had spent many years abroad in an effort to educate themselves. In the process, many of them had lost contact with the people at home and the nature of their problems and aspirations. Second, the institutions left behind by the departing Europeans were not capable of effectively handling the increased demand by the African peoples for greater levels of participation in both economic and political markets, and as such, should have been reconstructed after independence to make them more suitable for African needs. In fact, Africans should have been enfranchised in the preindependence period and provided facilities to develop their own laws and institutions for the postindependence society. Unfortunately, this was not done. As a result, political violence erupted as the struggle to capture the evacuated structures of colonial hegemony intensified. Third, there was no attempt, by the indigenous elites who had captured the apparatus of government after independence, to engage in institu-

tional reforms to reconstruct the state and provide the African peoples with appropriate and viable institutional arrangements. Consequently, postindependence political economy was to be dominated by the kind of opportunism that had characterized the colonial period.

All three leaders, Nkrumah, Nyerere, and Kenyatta, struggled to improve living conditions for their people. In promoting a form of African socialism, both Nkrumah and Nyerere genuinely believed that such a development model would provide the state with the resources needed to eliminate mass poverty and generally improve the living standards of the people, especially the historically marginalized. Kenyatta also attempted to follow a socialist development model, one that he believed would help Kenya develop rapidly. Although there were no mass resettlement programs like those promoted by neighboring Tanzania, Kenya's socialist programs did cause a lot of economic problems for the traditionally marginalized communities and contributed significantly to rising levels of corruption in the country. Postindependence political economy in all three countries came to be increasingly characterized by high levels of opportunism, including bureaucratic and political corruption. In fact, by the time Nkrumah was overthrown, Ghana had degenerated into a venal society in which lucrative monopoly positions in the economy were regularly sold by civil servants. Corruption had become so pervasive in Ghana that it was virtually impossible to successfully operate in the formal sector without paying bribes to the civil service workers. Of course, corruption was not restricted to Ghana. All three countries suffered from high levels of both political and economic corruption. The postindependence problems of Ghana under Nkrumah, Tanzania under Nyerere and Kenya under Kenyatta have been explored elsewhere. In this book, Professor Assensoh examines some of them. However, the main emphasis of the book is on the exploration of the struggles of the three indigenous leaders for the independence of their countries and their subsequent efforts to liberate the rest of Africa. All three leaders have their share of critics. In fact, in several papers, I have severely criticized Nkrumah for his perverse economic policies and the extremely high levels of corruption that characterized his years in government.¹⁰ Despite their shortcomings, all three leaders must be remembered as individuals who contributed significantly to the liberation movement in the continent and provided the leadership needed to gain Africans their freedom from the Europeans. Granted, Nkrumah promoted perverse and disastrous economic policies in Ghana, engaged in the torturing of members of the opposition, and squandered opportunities that could have been used effectively to lead the Ghanaian people out

of poverty and deprivation. In Tanzania, Nyerere promoted one of the most disastrous socialist economic programs in postindependence Africa and significantly increased poverty among the historically marginalized groups in the country. In Kenya, Kenyatta's relatively autocratic rule did not provide Kenyans with the opportunity to participate effectively in national integration and development. While not excusing them for their shortcomings, it is important to recognize that these individuals did provide Africans with the tools to build new societies. They were pioneers who made serious mistakes, but at the same time successfully established the foundation—the independent countries—on which Africans must now seek to build new societies. Studying these leaders and the mistakes they made should prepare Africans to meet the challenges of the new century. Revisiting their shortcomings should help us design laws and institutions that will make certain that the mistakes of the past are not repeated. The present study provides important insights into the lives and careers of Nkrumah of Ghana, Nyerere of Tanzania, and Kenyatta of Kenya, pioneering African leaders, who despite their shortcomings, have contributed significantly to the liberation of the continent and its people.

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10. See, for example, Mbaku (1992), *op. cit.*

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

From the onset, it is very important for me to underscore certain pertinent facts about this work. My immediate objective here is to place, in one volume, some essential historical as well as political aspects of the lives and times of three of Africa's very important leaders of the twentieth century: the late President (*Mzee*) Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya; the late ex-President *Osagyefo* Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana; and retired President *Nwalimu* Julius Kambarage Nyerere of Tanzania. Although this is the first time that the lives and political times of the three radical leaders have been so discussed in a single book, it is also crucial to explain that my foremost aim is not, necessarily, to do a definitive comparative study of all aspects of their lives and circumstances.

Instead, this work is a new refinement of various aspects of the political careers, some pitfalls and, above all, the ultimate achievements of Kenyatta, Nkrumah and Nyerere. Where possible, however, some enduring comparisons have been drawn, particularly in my introduction, to show where the three leaders, finally, stood in African-cum-world history and politics on the threshold of the twenty-first century. Indeed, this study is done with such deliberate scholarly seriousness that it should benefit scholars, including teachers at all levels, students and those who read for pleasure.

In addition to the detailed Foreword by Professor John Mukum Mbaku, and sections of the appendixes, notes and a detailed subject index, the book is divided into five chapters. Professor Mbaku was selected to do the Foreword for various reasons. First, his distinguished position as the Willard L. Eccles Professor of Economics and his general African research interests bring him in serious touch with African issues within the context of the continent's political economy. Second, as the successful past President of the Association of Third World

Studies and, also, as an editor of the Book Review section of the association's *Journal of Third World Studies*, Dr. Mbaku has earned such an enviable reputation among other leading scholars on Third World issues that he is a scholar who can understand and appreciate most of the detailed issues that I have set out to discuss in this volume. Above all, in discussions with him at the annual meetings of the association that he later headed, John always exhibited an indepth knowledge of African history and politics in general and, in particular, southern-cum-eastern African issues, both of which have for a long time constituted part of his research interests. Indeed, I am very grateful to Dr. Mbaku for his promptness in agreeing to do the foreword to the book.

Chapter 1 of the book—Introduction—is subtitled “The Life and Times of Jomo Kenyatta, Kwame Nkrumah, and Julius Kambarage Nyerere.” It is a comparative study of these men. It complements the existing relevant studies of the three African nationalist leaders that have been used to enliven each of the other four chapters. Apart from discussing their political careers, I have drawn examples from their known literary works, which were produced during their hectic careers as the first elected indigenous leaders of their countries.

Chapter 2—titled “Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya”—deals specifically with the Kenyan leader. Here, I have tapped my vast research collections and other useful works on Kenyatta to provide readers and researchers with a fresh analytical framework and to refine the lifelong events in which the Kenyan “Burning Spear”—as Kenyatta was nicknamed by both critics and admirers—was deeply involved from cradle to grave.

Chapter 3 selectively delves deeply into the life and works of Nkrumah. Again, I have relied on my own extensive research collections which date back to the early 1970s when I began scholarly research on the Ghanaian leader in my appointed residential capacity as a Scholar-in-Residence at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, Nkrumah's alma mater. Also, in my role as a researcher at University of Pennsylvania, where Nkrumah earned two master's degrees in education (1942), philosophy (1943), and subsequently completed the course work as well as the qualifying doctoral examination in 1945 toward his doctoral degree in philosophy, I was able to utilize a vast array of resources.¹ Additionally, I used his other existing published sources, both primary and secondary. Nkrumah's former publishers, Panaf Books Limited of London, was ably directed by his former literary editor, June Milne, a University of London-educated historian who lives in Britain in semiretirement from active publishing.

Chapter 4—“Julius Kambarage Nyerere of Tanzania”—is the main

section that distills existing primary and secondary source materials on the life and times of Tanzania's Nyerere. Here the University of Edinburgh-educated nationalist is treated as one of the pioneers of the politics of inclusion and "retirement," especially as he left his country's political scene voluntarily to devote his life to other national and international tasks. The chapter discusses Nyerere's life up to the year of his retirement from active partisan politics, 1985, and a few years beyond that period.

There are maps of each country as well as detailed chronologies of each leader. Important historical items have also been included in the section on appendixes. They include the 1963 charter and the administrative ladder of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now headed by Tanzania's Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, a Nyerere protege. There are the detailed notes at the end of the book. The bibliography has been deliberately kept to the minimum in order to document only primary and secondary source works on which I drew for the completion of the study on the three former leaders of Africa. Consequently, it is not by any means exhaustive.

Every effort has been made to offer fresh analyses of the lives and times of Kenyatta, Nkrumah, and Nyerere from cradle to grave. In doing so, I have painstakingly provided materials to compare their formative influences, most of which were acquired abroad during their student days; political philosophies; Pan-Africanist involvement; anti-colonialist struggles, and the three leaders' nation-building tactics. All of these topics are addressed within the context of the prevailing sociopolitical and economic nuances of Kenya, Ghana, and Tanzania in particular but Africa in general, with a deliberate emphasis on Africa's march toward the twenty-first century.

Essentially, this book comes to terms with the conclusions of many Pan-Africanists and scholars on Africa, who have offered cogent reasons behind the need for the fierce anticolonialist struggles that Kenyatta, Nkrumah and Nyerere sparked in their countries in the 1950s. For example, General Olusegun Obasanjo, Nigeria's former head of state and as the distinguished chairman of the Africa Leadership Forum, in 1991 stipulated, that "the anti-colonial struggles of African people was, among other things, essentially an ethical revolution in the most hallowed sense of the world."² Obasanjo added that, similar to the conclusions that I have reached in this work, the anticolonialist struggles in Africa were "waged as much to end foreign rule, racial bigotry, and the associated indignities as to extirpate illiteracy and all manners of backwardness. Yet no sooner had colonial rule ended than our new rulers set about converting the revolution into one of fire and

thunder against their own people."³ Hence, indeed, the detailed discussion in this book of the various forms of postcolonial inimical laws used to arrest, detain and even deport nationals and foreigners of several African nations without trial or conviction. In fact, General Obasanjo, who articulated this deplorable situation so eloquently, is currently behind bars in his native Nigeria, accused of a prior knowledge of a planned but never executed coup d'état against the military rule of General Sanni Abacha of Nigeria. He was arrested, charged with treason, tried—by what observers described as a kangaroo court—and sentenced to a long jail term by the Abacha regime. In fact, it is speculated that his life was saved by the outcries and condemnations of his plight by important political and international leaders. That, indeed, is the unfortunate situation in Africa today, not very different from Africa of the Kenyatta, Nkrumah, and Nyerere years.

Invariably, I cannot end this study without offering appropriate thanks and gratitude to certain individuals and sources. Promptly, I have a debt of unqualified gratitude to pay to numerous persons, but lack of space may not permit me to specify each by name. Therefore, I wish to begin by underscoring that I am very grateful to many friends, colleagues and students who encouraged me to soldier on to finish the work, no matter how daunting an experience it kept on coming at me. Professor Richard W. Hull of the History Department at New York University (NYU) promoted my interest in African history and politics during my graduate studies there, an interest that was buttressed by Dr. Hull's careful supervision of my doctoral dissertation at the time. Another scholar, who did much to influence my interest in Third World history and politics in general was Professor Peter Chelkowski of the Near and Middle East Center at NYU, who taught me Middle Eastern history and, later, served as my external examiner for my doctoral examinations. I certainly wish to inform him that his very enlightening jokes in class about several African and Middle Eastern leaders, not only gave me comic relief, but prompted me to delve more into British Commonwealth and Third World history and politics.

In many ways, I am very grateful to Professor Hans L. Trefousse of Brooklyn College, the editor of the Anvil Series of Krieger Publishing Company of Malabar, Florida. His gentle prodding in our correspondence kept me on my research toes, and I appreciate his assistance. Also, I am grateful to Ms. Marie Bowles of Krieger, whose patience and prompt responses to my multifaceted queries, made my work a lot easier. Additionally, I am grateful to Ms. Elaine S. Rudd, my helpful and superb editor at Krieger. Finally, I thank the staff of Britain's Public Records Office at Kew Gardens near London.

For financial and moral support as I completed the book, I am also very grateful to Indiana University, and especially Dean Morton Lowengrub of the College of Arts and Sciences, who extended a generous summer faculty research fellowship to me for two years. With that I did not need to search for summer income but, instead, buried myself in research for three books that I have sketched out for completion, including this one. In the field of additional research, I am also eternally grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities, whose six-week summer sponsorship of an Institute at The Newberry Library in Chicago, Illinois—for which I was selected—enabled me to use the vast research sources at the Libraries of the Loyola University of Chicago; the University of Illinois in Chicago; Northwestern University in Chicago, and the University of Chicago. Newberry was a great place for my cartographic needs, and I am grateful!

Two individuals who played the roles of companions while I worked on the book manuscript at the computer laboratory of the Loyola University in Chicago and the various libraries were my two children, then 15-year old Rose-Abena Assensoh, and then 13-year old Akwasi B. Assensoh, Jr. While in the city to participate in the N.E.H.-funded summer research and teaching Institute, Rose-Abena and Akwasi dutifully accompanied me to the well-stocked libraries and the Loyola computer laboratory every evening and on many weekends, where I worked on my various manuscripts. I am grateful to them as well as to the security personnel at Loyola, who trusted that I was there for a worthwhile research reason and never did anything to impede my progress as a researcher.

Additionally, I am very grateful to authors, editors and publishers, whose pioneering works on Kenyatta, Nkrumah and Nyerere provided me with part of the materials relied on and, some times, quoted for illustrative purposes. Without their earlier studies, it would have been a daunting task to start from the scratch to collect and collate research material for this study. I, indeed, doff my hat off to all of them.

Above all, I am responsible for any shortcomings in this book, as I worked on it at a very hectic time of my life: between changing jobs from Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where I was an associate professor of history and coordinator of graduate studies in the Social Science graduate program, to Indiana University's Bloomington campus as an associate professor in the Department of Afro-American Studies.

Finally, I am very grateful to my wife (Dr. Alex-Assensoh), Yvette, a political scientist in her own right, who helped a great deal on this book from its beginning to the end but shied away from being listed

as a co-author. In spite of the fact that she was also busily completing a book-length manuscript for Garland Publishers of New York, she often took time off to either listen to and offer advice on some intellectual stumbling blocks and to read and re-read "unclear" historical jargons to help in making them clearer with political science precision. Then, our dear son, Kwadwo, was often by my side at an early age of his life, sometimes trying to take over the word processor from me, which very often was a struggle between the two of us while his mother was not at home and I played the role of a temporary baby-sitter. I thank Kwadwo for his "hectic" and "intruding" companionship. For, during that time, when he was only nine months old, he still demanded that I should strike an equal balance between parenting and book-manuscript writing. Above all, it is worthwhile that Rose-Abena, Akwasi and Kwadwo are among those for whom this book is finally dedicated.