The Kenya 1997 General Elections in Maasailand: Of ‘Sons’ and ‘Puppets’ and How KANU Defeated Itself

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In early December 1997, a group of Maasai youngsters stopped the Peugeot car of the Kajiado District Commissioner Mutemi. Their aim was to admonish the administrator following interference by KANU in the nomination process for its parliamentary candidate in Kajiado Central constituency. The administrator was accused of being a party to the alleged rigging. After the car stopped, which did not carry the DC at the time, a conversation ensued in the following manner: Maasai: ‘Sema Moi ni Mbwa’ (Say Moi is a dog). Driver: (refuses to answer). Maasai: ‘Mimi nasema hivi, sema Moi ni Mbwa’ (I am telling you to repeat that Moi is a dog). Driver: (refuses to answer). The car was then set upon with clubs.

This story exemplifies the negative feelings towards KANU prevalent among many of the local people after the elected candidate Stephen ole Leken was dropped to give way for the incumbent MP David Sankori. Similarly, in Kajiado South constituency the same politics were played, thus bereaving Geoffrey Parpai his candidacy in favour of the incumbent Philip Singaru. This obstruction by KANU in the nomination of its candidates triggered a shock wave of anger and frustration. It caused an ‘earthquake’ that hit the political landscape in the Maasai area (See map on p. 190). As a result, KANU is no longer the natural option for the Maasai electorate. The 1997 elections ended the monopolistic position of the ruling party in Kajiado South constituency and in Kajiado Central the opposition party Safina almost won the seat. What remains to be seen is whether the turn away from KANU by the Maasai electorate is definitive. This chapter analyses the forces at work during the Kenya 1997 elections in the Maasai area.

Maasai politics in colonial days 1900-63

The Maasai of Kenya mainly inhabit the districts of Trans Mara, Narok and Kajiado in the southern part of the country bordering Tanzania. Before the
arrival of the British colonisers they lived more to the north of their present position in an area which came to be known the White Highlands. Protests against the loss of their northern area have been raised since the 1904 and 1911 treaties between the Maasai and the British were signed. In return for giving up the northern pastures, the Maasai were guaranteed that the southern reserve would be closed to non-Maasai. Since then the process of land loss has continued and has become one of the main political issues in the Maasai setting (see Rutten 1992). In 1960, shortly before independence, the Maasai, fearing that the closed status of their districts would be lost, created the Maasai United Front (MUF). The driving force was John Keen, born in 1929 in Laikipia, the northern area, the son of a German father and Maasai mother. Stanley Oloitiptip, a Kisongo Maasai from the slopes of Mt Kilimanjaro, Kajiado district, became the first chairman. Within a year the two men had clashed. Keen, who was also the organising secretary of the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), the party that sought to rally support from all small ethnic groups in Kenya, called for dissolution of KADU-affiliated tribal organisations so that the party could devote its efforts to the independence question (see Weekly Review 15/11/76). In response Oloitiptip organised a protest to KADU’s president Ronald Ngala and declared a vote of no confidence in Keen.

This marked the beginning of a long history of conflict between the two politicians representing Kajiado district. Keen left KADU to become an independent member of parliament before joining the Kenya African National Union (KANU) – which was mainly a Kikuyu-Luo body. Whereas KADU proposed some kind of majimboism (regionalism), KANU was considered to be a national party, which wanted freedom of settlement for every Kenyan in all parts of the country. Keen soon rose within KANU to become the organising secretary in 1962.

At the time of the Kenya constitutional conference at Lancaster House (March-April 1962) in London, which discussed Kenya’s independence, the Maasai were represented by Justus ole Tipis, John ole Konchela (KADU parliamentary group) and John Keen (KANU). In addition, a Maasai delegation, which included five more Maasai representatives, also attended the conference. This delegation expressed their wish to continue to enjoy security of tenure in their reserved area. In addition, they wanted their ownership of the lands which the Maasai had vacated as a result of the 1904 and 1911 treaties to be recognised as Maasai territory. They also demanded that the territory should revert to its original owners once it was vacated by the European settlers. The British government rejected these demands despite threats by Keen to go to the United Nations or the International Court of Justice. It also dismissed a proposal by Keen for financial compensation amounting to £5,800,000 and a further £100,000 annually. The KADU members within the delegation were less willing to accept compensation: they wanted the return of the land. ‘To the Maasai this was a matter of life and death’ (KNA/MAC/KEN/52/11). In protest, all Maasai representatives i.e., Tipis, Keen and Konchela, refused to sign the final report of the conference, The Framework of the Kenya Constitution, because of ‘the refusal of Her Majesty’s Government to recognise the claim of the Maasai delegation that the land formerly occupied by the tribe in the Rift Valley should revert to them’ (KNA/MAC/KEN/48/8). The loss of these high potential pastures and the loss of even more land later on are, as we will see, up till today major aspects of Maasai politics.

Post-independence politics in Maasailand: The early years 1963-83

In the 1960s Keen clashed with Oloitiptip several times. His outspokenness also landed him in problems with the authorities on several occasions. In 1967, he was detained for two months for blaming the heads of state of Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya for not making headway with East African unity. And in 1975 he was fired from the cabinet after a debate on killing of J.M. Kariuki. Likewise, on the issue of land he continued to criticise the establishment. In 1978 he warned that unless steps were taken to ensure its fair distribution, the potentially explosive land issue in Kenya would get out of hand. He pointed at corrupt individuals grabbing land in the Maasai area though at one time he himself was accused of favouring some friends and relatives in the Ngong Hills area. He blamed powerful individuals for misusing the funds meant for the conservation of wildlife in the Amboseli area (see e.g. Daily Nation 2003/75; 17/09/81; 03/11/81; 03/06/82; East African Standard 31/05/79; 30/01/83; 10/11/84; Nairobi Times 24/09/78).

Although outspoken and fearless, Keen was blamed by his constituency residents for not bringing home the development they wanted. On his part, he accused the local Maasai of still wearing the traditional dress and keeping to traditional ways of life, including moranism (warriorhood). He urged them to send their kids to school and to modernise. His rival, Oloitiptip, by contrast, defended traditional Maasai customs and worked hard as assistant minister to bring development to the benefit of his family and friends in his home area. By the mid-70s Oloitiptip’s star was rising even further when he was made the first Maasai cabinet minister (for natural resources). Keen, however, continued to make life difficult for Oloitiptip. The latter’s idea to revive the MUF in late 1976 was criticised and Keen demanded that his rival be thrown out of KANU for that idea. Eventually Oloitiptip lost his post of KANU district chairman (Daily Nation 15/11/76). In 1981, after Keen was re-appointed by Moi to the
cabinet as assistant minister in the Office of the President, the two Kajiado politicians ended their feud.

Yet the peace agreement did not last long. Keen announced the beginning of the end of the road for Oloitiptip when the latter was publicly accused of active involvement in shady plot deals by the Olkejuado and Narok county councils (Daily Nation 05/02/83; 21/04/89; East African Standard 05/02/83; 27/03/83). County council land and forest land had been handed out to Oloitiptip and his political supporters since the mid-1970s. Maasai elders of the rival Matapato section of Kajiado South constituency openly rejected Oloitiptip by April 1983 (Daily Nation 28/04/83). The following day another group of Maasai elders protested, saying John Keen had incited them to undermine Oloitiptip (Daily Nation 29/04/83).

In May 1983 President Moi announced that the next general elections would be held a year in advance to enable the political system to elect honest and dedicated leaders (IED 1997: 124). At a KANU rally in July, Oloitiptip was accused of not being development conscious, practising divisive politics in the district and mismanaging public funds. Oloitiptip hit back at Keen saying he did not want to waste time and energy 'quarrelling with a dying horse' (Weekly Review 29/07/83:11). Each of the two warlords supported rival candidates in their respective constituencies. At one time the Weekly Review concluded: "if there were any award given to the district with the longest record of political squabbling among its top politicians, then there is little doubt that Kajiado would hold the dubious distinction" (Weekly Review 26/08/83:17).

In neighbouring Narok district politics were dominated by Justus Kendet Tipis for Narok North and John Konchela for Narok West for most of this period. Like Keen both men had been to the Lancaster House conference. They also had their differences, but were not engaged in fighting each other as much as their Kajiado neighbours did. At one time Tipis was the president of the Maasai United Front. When KADU dissolved itself, he joined KANU and was made an assistant minister for Tourist and Wildlife before the 1967 elections which he lost to Moses Marima. He returned to parliament after beating Marima in 1974 and was appointed an assistant minister for Home Affairs. He also became KANU's national treasurer. By 1977 it seemed as if his political career was coming to an end (Weekly Review 10/01/77). Tipis had tried to organise the elections in the middle of 1976 while prominent persons were not around. However, he was challenged and in the December 1976 Narok district party elections, he was defeated by William ole Ntimama, who until that date had kept a low profile in national politics but was building a strong empire in his Narok district. A few weeks later, KANU headquarters announced that it would allow petitions from a few branches in the country, including Narok. Tipis was a member of the appeals committee and a repeat

was ordered. Ntimama's appeal to Kenyatta fell on deaf ears. However, he trounced Tipis a second time. When the general elections came in 1979, Ntimama was prevailed upon not to run against Tipis by President Moi (Weekly Review 31/01/97).

So, in 1979 ole Tipis was elected unopposed as MP for Narok North. He used his position to make life difficult for Ntimama who was then Narok county council chairman. This intensified when Tipis was appointed minister of state in the Office of the President in charge of internal security and the provincial administration. Though Ntimama survived a probe committee set up to investigate the affairs of the Narok county council, he was not able to withstand Tipis' harassment after he announced in early 1983 his intention to run against Tipis in the 1983 elections. He was arrested a few weeks before the polls and was charged with holding an illegal meeting. He appeared in court and returned home some days later to announce he would stand down in favour of Tipis. Again Tipis went in unopposed.

In both 1979 and 1983 elections, Francis Somphisha outvoted John Konchela, once an assistant minister for Works in Narok West, now Kilgoris constituency. The two had been competing over the seat since the early 60s. Narok West was also the home of the late Joseph Murumbi, Kenya's second vice-president, who had retired from politics earlier and died in 1990. Narok South constituency had remained firmly in the hands of the late Meshack ole Nampaso from 1969 to 1988.

The rise of new political leaders in Maasailand (1983-92)

In spite of Keen's efforts, Oloitiptip survived the KANU elections in September 1983, backed by his Kisono Maasai of Kajiado South constituency, and was re-appointed as minister in the cabinet. John Keen himself lost Kajiado North to Philip Odupoy who was appointed an assistant minister in the Ministry of Water Development. Odupoy was not well known by the people, especially the Maasai, but was politically and financially supported by Oloitiptip. Another person from Kajiado North constituency who marked his entrance into politics, was Prof. George Saitoti, a lecturer at the Department of Mathematics at the University of Nairobi. He was nominated MP and appointed the minister in the Ministry for Finance and Planning. It was the first time, in Kenya's history, that the post of minister for Finance was given to a nominated MP (Daily Nation 17/11/83).

Oloitiptip's fortune did not last for long as he was dropped from the cabinet in October 1983. There were rumours that Oloitiptip was linked to Charles Njonjo's attempt to overthrow the government assisted by foreign mercenaries. Oloitiptip would have become vice-president had the operation to remove Moi from power succeeded (Weekly Review 30/03/89, 3-7). The MP for Kitui
West, Parmenas Munyasia, hit at the Kajiado South MP for claiming to be a Nyayo follower (Moi’s) while he was named in the judicial commission of inquiry into the conduct of Njonjo (Daily Nation 28/03/84). Fred Gumo, the assistant minister for Transport and Communications, also accused Oloitiptip of plotting against President Moi (Daily Nation 03/03/84). The Olkejuado county council asked Oloitiptip to resign (Daily Nation 05/04/84). The following week Oloitiptip was named in a beach plot scandal in which he was said to have been illegally allocated 3.4 hectares in Malindi by the commissioner of Lands in the previous year (East African Standard 12/04/84). He was expelled by KANU in September 1984. After losing his political power, his financial base was also attacked by companies, hospitals, banks and the Olkejuado county council trying to settle unpaid bills by the now disgraced Oloitiptip. He was jailed and released on bail after one day (East African Standard 13/01/84; 25/05/84). In the end his property was saved from auctioning by his fellow Maasai, including John Keen. Oloitiptip died on 22 January 1985 and Moses ole Kenah became the new MP for Kajiado South.

In the 1988 elections, Kajiado district was divided in three constituencies: North, Central and South. In North, Saitoti backed by Keen was returned unopposed. Keen himself became a nominated MP and was appointed assistant minister in the Office of the President. To ensure Saitoti’s election, the incumbent MP’s life was made difficult (e.g., Philip Odupoy was charged with holding illegal meetings – Daily Nation 14/01/88), and so was Oliver Seki (threatened – Daily Nation 10/02/88). Odupoy’s life as MP was thus short-lived. He had mainly made himself known for opposing land grabbers and political godfathers in Kajiado district (Daily Nation 19/08/85). In Kajiado Central, Geoffrey Parsaoti beat David Sankori and Kiroken Mpoke during the secret ballot though initially the latter had gathered most votes at the queue-voting system. And with Oloitiptip gone, Singar, married to Saitoti’s sister, had an easy time in winning the 1988 elections in Kajiado South.

In Narok district, Ntimama finally was able to compete with Tipis. He defeated the former Minister in Narok North constituency by polling 14,240 to Tipis’ 12,369 votes (Weekly Review 31/01/97). After Tipis died, the politics of Narok district remained divided. This time it was Harun Lempaka of the small Ildamat section crossing swords with Ntimama’s powerful Purko Maasai. However, Ntimama’s star rose quickly and he was appointed minister for Local Government and Physical Planning. Ntimama became known as a hawkish politician in national circles though he was defeated by Prof. Wangari Maathai by the end of 1989 over the intended construction of the 60-storey Kenya Times Complex in Uhuru Park, his ministerial position and influence notwithstanding (Daily Nation 09/11/89).

The 1988 elections marked the peak of regime consolidation under President Moi (IED 1997:153). Most of the regime’s opponents had either been co-opted or were in prison or exile. In their respective positions of cabinet minister and assistant minister, both Saitoti and Keen stood together and condemned those Kenyan dissidents at several public functions. (Daily Nation 01/11/88). Their support for Moi and the party was rewarded on 1 May 1989 when Saitoti became vice-president, replacing Dr Josephat Karanja. Saitoti continued to hold the portfolio of minister for Finance (Daily Nation 02/05/88). Yet, as the sixth vice-president of Kenya, Saitoti soon learned that some politicians were not in favour of his vice-presidency. However, John Keen and Geoffrey Parsaoti came to his defence. By March 1990, in the wake of the Ouko murder, rumours spread that Saitoti had been shot dead (Daily Nation 04/03/90). Again Keen stood up against the inciters. Keen was also instrumental in defaming the opposition and the calls for multi-partyism (see Daily Nation 04/02/95).

Where Joseph Murumbi was quick to resign as vice-president from the Kenyatta regime, Saitoti, the second ‘Maasai’ son to become VP, decided to stay put and in due course became allegedly involved in numerous scandals. Among the most serious scandals was the infamous Goldenberg case. Saitoti could no longer count on John Keen for support as the latter had run into problems with the anti-Saitoti KANU politicians who saw Keen as the main stumbling block to their designs against the vice-president. The Weekly Review called it the ‘lone voice of reason’ when Keen warned Rift Valley leaders going to Narok town not to associate the Maasai with irresponsible and inflammatory statements.

Keen said that the Maasai could not afford to isolate themselves from other Kenyans adding that ‘the Maasai have spears, but the spears we have are for the protection of our livestock and families and we will never use them against other Kenyans’ (Weekly Review 04/10/91:10). Keen became concerned that self-government for the Rift Valley Province would entrench the Kalenjin hegemony at the expense of his fellow Maasai (see Throup and Hornsby 1998:96). KANU hawks like Biwott and Ntimama, who had started the renewed discussion on the majimbo system, as opposed to the centralised system Keen has been propagating since the early 1960s, attacked him.

The calls for political reforms in Kenya reached a height by the end of 1991. Out of fear for the post-KANU or post-Moi era, the clique of Rift Valley and Coast KANU hardliners propagated the introduction of a system whereby Kenya would be divided politically and economically, in a way that would safeguard their interests best. This independent stand, however, initiated the final fall of John Keen from his position within the Office of the President. Matters became worse when he accused ‘mischievous’ leaders of sniffing...
disintegrated through infighting in FORD towards the end of 1992. KANU hastened this process by inviting opposition candidates to defect back to KANU in exchange for material wellbeing.

In Kajiado North, problems emerged when John Keen announced he wanted to oppose Saitoti on a DP ticket. He and his supporters were beaten up on a number of occasions between June and December 1992 (Daily Nation 14/11/92). The provincial administration sided with the incumbent MP and Vice-President Saitoti. Another main challenger was Philip Odupoy for FORD-Asili, who this time around was not willing to step down for Saitoti. Challenged for the first time in his political history Saitoti issued a colour booklet reminding the electorate of all his virtues as a development-conscious leader. It would appear that Saitoti won the Kajiado North elections as a result of a well-planned and conducted fraud rather than his development record. Voters had been trucked in from other constituencies. It is suspected that at the count ballot boxes that had initially been over ordered and withheld suddenly showed up (see Throup and Hornsby 1998:499). Saitoti scored 51 per cent against 22 per cent for both Odupoy and John Keen.

Kajiado Central and South were mainly a two-party battle between KANU and DP. In Kajiado Central, Saitoti tried to persuade his favourite’s opponent (Moses Loontasati of DP) to step down in favour of Sankori. Loontasati refused. Sankori was supported by Leken (both of the Seuri age group). In the KANU party primaries they had beaten Peter ole Ntasikoi (Leken’s brother) of the Seuri age group. In both constituencies, KANU won the elections, albeit with a small margin of 10 only per cent. Sgaru (also of the Seuri age group), with Sankori nicknamed ‘Saitoti’s puppets’, kept ahead of DP’s Geoffrey Parpai (a Kiseyia agemate).

In Narok North, Ntimama faced opposition from Harun Lempaka (FORD-Asili) and John Tiampati (DP). Both opponents claimed that YK’92 and Ntimama tried to kill them (Daily Nation 21/11/92; 26/11/92). Two opposition supporters were killed in Narok town and the FORD-Asili office destroyed. Ntimama himself threatened non-Maasai residents that they would face the consequences if they failed to support KANU during the 1992 elections. These were no empty threats. For instance, the village of Enosusupkia, foremost a Kikuyu settlement in the northern part of his constituency, was attacked by people in KANU youth uniforms, firing arrows at non-Maasai. The day before the elections vehicles carrying loudspeakers reminded the Kikuyu that they would be evicted if they did not support the ruling party. Ntimama gathered almost 63 per cent against 24 per cent for Lempaka and 11 percent for Tiampati.

In Narok South – the most traditional and pastoral of all the constituencies in Maasailand – KANU had a walkover. There are hardly any immigrants in this remote and mostly dry area. Moreover, the DP candidate was time barred around offices and pretending to have barometers for gauging other leaders’ loyalty to President Moi. In addition, his warning to leaders not to antagonise the American government and the US ambassador Smith Hempstone over issues of good governance was not welcomed by the hardliners (Weekly Review 18/10/91). Soon after, on 28 October, Keen, was dropped as assistant minister in the Office of the President. By November while still in KANU, he started to speak openly in favour of the multi-party system in Kenya.

It was at this time that Saitoti lost another, and even more important, friend. British Scotland Yard detective, John Troon named Nicholas Biwott as among the key persons in the killing of Foreign Affairs Minister Robert Ouko in February 1990 (Weekly Review 29/11/91). KANU was in a disarray after Biwott was arrested, jailed and sacked from the cabinet. On top of that, the World Bank and other donors decided to withhold development aid for Kenya, a measure used for the first time ever to link aid and good governance with regard to an African county. The pressure for change that had been initiated by the churches in early 1990 now mounted to its height. Money talked and on 2 December, President Moi summoned a special KANU national delegates’ conference. Though most MPs wanted to continue with the single-party era, the president announced that he intended to repeal section 2(A) of the constitution, which had made Kenya a de jure single-party state in 1982.

The proposal allowing political pluralism in the country came into effect on 10 December. Apparently, Saitoti was among those in favour of political reform to pave the way for the resumption of Western aid. They were convinced that KANU could legalise opposition parties, call and win a snap election and keep the money rolling in (see Throup and Hornsby 1998:86-8). John Keen joined the Democratic Party that had been formed shortly after Christmas 1991 by former Vice-President Mwai Kibaki. Keen’s divide with Saitoti was now complete.

To withstand the opposition KANU fought hard and used all means available to guarantee it remained in power. For its election campaign, it appropriated billions of shillings from such as the National Social Security Fund and the Kenyan Posts and Telecommunications and launched Youth for Reform to pave the way for the resumption of Western aid. They were convinced that KANU could legalise opposition parties, call and win a snap election and keep the money rolling in (see Throup and Hornsby 1998:86-8). John Keen joined the Democratic Party that had been formed shortly after Christmas 1991 by former Vice-President Mwai Kibaki. Keen’s divide with Saitoti was now complete.

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during nomination day and thus could not stand during the elections. Accordingly, Samson ole Tuya went in unopposed.

Narok West was less easy to win for the local Maasai candidate because of the large number of Kipsigis living in the area. Their candidate, Richard arap Birir, narrowly lost the KANU nomination. On a PICK ticket he made life difficult, but could not beat newcomer Julius Sunkuli, a Moitanik Maasai. Yet both supported President Moi for president. Actually, with the exception of Kajiado North (48 per cent), Moi got an absolute majority of the votes in Maasailand in 1992, scoring between 60 (Kajiado South) and 97 (Narok South) per cent of the presidential votes.

The 1992-97 period: shifting alliances and the emergence of Maasai nationalism

After the 1992 elections, those who had dared to exercise their constitutional right to vote for the opposition became vulnerable to threats and intimidation from the ruling party and state functionaries. Threats uttered before the elections were turned into reality. At a rally in Kerio South early April 1993 Ntimama, backed by other Rift Valley politicians, including Saitoti, Tuya, Biwott and Kones, told the ‘true’ Rift Valley residents (the Kalenjin, Maasai, Samburu, and Turkana) to be on their guard against the opposition (see Human Rights Watch/Africa Watch 1993:15).

The warning was made a week after opposition supporters shouting ‘Moi must go!’ during the state opening of Parliament (Daily Nation 24/03/93) had been attacked by a Maasai moran squad. Policemen watched as if they were helpless bystanders. The week after the Kerio rally Kamba and Maasai leaders, including Saitoti and Ntimama, gathered in Kajiado and repeated their war threats in what came to be known the Kitengela Declaration. This especially damaged Saitoti who was openly attacked by KANU moderâtes, their war threats in what came to be known the Kitengela Declaration.

Out for the Count

Maasai also attacked people who sought refuge in the nearby mission church. Some 12,000 settled in Maela refugee camp, Nakuru district.

In parliament, opposition MPs attacked Ntimama and called for his resignation but he, backed by Moi, said he had no regrets about the events in Enoosupukia and defended the killings because, ‘Kikuyus had surpassed the Maasai, taken their land and degraded their environment. . . . we had to say enough is enough. I had to lead the Maasai in protecting our rights’ (Human Rights Watch/Africa Watch 1997:78).

By the end of 1994, the 8,000 refugees still in Maela forced the government to destroy the camp to avoid the embarrassment of starving refugees under the eyes of UNDP officials. Most of the internal refugees were dumped in Central Province or ‘resettled’ in Moi Ndabi (1,200 persons only). By late 1995 an estimated 5,000 people, the poorest of the poor, were still in the vicinity of Maela, in nearby farms and towns such as Ngondi and Ndabibi, hoping to one day return to their farms in Enoosupukia (Kaiser 1995:21-2).

The champion of Maasai rights, indeed, is how Ntimama portrayed himself. In the wake of the constitutional reform debate, he reopened the discussion on majimboism, once KADU’s leading political ambition in the early 1960s. He went as far as accusing the late President Kenyatta of undermining the independence constitution to favour one tribe. ‘Kenyatta made sure that he prepared his people to dominate over other tribes’. He warned that the Maasai would not accept any constitution that failed to address the issue of land rights (Daily Nation 11/01/98). Once again, friend and foe attacked Ntimama, including President Moi, over his remarks. Only some KANU hawks like Shariff Nassir supported the minister (Daily Nation 15/01/95). The next day ‘Maasai moran’ killed ten Kikuyu in neighbouring Mai Mahiu in Nakuru district in revenge for the killing of a Maasai herdsboy. Fingers pointed at Ntimama as one of the instigators of the slaughter.

Then on 17 January, politics in Maasailand took an interesting turn. The DP secretary general John Keen stated that he supported the stand taken by Ntimama on the issue of Maasailand (Daily Nation 17/01/95) while, a week later, FORD-Asili national treasurer Harun Lempaka accused Ntimama of having installed a Maasai private army to evict non-Maasai from Narok District. Lempaka also mentioned the sacking of three chiefs who refused to co-operate in the eviction of non-Maasai (East African Standard 25/01/95). That same week Keen paid a visit to President Moi, ostensibly to discuss Maasailand rights. It was, however, no surprise to political commentators that John Keen soon after defected back to KANU. Keen was promised a position among KANU’s kingmakers (Africa Confidential 26/05/95:4). Rumours say that he was also promised the return of the land that he once sold to the Government of Kenya and the waiving of huge debts (this money mysteriously disappeared after the 25 May rally in Kajiado town).
Ntimama and others (Parsaoti, Keen) campaigned against Saitoti mainly on the ground that, since he did not speak Maa, he was not qualified to be their representative. Furthermore, they accused Saitoti of being involved in shady land deals, favouring his "fellow Kikuyu". Believing they had Saitoti cornered, Ntimama and company travelled to Kajiado in Moi's entourage only to learn, when Moi mounted the podium, that Saitoti would remain local KANU chairman and, in effect, vice-president *(Africa Confidential 26/5/95:4)*. As *Africa Confidential* rightly predicted, Saitoti was not able to relax for long.

In September 1996 over 100 moran took to the streets of Nairobi to demonstrate against Vice-President Saitoti. The moran stormed the headquarters of the ruling party at the Kenyatta Conference Centre to demand audience with the secretary general of the party, Joseph Kamotho, a close ally of Saitoti. As they were demonstrating in Nairobi, simultaneous marches were taking place in Ngong town, where demonstrators claimed that the district officer for the area, Reuben Rotich, was causing rifts among KANU members in the district. Saitoti quickly convened a meeting in Ngong town, addressing a meeting in Ewaso Kedong in Kajiado, Saitoti launched a scathing attack on Ntimama, accusing him of trying to bring bloodshed in Kajiado, and describing him as a tribalist. The *Weekly Review* reported that "Saitoti was masterminding Lempaka’s defection to hit back at Ntimama, who is suspected of organising and patronising a group of anti-Saitoti elements in Kajiado North constituency, including a former lecturer, Prof. G. Maloy, who is planning to run on a KANU ticket against Saitoti in the forthcoming elections" *(Weekly Review 31/01/97:8)*. Saitoti persuaded Lempaka to defect back to KANU. Now the Maasai history of political infighting had shifted from Keen versus Oloitiptip to a major fight between the Kajiado and Narok Maasai leaders, and both cabinet ministers William ole Ntimama MP for Narok North and George Saitoti MP for Kajiado North, over control of politics in Maasailand. Each leader has considerable support and has sponsored a candidate against the other. In the Saitoti camp were the MPs of Kajiado South Philip Singaru, and Central David Sankori, as well as Julius Sunkuli of Kilgoris constituency, the single constituency in Trans Mara district (formerly Narok West). Ntimama got support from Tuya (MP Narok South) and KANU-turned activist John Keen. However, many elite Maasai, some of them MP candidates, supported Ntimama as well. Maasai nationalism had established itself firmly in the southern Rift Valley (see *Daily Nation* 20/06/97).  

### Maasai traditional leadership: the role of sections, clans and age groups

The Maasai traditional leader is a respected community figure who is elected when a new age group is formed. This is done at the time of a big ceremony called *enkipaa*, when the boys gather to celebrate the start of circumcision. After this they can become young moran (warriors). The chief must be well known by all members of his age group. He should, preferably, come from a well known and wealthy family, to avoid any corruption in acquiring wealth. This wealth should also enable him to assist needy people. He should be a person of *esinyati* (purity), i.e., an incorruptible person with no physical deformities or any other abnormal marks on his body. This aspect is even more paramount than the family’s wealth. Among the duties of the traditional chief are to control others, to link the elders and his age group, to have a say in important matters that touch upon the community *(see ole Sekuda 1997:94)*.

Traditionally, the Maasai do not like people going for leadership. The family will cry foul when one is elected to be the *olaiguenani* (traditional Maasai leader). It means that the relative’s interest is less with the family and more with the community at large. The Maasai also use the term *olkitokkitok* to refer to a big man. In the Maasai political arena it means that George Saitoti might be called an *olkitokkitok*, but not an *olaiguenani*. This is an important distinction as it implies that Saitoti lacks the traditional respect and network other Maasai leaders have. Where Maasai traditionally prefer not to be elected in a leadership position, nowadays the *ilnusai* (half-Maasai) think differently: they do have an interest in becoming councillor.

Some critics say this is to enrich themselves and their families, because their positions give them opportunities to make money. Some young Maasai elders claim that it will take their community at least ten years to appreciate educated persons in the age group members who are now in their 40-50s for leadership roles and positions. At the moment, the Maasai prefer someone with no formal Western education but such a person has no chance in national politics.

The Kenyan Maasai are subdivided into 12 sections called *iloshon*. The original meaning of the word *olosho* is plateau. Initially, in order to distinguish between the various "plateaus", the inhabitants of each plateau were given a specific name. Gradually, the word acquired the extended meaning it has today whereby it refers to an independent group of people having their own name, specific territory with well-defined boundaries, peculiarities of dress, beadwork, speech, housing, celebration of ceremonies and even their own defence force *(see Mol 1978:100)*.
Maasai society is also sub-divided along the lines of clans (ilgilat) and sub-clans (ilponot). The first division is in two major houses or moieties (ink-aijjik): Orok Kiteng (house of the black oxen) and Odo Mongi (house of the red oxen). Each of these is further subdivided into seven major clans (some say there are only four or five; see Mol 1996: 21). Theoretically, every clan can be represented in every olosho. The number and naming of clans show disparity among the various iloshon. The seven major clans again are sub-divided into a number of sub-clans (ilponot).

If a Maasai wants to go into politics, he needs, first and foremost, the support of the age group and, to a lesser extent, the clan. His age group and clan should ask the others to support their ‘son’.

Preamble to the Kenya 1997 elections in Maasailand

Election fever started gathering momentum in early 1997. This was partly due to the fact that President Daniel arap Moi could announce the holding of elections any time in the year. This uncertainty meant that candidates had to be prepared for elections anytime within some six weeks after the announcement of polling day. On the ground, local candidates and their agents were doing a lot of work. Three main lines of interference were followed in the first half of 1997: influencing voter registration, building alliances between sub-clans and age groups, and pleasing the electorate by handouts; i.e. free food distribution in certain areas.

In the Magadi area of Kajiado North, for example, many people were excluded from the register according to one informant. Not just young people but also people with old identity cards were not able to get new ones. Forms filled in January were never forwarded. The area near Magadi town is inhabited by immigrants working for the Magadi Soda Company. The nearby Nguruman cultivation area also has many immigrants. In preparation for election day local observer groups tried to recruit people, but failed in several polling stations. The local Catholic church refused to participate in the process despite the fact that all parishes had been ordered to do so. Fear of repercussions for queuing behind the ‘wrong’ candidate, as had happened in 1992, made them decide that observing and reporting would be too great a risk for anybody living in this small community.

Besides voter registration and observing problems, other ‘preparations’ were underway. For example, in Kajiado North constituency the Keekonyokie Maasai this time around had three candidates (Saitoti, Parantai, Maloi). The Kaputiei Maasai are a minority in Kajiado North constituency. The Keekonyokie insisted that the Kaputiei should support the sons of the majority without fail. A group of Maasai went to see the Kajiado district commissioner to make sure that Daniel ole Muyaa (chairman of the Olkejuado county council who has non-Maasai roots) would not bring his Kamba and Kikuyu friends from across the district boundary, using money to register and vote in Kajiado. Extra wards were created in this part of Kajiado North constituency. The last two wards would be for the Maasai. The others (near the flower company which employed many non-Maasai) was for the Kamba. Muyaa has a farm in Kitengela and would stand in that area. At the time of registration and thereafter reports from the area indicated that local chiefs and politicians handed out free relief food to village elders. More relief food was given than at the beginning of the year when it was needed most as a result of a serious dry spell.

Also in support of certain councillors Saitoti’s hand was felt. He made life difficult for the opponents of his favourite candidates. For example, Andrew Nangurai stood for local councillor in Oloolua ward on a KANU ticket. However, since his business companion, ole Leken, the MP candidate for Kajiado Central, was standing against ole Sankori of Saitoti’s camp, Nangurai got a hard time. The Oloolua ward has three main centres: Oloolua, Embulbul and Kerarapon. Nangurai originates from Kerarapon. When the vice-president learnt of Nangurai’s intentions to stand, he dictated that KANU nomination queuing would be done in Oloolua and Embulbul only. Nangurai protested because he now had to stand in the strongholds of his opponents Mohammed Malambu, Henry Pulei and George Nyoike (a Kikuyu), the last being Saitoti’s favourite. It is thought that Saitoti’s assistant, Tanju, was influential in this decision.

In other constituencies of Kajiado district people were also working hard to ensure that their political lifespan would be extended after the 1997 elections or that they would take over from the incumbent councillors. Yet, in all areas, one force to reckon with was the vice-president. Saitoti allegedly interfered in the Namanga civic elections of Kajiado South constituency where his involvement had gone on for some years. There had been a big fight over land in this area. A local Maasai candidate for the local council, Paul ole Olorkinyei, brought up the issue of grabbing commercial plots (up to 15 per person) by non-Maasai in Namanga town at the expense of the Maasai population. Saitoti was accused of assisting his friends to get this land. Tanju, who comes from nearby the area, initially offered Ksh. 500,000 and later Ksh. 1.2 million to silence Olorkinyei, but the latter refused.

For the parliamentary seat, three candidates were in the race in Kajiado South. Geoffrey Parpai had lost on a DP ticket to Singaru in 1992 and was this time prevailed upon by the people of Kajiado South to defect to KANU if he wanted to be elected to parliament. Though he did so on Madaraka Day 1997 (1 June), he was reluctantly accepted into KANU’s fold. He was...
nevertheless nominated on the KANU ticket, so was Richard Oloitiptip. Each candidate belonged to the Kisongo Maasai, but represented a different clan: Singaru for Ilaiser, Parpai Ilmolelian and Oloitiptip Ilmosijua.

These patterns were very interesting because people mixed themselves and formed the so-called ilimitito (strong groups) which compete together. Ilmolelian and ilmarmae joined forces to back Parpai. Ilaiser and ilmekuperia supported Singaru and ilmosijua, a few ilaitayiok, and ilmoshon threw their weight behind Oloitiptip. This struggle took three good months with every group campaigning for victory. Initially, Singaru’s camp seemed to be on the winning side. They went round during the night terrifying other groups by shouting a lot as well as travelling in cars and hooting to intimidate their rivals. Also dances used in circumcision ceremonies and other traditional activities were performed. But this time around Parpai’s group enabled their candidate to win the race.22

In Kilgoris constituency, the main contestants were the incumbent Sunkuli and Gideon Konchela, a Uasin Gishu Maasai, son of the late MP John Konchela and former army colonel. Both had been able to secure funds from financial tycoons. The chairman of Co-operative Bank, Hosea Kiplagat, supported Sunkuli with millions of shillings, while Konchela, to a lesser extent, got support from Ntimama. Here the fight was less between clans, but more along lines of sections and between different ethnic groups: Maasai, Kipsigis and Kisii.23

The DC Kilgoris, Wilson Litole, who is a close friend to Sunkuli is thought to have been instrumental in ordering the police to disturb a harambee fundraising by Konchela in mid-1997. A political fight broke out between Sunkuli and Konchela on how to conduct the KANU primaries; whether they should be through the queuing system or by secret ballot as Konchela had requested. In the end, a compromise was found. KANU headquarters allowed the secret vote to be used in Kilgoris town only. It is in this constituency that ethnic cleansing was used as a fourth way of ‘preparing’ for the elections. Tension had already been on the rise in October and early November. Crossborder cattle-rustling related fights occurred between Kisii and Maasai.

On 20 November, however, Kilgoris town turned into a battle ground in which at least 12 people were killed, shops were looted and property destroyed (Daily Nation 22/11/97). The killing of nine Kisii residents in Kilgoris town began after an administration police officer shot dead a young Maasai a few metres from the DC’s office. According to the DC, the killing was an accident by the policeman who tried to disperse marauding Maasai. Another two Kisii were killed along the border when the two communities clashed at 6 pm that same evening. Government vehicles were used to ferry thousands of Kisii who fled the area. Reports from local priests, however, state that not 12 but at least 21 people were killed. And although both Moitianik and Usain Gishu Maasai have been fighting the Kisii, most fingers point to Sunkuli as the instigator of these clashes. First and foremost, he stood to benefit from the absence of a Kisii vote (Economic Review 01-07/12/97:23). The Konchelas also have a history of expelling non-Maasai (i.e., Nandi). Whatever the truth of the matter, what is sure is that the attack on 20 November was well planned in advance.25 On the morning of the attack, one informant reported that he had been told by a Maasai woman and passing young moran to stay away from town because problems were expected to erupt. Another informant stated that the officer commanding the station in Kilgoris town later told him that investigations into the case were somehow impossible, because the latter’s hands were tied as ‘the guy who did it is with the Office of the President, so he is somehow my boss’.26

The party primaries in Maasailand

On 27 November KANU held its party primaries. Reference has already been made to the fact that Maasailand was mainly a KANU-dominated zone. For this reasons we will restrict ourselves to the way KANU conducted its party election. The most interesting party elections were conducted in Kajiado Central and South. In Kajiado Central, Leken beat Sankori with a narrow margin of 88 votes (11,403 against 11,315). In Kajiado South, Geoffrey Parpai was declared the winner by the returning officer, Paul Nitiati, after garnering a total 8,884 votes to Singaru’s 8,659 and Oloitiptip’s 2,500. This victory was officially announced by KBC radio.

However, Parpai’s and Leken’s victories were nullified. There were complaints that Leken’s agents rigged the results in Bissel and Lorngosua polling stations.27 Fingers were pointed at Saitoti as the man behind the nullification. He himself had been nominated to vie for Kajiado North constituency on the KANU ticket.28 People complained that he had manipulated the nominations to make sure that his ‘puppets’ won. This unprecedented move was well calculated and planned for. According to the Parpai and Leken camps, Saitoti used all his influence to convince KANU secretary general, Joseph Kamotho, and the head of party’s nominations, Dr Njoroge Mungai, that his allies had genuinely won the nominations. The following plot was said to have been strategised carefully:

After the results were announced early Friday 28 November, it is said that Sankori and Singaru immediately met Saitoti in Nairobi to brief him of their defeat. On Saturday 29 November Sankori and ole Singaru spent half the day with the vice-president in Nairobi before going back to their respective constituencies later that day. On Sunday 30 November, the two went round meeting their supporters (mostly elected councillors) to organise demonstrations in Kajiado and Loitokitok. On 2 December, Sankori supporters
demonstrated in Kajiado town denouncing the results and urging fresh nominations. John Keen was accused of working for Sankori’s downfall and President Moi was given up to Friday 5 December to nullify the KANU nomination or they would defect to the opposition en masse (Daily Nation 03/12/97). Singaru and Sankori did not attend the demonstration as both were in Nairobi, KANU headquarters, to lodge their complaints.

On Wednesday 3 December, it was announced over the radio that the nomination exercise was to be repeated in Ilbissel Centre in Kajiado Central and Olgolulu and Namanga centres in Kajiado South. The paradox here is that the announced centres were the strongholds for ole Leken (Kajiado Central) and Oloitiptip’s son in (Kajiado South) and would not favour the former incumbent leaders whom the repeat was meant to favour. On Thursday 4 December, Richard Oloitiptip decided to step back and campaign in favour of Parpai so as to defeat Singaru. This move weakened Singaru’s clan. The two leaders went to Namanga and Olgolului to campaign. Singaru was not seen in the two centres and is said to have been busy in other locations of the constituency campaigning.

In Kajiado Central, the area elite, namely John Keen, ole Leken, ole Polong (Public Service Commission under-secretary), ole Kipury (Registrar General), ole Tutui (prominent businessman in Nairobi) ole Nkaisirri (brigadier in the army), ole Ncharo (District KANU coordinator) and other prominent Maasai met in John Keen’s home and strategised too for Leken. KANU supporters claim that the money given by Moi to campaign for him and KANU was actually used for Leken’s campaign. Also the Club of 7 are said to have poured in Ksh. 200,000 each. In their view, Sankori had become too powerful and was overshadowing them. Job and chief allocations had not favoured their circles as much as they had Sankori’s, they claimed.

Also lucrative business contracts, they feared, might be lost if Sankori stayed in power. To change the tides they went for Leken. Both men belong to the Seuri age group. This move was met with hostility by the Kingonde age group who stated that the Kiseyia age group in between them and their ‘fathers’, the Seuri, tried to break this natural bond between the Seuri and the Kingonde.

In the months preceding the elections the Kingonde elite youngsters tried to convince their ‘father’ Leken that his standing would give the Kiseyia a chance, but they failed. By splitting the Seuri, the Kiseyia indeed tried their only chance to beat the more numerous latest-formed Kingonde age group following them.

Some of the elite backing Leken are said to have gone to Ilbissel town and campaigned for Leken. Sankori too, like ole Singaru, never showed up in the mentioned centre. Parpai appeared before the KANU disciplinary tribunal and successfully argued his case out. The KANU headquarters issued Leken and Parpai with valid party nomination certificates duly signed by the party's secretary general Joseph Kamotho. Leken and Parpai made copies of the certificate, on instigation from John Keen, and distributed them to their supporters.

Friday 5 December was marred by lots of confusion. It was not clear to Leken and Parpai whether there would be a repeat poll and what its status would be now with Leken and Parpai having obtained their papers. Leken was in Ilbissel town and Parpai was in Olgolului and Namanga in the early hours of the day. People arrived in the three centres and started queuing in favour of Leken and Parpai. Meanwhile, when this was going on, Singaru and Sankori were in other centres urging their supporters to queue. Leken and Parpai sensed danger and went to the KANU headquarters in their respective constituencies. Both the officials there could not clarify what the certificates issued the previous day were meant to be. Leken and Parpai, brandishing their nomination papers, urged their supporters to disperse and not to take part in the exercise, because the KANU headquarters did not sanction the repeat. The Singaru and Sankori camps capitalised on the confusion to their favour.

On Saturday 6 December, the party headquarters kept silent and maintained that Leken and Parpai were still the bonafide nominees. On Sunday 7 December, newspapers show that Sankori was nominated to vie for Kajiado Central and Singaru for Kajiado South. Both these leaders were issued with nomination certificates on this day.

During this week of confusion Leken and Parpai went to State House to complain about the rejection of their KANU nomination papers and the call for repeat polls. They blamed the vice-president and Kamotho. Moi was not amused, but both Kamotho and Saitoti were able to convince the president that supporting Leken and Parpai would undermine KANU in the district.

In Narok district, the KANU primaries were of a less confusing character. The three main opponents for the KANU ticket in Narok North were William ole Ntimama, Harun Lempaka, and newcomer Jackson ole Mwaniki, a young man from Ntimama’s Purko section. The latter mainly received his support from the Kiseyia age group and non-Maasai. All realised that not so much 29 December as 27 November would be the real election day. Thus, for example, in Narok town on the evening before the party primary, cars were driving up and down with campaigners telling people to come and vote next morning. Ntimama’s opponents were shouting not to be afraid and ‘to come to the funeral tomorrow’. This was meant to be the funeral of ole Ntimama who had somehow fallen out with Moi and KANU headquarters and the non-Maasai in town felt they had a chance to elect somebody else who might be less aggressive to non-Maasai.
In Narok town all three contenders were physically present: Lempaka, Mwaniki and Ntimama. Administration police were present but kept a good distance in order not to interfere with the elections. Narok town elections were conducted in a well-organised and fair way. In the town, Mwaniki beat Ntimama and Lempaka with a landslide and the winner and his supporters started dancing in the streets. The fact that they had dared to come to the polling station and queue according to their wishes seemed to be a great relief since during the days and weeks before polling day some Ntimama supporters had been intimidating their rival’s supporters. Still, altogether only 50 per cent of the registered voters in Narok town came to vote. But Mwaniki’s celebration did not last long. As soon as the results came in from the 31 sub-locations of Narok North constituency, Ntimama took the lead and was declared the winner next morning. The final results were: Ntimama: 21,291; Mwaniki: 12,516 and Lempaka: 3,864.

In Narok South, it was reported that identity cards and voters’ cards were hardly checked during the KANU primaries. Even youngsters below 18 years of age were allowed to queue. Youngster Stephen Kanyinke ole Ntutu (36), son of former paramount chief Lelionkaole ole Ntutu defeated the incumbent ole Tuya who is in Ntimama’s camp. The county council (read: Ntimama’s) fight with the Loita Maasai over the sacred Loita forest, the control over the Maasai Mara Game Reserve revenues and lack of initiatives by Tuya were among the main reasons for his defeat. Also the fact that the Narok elite backed Ntutu was a setback for Tuya. As a last resort, Ntimama assisted Tuya to be nominated on the DP ticket.

In Kilgoris, Sunkuli beat Konchela 15,050 to 11,493. According to Konchela he was rigged in at least 16 polling stations. Reports by more neutral observers confirm that especially in Sunkuli’s area agents of Konchela were threatened and bought to co-operate with Sunkuli. Also, voters were threatened that if they queued in Konchela’s line then bad things would happen. Elders from the area appealed to President Moi to order a repeat as ‘the parliamentary nomination did not reflect what most Trans Mara residents expected’. The elders said Trans Mara is a KANU zone but the nomination results could force people to think otherwise (Daily Nation 03/12/97). After he was defeated, Konchela stated that he intended to bring back the Kisii using lorries on election day. He claimed that a secret ballot would have favoured him, as he would get all of the Uasin Gishu, the Siria and one third of the Moitanik and half the Kipsigis. Sunkuli, by contrast, claimed that he would have all the Moitanik, most of the Siria, some of the Uasin Gishu and most of the Kipsigis. However, a repeat was not ordered for Kilgoris constituency. Konchela defected to DP.

Parliamentary nominations on 8 and 9 December 1997

The nomination of candidates for parliament and civic councils was spread over two days. The candidates had to hand in their nomination papers to the electoral commission officials in each constituency. On Monday 8 December the 7 am news bulletins announced that the president congratulated all those who won in the repeat nominations. The names of Singaru and Sankori were mentioned among others. In Kajiado Central, Leken presented his KANU nomination papers first and the returning officer refused to accept them, saying that he was acting on a directive from KANU headquarters. Sankori supporters claim that Leken then contacted a military person at State House who instructed Leken’s nomination papers to be admitted. Still the returning officer refused to accept the papers because ‘if it was the president who had sent him, let him (Moi) call me directly.’

Parpai suffered the same fate. The reason for not accepting his nomination was that he said he was said to lack a language proficiency test. Both of them then announced their defections: Leken to Safina and Parpai to DP. John Keen worked hard to organise their nomination papers by contacting Richard Leakey of Safina and DP headquarters. Keen also assisted Olorkinyei who once again was rigged out for the civic council seat after winning the elections as KANU candidate in the Namanga ward. The KANU headquarters issued nomination papers to the opponent who had been trampled in the party elections. Olorkinyei got DP papers as well. On Tuesday 9 December, Leken (Safina) and Parpai (DP) presented nomination papers for their respective parties to beat the deadline. Moses Loontasati (DP) and Sidney Quantai (SDP), formerly with KTN, were also cleared to vie for the Kajiado Central constituency.

In Kilgoris nomination was done in an orderly manner. The main problem was to hand in completed ‘oath secrecy forms’ which had to be done in front of a magistrate who was in Kisii town (51 km a way). Because of the tensions between the Kisii and the Maasai, however, transport was difficult and Maasai candidates feared going to Kisii town.

The campaign period: 10-28 December 1997

The political implications of KANU headquarters’ interference were enormous. Not only did Leken and Parpai defect but also the outcry for justice to be done among many ordinary Maasai was revolutionary. Large numbers of people in both Kajiado constituencies were demoralised and angered by these developments. Their one and only party KANU had cheated them like small children. It was now that some realised that Kenya offered more than one party. This was bound to have detrimental repercussions on KANU as a party
and Moi also realised this. Sensing danger, he called upon Leken and Parpai to come to State House for an impromptu meeting. They were accompanied by a group of Maasai leaders. Moi tried to cool down tempers and he sent his apologies to Parpai and Leken. He promised that should KANU win he would shake his tree and certainly some fruits will fall. District commissioner Mutemi was transferred immediately thereafter.

Saitoti himself personally experienced the anger among the Maasai when, on a meet-the-people-tour, he was chased away from Isinya town, bordering Kajiado Central constituency on 11 December. When he arrived at the shopping centre, the local people indicated that they were not ready to listen to him and he should therefore leave the area. Some even pretended to be vomiting when they saw him. They shouted pro-DP slogans at him and raised the DP symbol. Some days earlier both NDP and DP supporters had chased the vice-president from the Ongata Rongai quarry area. Some told him that he was wasting time by going to the area, and if he wanted their votes ‘he should rig as he did in 1992 by marking ballots in his favour.’ Almost a similar scene was repeated in Kiserian town, where interference in the primaries occurred. County council chairman Muyaa feared that his fortunes would also dwindle and he made arrangements with a local businessman in the area to ensure that his employees would vote for him in exchange for money.

During a crowded rally on 17 December in Kajiado town, Parpai, Leken and Leakey and local councillors supporting Leken addressed hundreds of Maasai. They blamed Saitoti and his clique of KANU councillors, including county council chairman Muyaa, for interfering in the electoral process and for their involvement in corrupt land deals. Next, the team surrounding Leken went back to the drawing board and concluded that, though Leken had a good chance of winning on a Safina ticket, they feared that Loontasati, the DP candidate, might split the opposition vote. The Leken team, including John Keen personally, talked to Moses Loontasati (DP) on several occasions urging him to step down, all in vain. The leaders went to a point of requesting Loontasati to mention his premium, but he refused to do so. Loontasati had simply been offered more money by Sankori, his critics claimed.

During the campaign the DP and KANU candidate went as far as advising voters that in case they did not vote for the KANU or DP candidates, then they should vote for Loontasati or Sanhari, respectively. All tricks were now being used to win the votes.

In the Dalalekutuk area of the Kajiado Central constituency, Sankori spread the story that Leken was planning to move back the border between the Dalalekutuk Maasai and Leken’s Matapato section of the Maasai population if he became MP for the area. In 1978 a clash between the two sections over this border resulted in the death of many Dalalekutuk Maasai. In Kajiado town, the night before the elections, Sankori’s men went round pretending to be Leken and warning that all non-Maasai would be kicked out after the elections. Leken, on his part, suggested Sankori was not a true Maasai and that by all means all Matapato Maasai should not vote for a Kaputiei ‘Maasai’. Playing the iloshon card, backfired on Leken as it to some extent united the non-Matapato Maasai.

In Kajiado South, the situation was more relaxed as it was only a KANU versus DP fight, with KANU already having won in the first round with a clear victory. Tension was reported here and there in the area, but in general there was no chaos. The most interesting aspect was to see that the division among the Maasai became even more complicated after Oloitiptip (Kisii age group like Parpai) quit the race and also a number of ilaiser dropped their own MP (Singaru). Instrumental in this were age group reasons and traditional Maasai chiefs now opposing their ‘own son’. So people had made up their minds and stated ‘KANU can’t fool all people all the time.’ The coming of DP activist Njenga Karume to Loitokitok was also warmly welcomed by the now DP-turned-Maasai and the large number of Kikuyu in the area.

In Nark North, Ntimama had an easy time after being elected the unopposed KANU MP as nobody dared to stand against him. Ntimama campaigned for Mwai Kibaki and made Tuya and Konchela defect to DP. Otherwise, he mainly stayed in Mombasa.

In Kilgoris, tension continued as the fighting and killing did not stop after the party nominations. According to informants, politicians from both sides were very active in the displacement of the Kisii from Trans Mara. Zaphaniah Nyang’wara (KANU MP for Bomachoge constituency, Kisii district) together with Sunkuli, were said to have been collaborating to safeguard their interests in the area. This was done, e.g. by Nyang’wara inciting the Uasin Gishu Maasai (home of the now turned DP candidate Konchela) to fight the Kisii. A local Kisii councillor was killed by youths from Uasin Gishu. The aim was to discredit Konchela among the Kisii and make them vote for Sunkuli. By 18 December, the campaign was further seriously hampered by President Moi’s declaration of a security zone on the violence-torn borders of the clash-hit areas. It barred politicians from outside the area from campaigning. This move favoured Sunkuli. In spite of the ‘security zone’ on 26 and 27 of December many Kisii left Ngararu in Kilgoris constituency.

**Election days: 29 and 30 December 1997 in Maasailand**

Finally, after all these months of political intrigue and campaign, the candidates made the final step. Table 15.1 presents the number of those who registered to vote as well as those who actually did so. The figures are
The people inside ran out and a commotion ensued. In the meantime, the gangs jumped through the windows and poured petrol on the ballot boxes the queue and vote before the other people. When it proved impossible, the same group went round the building and broke the window to the classroom. Group of people who came in a pick-up twmcab. The men demanded to bypass the crowd and reclaim the box.

6.30 pm that balloting was suspended, angry youths stormed the polling station presiding officer whom he accused him of 'rigging'. A lack of ballot papers primary school polling station, Saitoti was reportedly very angry with the

This was especially so in Kajiado South and Kilgoris where some questionable events took place. Some of these are hard to prove while others are more obvious. Some were of a minor significance while others were of a more serious nature. In Ngong township mainly in Kajiado North where some questionable events took place. Some of these are hard to prove while others are more obvious. Some were of a minor significance while others were of a more serious nature. In Ngong township primary school polling station, Saitoti was reportedly very angry with the

Voting countrywide suffered from logistical problems due to heavy rains and for certain constituencies a lack or mix-up of ballot papers (Rutten 1998). This was especially so in Kajiado South and Kilgoris where some polling stations could not open until 2 pm (instead of 6 am) or had to close for some time when ballot papers got finished. Due to these problems the Electoral Commission of Kenya announced, though in a rather confusing way, that voting would continue next day, on 30 December. As far as irregularities were witnessed by the local and international observers during voting day, it was mainly in Kajiado North where some questionable events took place. Some of these are hard to prove while others are more obvious. Some were of a minor significance while others were of a more serious nature. In Ngong township primary school polling station, Saitoti was reportedly very angry with the presiding officer whom he accused him of ’rigging’. A lack of ballot papers delayed the voting. When Saitoti and Oliver Seki (SDP) announced by and attempted to seize a ballot box. Police had to fire shots in the air to disperse the crowd and attempted to seize a ballot box. Police had to fire shots in the air to disperse the crowd and reclaim the box. At Eeno Matasian in Kajiado North, ballot boxes were set on fire by a group of people who came in a pick-up twmcab. The men demanded to bypass the queue and vote before the other people. When it proved impossible, the same group went round the building and broke the window to the classroom. The people inside ran out and a commotion ensued. In the mean time, the gangs jumped through the windows and poured petrol on the ballot boxes and set them ablaze. In the same station two men had a row over which of them was the presiding officer. Oliver Seki threatened to withdraw from the race on 30 December. He claimed that 19 ballot boxes had been sneaked into Ngong town (Daily Nation 31/12/97; 01/01/98).

As mentioned earlier, in the southern part of Kajiado North, i.e. in several polling stations in Magadi area, no observers were present. Also in certain areas (e.g., Korrompoi, Bulbul) KANU agents were allegedly bribing people, while a DP agent in Inkijito primary school was told to stop telling people who to vote for before entering the polling station. Two of Saitoti’s agents, Tanju and Sultan, were seen going round monitoring what was happening on election day. Later they were named as the kidnappers of the deputy returning officer in the Ngong counting hall. The deputy returning officer, a Mr Simel, was put blindfolded in a car and dropped at Machakos.

In Kajiado Central constituency, KANU agents allegedly bribed voters in Enkoroni, while in Kajiado town voters were transported to the polling station by the KANU parliamentary and civic candidates. At Toroka (KMQ polling station) an official was found asking the illiterate voters questions, such as “Who is your President?” and “Who is your MP?”, favouring the incumbent KANU politicians. This practice was stopped after opposition party agents complained. Also, in Ilmarba, Leken’s stronghold, it was reported that some officials purposely invalidated ballot papers for those voters thought to be KANU supporters.

In Kajiado South no major irregularities occurred except that civic candidate Paul ole Olorkinyei’s name was not followed by the DP symbol, but by the NDP logo (tractor). The people wondered about this and were confused. Many of them had apparently been told to go and vote for the DP’s ‘lump’. Also many Kikuyu supporters of Olorkinyei changed their minds, preferring KANU to NDP. Olorkinyei lost to the KANU opponent whom he had beaten before with a landslide. Fingers pointed at Saitoti again.

In Narok North’s Olchorro location, the ballot papers for civic candidates were missing for the whole day and the community did not vote until the morning of 30 December. In Naisoya polling station the KANU agent, who happened to be the unopposed councillor of the area, used vernacular language. Agents of other parties were not present and observers were kept at a distance when illiterate voters entered the booth.

In Kilgoris, the DC was seen actively campaigning for Sunkuli in Enosaen polling station; while in Sosio the presiding officer was caught influencing illiterate voters to vote for President Moi. In Olereko there was a switch of party symbol to the disadvantage of the DP candidate.
**Table 15.2: Parliamentary and presidential results 1997 election in Maasailand (per cent)**

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kilgoris</td>
<td>63.89</td>
<td>92.77</td>
<td>35.77</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narok North</td>
<td>unopp.</td>
<td>81.24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15.46</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narok South</td>
<td>79.19</td>
<td>91.12</td>
<td>20.81</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kajiado North</td>
<td>60.85</td>
<td>49.33</td>
<td>31.53</td>
<td>40.26</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.61</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kajiado Central</td>
<td>48.66</td>
<td>61.89</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>34.49</td>
<td>45.78</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kajiado South</td>
<td>42.58</td>
<td>43.08</td>
<td>57.42</td>
<td>53.23</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.69</td>
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Source: IED/CIPC/NCCCK 1998

*Safina had no presidential candidate

Table 15.2 shows the winning parties and presidential candidates. Foremost, it is clear that, in spite of its still holding on to five out of six constituencies, Maasailand is no longer a KANU zone. Especially Kajiado Central was narrowly saved for the ruling party, due to the split of the opposition. The next elections will tell whether this has been a one-time affair with the opposition or whether it is the beginning of a turnaround.

According to a councillor from Magadi, when some Maasai councillors paid Moi a courtesy call at State House soon after the swearing in of the president in Nairobi, he could not conceal his displeasure at the way the Maasai had voted in the 1997 elections. When the president rose to address them, he had very few words: ‘I knew all along that I would win in this election. I also thought the Maasai to be mine and, hence, their votes. But you seem to have wavered somewhere and let the opposition wave sweep through your land. You seem not to be the Maasai I knew. You will never see me again in Maasailand, that’s for sure.’ In spite of these emotional words, Moi returned in 1999 to Kajiado and Narok.

The first person to suffer was Saitoti who, shortly after the elections, was not re-appointed as vice-president. One informant reported that Saitoti almost quit politics altogether in protest against Moi’s decision. However, he remained in politics, and in the cabinet as minister for Planning and National Development and sought alliances to survive. On 27 January, he went to see Moi who promised that he (Saitoti) would soon regain his position as vice-president. This happened in April 1999 after many other candidates had been named to take the position. Konchela defected back to KANU soon after the elections, while Mwaniki, who had not opposed Ntimama on 29 December, was rewarded with a post on the Kenya Wildlife Service board of governors.

Ntimama was re-appointed to the cabinet. However, at the local level, the provincial administration and his Narok South counterpart had trimmed his power. They had worked hard to raise the number of wards in Narok South in spite of fewer people. The effect of this move was that in the Narok county council Ntimama’s Purko no longer had a majority. Ntimama complained bitterly about it (see *Daily Nation* 01/04/98). Since Ntimama had in the past used the same trick of creating wards in his Purko home area, this time round he was beaten at his own game.

In a surprise move at Parpai’s victory party, Ntimama openly lined up with his political friends of the moment and tried to mend fences with the Kikuyu voters. In front of DP politicians and a large crowd of Maasai and Kikuyu of Kajiado district, he ‘apologised’ for Enososupukia, claiming it to have been a ‘misunderstanding’. This statement may not have made him popular with the Kikuyu deported from Enososupukia, but it eased some of the tension among the remaining Kikuyu of Narok district. But the fact remains that Ntimama would most likely not have won his parliamentary seat had he not evicted the Enososupukia residents.

For ole Leken the outcome was most dramatic. John Keen, who claimed he sponsored all opposition candidates in Maasailand, advised him to stay in Safina and wait for his turn. The main problem is that Leken favours an active role in politics. Leken was one of the candidates for the post of secretary general of Safina but failed to win the post. He accepted a government job as chairman of a committee of inquiry instead.

**Conclusion**

In the foregoing discussion, we have followed Maasai politics from the beginning of this century until the last general elections of 29-30 December 1997. A striking aspect of our journey along with the politicians and issues at stake is that in the end the power struggle among the Maasai is for safeguarding access to resources (land, water, jobs). Sections, sub-clans and age groups play a major role in the outcome of this political fight. However, no easy lines of voting can be pointed at, as individual interests play a major role. Secondly, most of the Maasai formal political elite have never held the position of a traditional Maasai leader. Almost all have mixed origins, yet some are considered to belong more to Maasai society than others.

The ethnicity factor has gained importance as a result of the opening up of the Maasai districts and the influx of non-Maasai voters, especially since the sub-division of group ranches, making land a commodity that could be sold to outsiders. It has changed the political landscape to the extent that soon there will be as many non-Maasai as Maasai living in Maasailand. This
has multiple effects on the way politics is going to be conducted in the area in future. First, the newcomers are pointed at as those coming in to grab land. By trying to keep away other political parties, several KANU die-hards use this story. It is even used to chase away the ‘newcomers’ from their legally bought parcels of land (e.g., Enosupukia). Secondly, although they still occupy the small towns and islands of high potential, the non-Maasai numbers are boring the Maasai politicians, though less the ordinary pastoralist, because on voting day the non-Maasai might vote in their own representatives.

In Kajiado district the era of multi-partyism has opened the eyes of many firm KANU believers, when the ruling party they had supported for many years ‘rigged’ out their ‘sons’. In almost all of these contests, though, the underlying fight was between two camps. At the surface it, might have appeared as Singaru versus Parpai, but in reality it was Saitoti versus Ntimama fighting for power. The fight was between those known to be involved in land deals (i.e., Saitoti who was instrumental in selling Maasailand to the Kalenjin elite, in collaboration with Muyaa) versus Ntimama’s camp who had gained the questionable reputation of chasing away newcomers. Right now, with the exit of Simon Nyachae from the cabinet, the Ntimama faction in KANU has been seriously weakened.

Moreover, the age group issue is apparently at stake. The newcomers Sunkuli, Muyaa and Sankori might in the long run undermine Saitoti’s and Ntimama’s leadership. The latest twists and turns underline the fact that Maasai politics are much influenced by the age group factor in addition to the issue of access to resources, especially land, jobs and contracts.

Whether the opposition will be able to consolidate its position in Maasailand and improve in the more Maasai-dominated regions remains to be seen. Kajiado Central could have been won if DP and Safina had cooperated. However, had Leken’s nomination not been nullified he would have stood on a KANU ticket and Sankori would likely have ‘defected’ to the opposition. Leken might have ended up in parliament on a KANU ticket and Sankori would likely have ‘defected’ to the opposition. However, had Leken’s nomination not been nullified he would have seen. Kajiado Central could have been won if DP and Safina had cooperated. However, had Leken’s nomination not been nullified he would have stood on a KANU ticket and Sankori would likely have ‘defected’ to the opposition. Leken might have ended up in parliament on a KANU ticket. The question remains whether in future a new brand of politicians, be it Maasai or non-Maasai, will be elected who, as in the Maasai tradition, are people of respect and dignity, who work hard for the good of the people they are supposed to represent faithfully and honestly.

Notes

1. These were: J. ole Sein, P. ole Lemine, P. ole Nampaso, Dr Likimani and J. ole Tameno (see KNA/MAC/KEN/47/5).
2. It needs to be stressed that both John Keen and Stanley Oliotiptip at times have condemned Maasai for ‘backwardness’. For example in 1970, after Oliotiptip was made Maasai spokesman, they co-operated and spearheaded a campaign which was aimed at the discontinuation of moranism (warriorhood) with young Maasai. They advised the Maasai to send their young children to school instead. Yet Keen was most extreme in this and even at one time gave an eight-month ultimatum to the Maasai to change dress otherwise he would quit parliament. Next day, Oliotiptip condemned him and the old fight between the two men started all over again.

3. Ntimama was born in 1930 at Melili in Narok district. He attended the Narok Government School from 1937 to 1944 after which he went for a teacher training course at Kaluha in Muranga’s district. He taught from 1947 until 1958 when he joined Narok African Education Council for about a year as a clerk. He had been a councillor in the council from 1954 to 1958 while he still served as a teacher, and from 1959 to 1960 he was a nominated member to the Legislative Council. In 1960 he joined government service, and served as a district officer until 1964 when he quit to become one of the most prominent farmers in Maasailand. He was elected Narok county councillor and chairman in the 1974 local elections. In addition to his farm in Narok, he runs, among others, some business concerns in Nairobi and owns tourist lodges in Maasai Mara Game Park (see Weekly Review 01/01/77).

4. Joseph Murumbi, born in 1911 as son of a Goan father and Maasai mother. He was most instrumental in the early 1960s while in London to Kenya’s fight for freedom. After returning to Kenya he would soon become minister of state for foreign affairs before becoming Kenya’s right hand man in March 1966. In a letter dated 15 August 1966 addressed to Kenyatta, Murumbi indicated that he wanted to resign his position as VP as soon as possible. A mere eight months later he did. Murumbi made this step out of discontent of upcoming corruption in the régime, but foremost because of the assassination of his old and trusted friend Pio Gama Pinto, allegedly by the Kenyatta régime (Daily Nation 07/07/83; interview Mrs S. Murumbi, November 1997).

5. George Saitoti was born in 1944 as George Kimuthia Kiariie in Nongon town, Olooloa location, of Kikuyu parents, the late Mr Zachary Muthengi Kiariie and Ms Zipporah Gathoni. He joined Oloolua Primary School, the only colonial school in Nongon in 1952. He was admitted to Mang’s High School in 1960, before going to Cambridge School, Western Massachusetts and later Brandeis University in the US in 1962. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in mathematics in 1967. He later went to the UK to obtain his MA (1968) and a PhD at Sussex University (1971). He began teaching Mathematics at Nairobi University that same year. In 1978 he became a senior lecturer and chairman of the department. Later in the same year he was appointed chairman of Mummies Sugar Company and a director of Kenya Commercial Bank. In December 1982 he succeeded Philip Ndegwa as the bank’s executive chairman (Daily Nation 02/08/89; Saitoti 1997: 16-7).

6. Philip Odupoy was made boss of a vegetable firm in Naivasha.

7. Goldenberg Ltd, was an Asian-owned company that received throughout 1991-92 some US$ 600 million in compensation for non-existing exports of gold and diamonds to fictitious companies in Switzerland and Dubai. According to the Law Society of Kenya (LSK) many people within government circles profited from this scandal. The LSK reasoned that, among others, the minister for Finance, George Saitoti at the time, should be brought to court. The society showed relevant documents to prove their case that the Treasury was involved. Also foreign donors have indicated that action has to be taken against the keyplayers involved. It is only in 1998 that detailed hearings started.

8. Saitoti has been working hard to develop his constituency. He even used Treasury money directly to fund projects. For example he would call the Ministry of Water in Kajiado town to send an officer to a job in a certain location. These were unplanned projects. It is one of the reasons why expenditure in Kajiado rose after Saitoti came to power (see Rutten 1992: 109-12). It also explains one of the reasons for the failure of the District Focus Policy (see Rutten 1990).
9. The trick of over-ordering boxes for Kajiado North constituency is one theory, but it might as well have been the case that extra boxes were available anyway. According to *Africa Confidential* (Vol. 33 No.20) 4. 'Britain had been under pressure from Kenya to assist KANU's plans for victory. As part of its support for the democratic transition, the UK has provided ballot boxes and will provide ballot papers too. But Narobi has been demanding more boxes and papers than originally planned. This is widely understood in Kenya as a way of ensuring there are plenty of boxes filled with KANU votes. Britain pressed the request, while the US pressured it not to provide any more papers or boxes. It has now agreed to provide 35,000 boxes, 5,000 more than originally requested. This was simply because the boxes were 'smaller than was expected', a Foreign and Commonwealth Office official told *Africa Confidential*, and there was 'no intention of favouring any party.' The Kenyan government has also been threatening to print its own papers and then hand the bill to Britain.

10. There were problems in the 1992 KANU nominations. Parasai won. Ntasiiko and Sankori petitioned. There was a repeat. Ntasiiko stepped down for Parasai but Sankori, backed by Saitoti won. He was the chairman of the Matapato elite Maasai. This made the Matapato to back Lootnasta on a DP ticket.

11. It was later admitted by the KANU secretary general that the party had brought 3,000 youthwingers from Kajiado District and elsewhere. The policemen's duty had been to maintain peace and protect the youthwingers (Daily Nation 01/04/93).

12. Following independence, Kikuyu farmers began settling among the Maasai pastoralists in the Enoosupukia area. In 1977, the area was designated a land adjudication area and the Kikuyu began to issue title deeds to purchasers. A lot of land under the guise of protecting tribal interests (Sanger and Nottingham 1964:16).

13. It was later admitted by the KANU secretary general that the party had brought 3,000 youthwingers from Kajiado District and elsewhere. The policemen's duty had been to maintain peace and protect the youthwingers (Daily Nation 01/04/93).

14. The true is that a group of Maasai elders visited Maela camp and requested the government to return the Kikuyu farmers. Most of these were not squatters but legal landowners. The government began to issue title deeds to purchasers. As at the time it was needed most (in early 1997 during a major drought). It was thought to be a political issue because of the elections coming and three people campaigning for votes to be elected in the county council and one MP seeking re-election.

15. In 1996, after intense lobbying by Olorkinyei a new ward was created in Namanga. Ntimama supported Olorkinyei. The VP campaigned for his man Matampash. However, Olorkinyei won Saitoti kicked out a repeat. Olorkinyei won again. Following this outcome the ward was de-registered. If there is no ward, there cannot be a councillor. Olorkinyei initiated his anti-government (Saitoti) campaign. The nullification of plots all over to non-Maasai has recently started.

16. The non-Maasai factor was also important in the struggle for votes. They mainly inhabit the urban centres such as Namanga, Loitokitok. Ngong and the like. In Namanga/Mile Tisa the non-Maasai (though in small numbers) supported Richard Oloitiptip. The Loitokitok and Entonet non-Maasai supported Sanguru as he lives there. The Iliat, Entama and Rombo non-Maasai supported Parasie for the same reason here. To date the Trans Mara electorate covers some 20,000 Kisigipsi, 8,200 Uasin Ghish, 8,100 Moitanik and 6,500 Siri. Traditionally, the Loita and the Siria Maasai used to live in what is now called Trans Mara district. The Loita lived in the plains while the Siria were in the now Maasai Mara game park. The Siria were pushed away by the Purko. These Purko came from the north. The Maasai engaged in cattle stealing. Many animals died in that area. The Loita were pushed to areas where there was already a Maasai settlement. One should keep in mind the fact that we are dealing with small populations. The Siria cattle were also found near Golgori. The Uasin Ghish at that time were still around Nakuru and Eldoret. Only the Luo had some claims, e.g. above Migon (Awendo).

17. In 1922 the Maasai were given the option to move west to Kilgoris. Only a few Maasai families moved in that direction: ole Kaikai, ole Konche, ole Maasai and chief Nilania. The latter kicked out Count von Dorenhoff (founder of Kilgoris) because of the war. This German was a dairy farmer involved in making cheese from Maasai herd's milk. He went to farm in Sotik. In 1932 Kilgoris was made a district officers station. The Moitanik are a small Maasai tribe who have much influence by the Nandi, but also Bahiya and Baganda. Many speak Kalenjin, e.g., Sunkuli. The Moitanik had Nandi laibons (wise men). The Siria chased the Moitanik northwards. South of Kilgoris lived a group of Nandi workers (builders of the Catholic mission). These ones were kicked out by Konche's father in 1968 (Billy Konche - member of the Lancaster House conference in London discussing Kenya's independence). The reason must have been political, but Konche (Uasin Ghish Maasai) could not kick out the Kipsigis. Battles along the Migi River are known to have occurred in the 1860s between the Maasai and Kipsigis. John Kaiser claims the
Out for the Count

Kisii lived halfway between Lolgorien and Kilgors upward from Lolgorien. Fights in the area were mainly between the Sirma versus Kura, Moitaniak versus Kipsigsig (over cattle) and the Uasin Gishu versus Kisii and Luo (interview with Father Frans Mol, Mill Hill missionary, 12/12/97).

24. On 23 November, Rail Odinga visited Kilgors town on a fact-finding mission. He was soon ordered to leave by six morans who had been brought in by a police vehicle that had stopped some 200 metres from where the crowd had gathered. They were armed with simis and rungar and stated it was a KANU zone. One of the morans aimed his iron-studded club and seriously injured Odinga's bodyguard on the head. Damage was also done to the NDP vehicles by smashing windows and damaging bodywork. According to Odinga the police just stood by and watched (letter dated 25 November 1997 addressed to the Electoral Commission of Kenya). This story seems to confirm allegations that Sunkuli was the one orchestrating these attacks.

25. Evidence produced before the Akiwumi Commission seems to confirm the believed involvement of Sunkuli (see e.g., East African Standard 12/02/99; 13/02/99; 14/12/99; 22/04/99).

26. Interview conducted in Kilgors town on 7 December 1997 by the author. Informants also narrated that Kisii had killed two maasai boys recently. One boy, sleeping in Kilgors Secondary School, had his head cut off and impaled on a stick. The Maasai were furious. This happened in the border town Nangusa. The boy had gone to Nangusa to sell goats. He was in one of the hotels when Maasai looted cows from the market. The Kisii revenged on the boy. In addition, a small kid was killed by gunfire from a car. The Maasai took revenge on the Kisii by organising a raid on the market.

27. KANU supporters claimed that Leken's ally, one Tutui, was instrumental in changing the actual votes in his favour. One agent of Leken in Lorngosua polling station is said to have stated afterwards that he rigged over 88 votes.

28. After the KANU nominations, an acquaintance met Vice-President George Saitoti, and while congratulating him for his victory in Kajiado North, informed him that Kajiado had acquired a new brand of politicians. The VP was not amused and asked, 'What do you mean? Those guys are opposition damu. I cannot work with them.' The person retorted by saying, 'but they have won on a KANU ticket and are therefore KANU people. They could not have bothered for this kind of nomination if they are not interested in KANU.' 'No way,' replied the VP, 'those guys may have won in KANU. However, they will always have one foot in KANU and the other in the opposition and its masters. So I will have to do something in two days' time and revert the situation.'

29. When the Kajiado Central constituency KANU nomination results were nullified, Moi asked Leken to step down to give room for the KANU candidate. Some local people accompanied him on the journey, leaving a warning behind from the local people to the effect that: 'ole Leken, they are going to give you a job or money. If you agree to be cowed, do not come back here. Do not agree to be bribed. We need you as our leader and not Moi's servant.' When they arrived at State House, Moi offered Leken a job as a high commissioner in London, and acknowledged the fact that a mistake had been made in both Kajiado Central and South, 'but to error is human', he concluded. Leken is said to have replied that: 'Your Excellency, I am not refusing your offer. And I think that in the years that I have given (sic) you as an ambassador, I have done well. However, the people now want me to serve them in a different capacity and that is why Sunu turned up in large numbers to queue for me. If you want me to serve you again, do come down to Kajiado Central and ask the people to allow me to. Otherwise, I am not able to do that on my own.' The president kept quiet and then said, 'Then, if you are going to campaign, then ask votes for me while you solicit for yours.' Councillor Osoi (from Mashuru) is said to have risen and told the president that, 'Let us be clear about this. The Maasai are very annoyed by what happened, and especially the role of the VP and the DC Kajiado. If you really want the Maasai to co-operate in any way, first, do fulfil the following: Remove the DC within 48 hours, tell Saitoti to keep off Kajiado Central, and as for votes, come yourself and ask the Maasai to give you votes.' With these few words, the Maasai, picked their rungar by the gate and went home.

30. Results came in by sub-location, not by polling station. This was confusing, because the official gazetted list of the polling stations did not match with the sub-locations. The 'KANU' list also did not specify which polling stations were in which sub-location.

31. Interview with G. Konchela 04/12/97.

32. Parpai had been the deputy clerk to the Kajiado county council. He was forced to resign in 1992 after he had raised a clenched fist, the DP sign, in a bar in Kajiado. This made him join the opposition in bitterness at the decision.

33. Sankori had full support in Kaputiei (his home area) and Dalalekutuk. He would do well among the Ildamat and the lipurko (though they are a minority in number). He has some support in Loodokilani (where he has married from) and some in Matapato. Leken had great support in Loodokilani, Matapato (home area) both of which are populous and has decided support in Dalalekutuk (nearly 50 per cent) and some in Kaputiei it was estimated.

34. Loontasati had contested in the 1992 elections on a DP ticket against Sankori where he got 8,543 votes to the winner's 11,262 votes. This time Leken asked Loontasati to support him in the KANU primaries for Leken to defeat Sankori. If Leken would fail he would, during the general elections, campaign for Loontasati and DP. When Leken defected to Safina, Loontasati felt betrayed and opted to co-operate with Sankori. Others claim that Loontasati felt he was too close to Singaru to avoid the loot of his project. Likewise a sub-clan from Ilaitayok known as isirila (limukaperi) from the controversial Olugulului/Ollalarashi group ranch backed Singaru so as to retain their group ranch positions.

35. The Ilais clan were divided by a sub-clan named iloodo-kishu (red cows) who did not want Singaru, simply because their clansman Somoire from the PADEP project was not admitted. Keen who had always been a very close friend to Loontasati's father (ole Nkoyo).

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38. Oliver Seki was seen actively campaigning in favour of George Saitoti. At 2.30 pm the voting had come to a complete standstill. Presidential and civic ballot papers were not available. The presiding officer went round but returned empty handed. Both candidates went and brought the returning officer (Taalam). He explained he had distributed the ballot papers to other stations. One of the ballot boxes for the civic elections was blown out of the balloting room by an angry crowd planning to burn its contents. The police chased everybody out except agents and the deputy presiding officer. The boxes were sealed and voting continued the following day. The boxes were taken to the counting hall and returned next day. Agents agreed that the seals of the boxes were intact (IED observers' report).

39. KANU claimed that Olokinor's victory in the primaries was due to his bringing in Maasai moran, lacking ID and voter cards. When Godfrey Parpai defected to DP,
Olorkinyei also defected 'willingly' to DP though he could have stood on a KANU ticket. He, however, opted to campaign fully for his parliamentary candidate. KANU then cleared Moses Ketukul, supported by Saitoti, who had lost to Olorkinyei. On 29 December, Olorkinyei did agree to continue with the election with the wrong party symbol attached to his name and he signed a letter in this respect. Still, it is not clear whether the mistake was made in Kenya or in the UK. Finally, the fact that the moran could not vote in the general elections and that Olorkinyei is said to have threatened the non-Maasai if they engaged in the KANU primaries, this time around they did vote and most likely tilted the scale against the DP candidate.

38. Though Leken did not petition his defeat, long after one informant (a counting clerk), claimed that at the count he noticed that several ballot papers were folded tightly together. One would not expect this to be possible if ballots are put into the box one by one. The numbers stuck together could range from 5 to 15. Boxes from Dalalekutuk, Sankori's stronghold, especially showed this rare feature for the presidential and parliamentary elections, not so much the civic. Often all but one were votes cast for the KANU candidate. A possible explanation given for this was that if opposition supporters boycotted voting, the remaining papers could have been used and put in the box en masse. Of course one still needs an enabling environment to do so.

39. Informant's name withheld.

40. Moi and Saitoti were for a long time not on speaking terms. For example, Moi attended a party in 1998 organized by ole Muyaa to celebrate his recapturing the Kajiado county council chairmanship. According to witnesses Saitoti, who was also present as the MP of the area, was not allowed to speak.

41. A major factor in the voting pattern in Kilgoris constituency was the fact that a large number of Uasin Gishu (some 70-80 per cent) voters did not support 'their' man Konchela, because there is a fight over land. The Uasin Gishu want to be among the beneficiaries, like the Moitanik, of getting land from the Siria (in the Masurara area) and Konchela is not in favour of this. On 27 January 1998, tension among the Siria Maasai rose because of the Uasin Gishu and Moitanik Maasai, inviting them to join them against the Kisii. The call is that they are all Maasai and cannot sit on the fence. Yet, the Siria (the smallest group of Maasai in the area) are known to be a very gentle and peace-loving people. They will not support Sunkuli because, for example, in 1996 he tried to throw them out of an area (the Soit Escarpment) where the Siria had received a lot of revenue from some tourists lodges (one belonging to Moi) for allowing wildlife to roam the area. The idea was to allegedly put his Moitanik relatives and friends in the area to make them profit from the revenues. One Kijabe (a Siria) went to see Moi and threatened to sue the chief (Sunkuli's puppet) in court. The court case never materialised.

42. In the county council Ntimama has a problem: the DC has influenced Ntutu to make sure his constituency got 25 wards as against the 17 in Narok North. Add the 6 and 4 nominated councillors and it will be 31 to 21. Most of the councillors in South are youngsters from another Maasai section and are not willing to co-operate with Ntimama. They now want full control of the resources of the Maasai Mara. They have appealed for the chairperson and the treasury to come from their side. The clerk already is. Altogether Ntimama will lose most of the Mara money. He has already indicated that Narok North still has the pyrethrum and wheat (interview in Narok town 23/01/98).

43. Interview with John Keen (18/01/98).

44. Interview with Richard Leakey (24/01/98).

45. Lately Muyaa is said to have been instrumental in an attempt to allocate the county council Livestock Holding Ground land near Ngong to State House-related persons. This should act as a stepping stone for an MP position. This would directly threaten Saitoti's position.
Elections represent the most formidable means of recruiting individuals into leadership positions and in this sense they form the very foundation of a political system that ascribes to liberal democracy. This chapter is concerned with the analysis of electoral politics in Kenya generally and in Kalenjin constituencies in the Rift Valley in particular (See map on p. 189).

Electoral studies can only be meaningful if they contribute to the understanding of political dynamics and behaviour in a specific system. With this in mind, the study attempts to explain why people voted or did not vote, and the factors which influenced the decisions of the voters. Moreover, this chapter analyses the relationship between the electoral process and the politics of parliamentary elections in Kenya.

The significance of elections is also dependent on how freely such elections are conducted. In a democracy elections enable the electors to vote on the basis of their free will. They also enable aspirants for elective posts to offer themselves for election without let or hindrance. The major test for free elections is the openness of a political system. Such openness implies that citizens are free to engage in political formations on the basis of their value preferences and that such formations enable the electors not only to choose between (or among) candidates, but also between or among competing policies and programmes.

Jean Blondel (1963) outlines the factors which he considers crucial to a voter’s choice in a given political system. They include religion, demographic variables (age, sex), tradition and environment (social and family background), self-assigned class and membership in interest or pressure groups. Out of the experience of the 1992 Kenyan elections we hasten to add ethnicity as one of the critical variables.

The Kalenjin community, which is our case study, is President Moi’s ethnic group. Moi is also the chairman of the ruling party, Kenya African National Union (KANU). In Kenya, as elsewhere in Africa, often times the party in power tends to use its position to acquire electoral advantages over its opponents. Likewise the position of head of state is seen as beneficial to the community which the occupant of the office halls from.