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Kenya Research project by Robert M. Press [see: Press, Robert M. (2006) *Peaceful Resistance: Advancing Human Rights and Civil Liberties*. Aldershot, U. K.: Ashgate.]

Transmitted to LOC February 13, 2011

Interview conducted by Robert M. Press (bob.press@usm.edu; press.bob@gmail.com)

Interviewee: Martin Shikuku

Location of interview: office in Nairobi, Kenya

Date of interview: 2002

I = interviewer (Robert Press); R = respondent (Martin Shikuku)?? indicates a point unclear. Some tape counter numbers are shown. Bracketed and/or bold research notes are also shown.

Bio. Mr. Shikuku played a visible role in the challenges to the one party state, both in the 1960s as a Member of Parliament, and in the 1990s. He was imprisoned a number of times. He helped form the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy [FORD] in 1990/91 and tried to hold a major political rally in 1991 in favour of multi-party democracy. The rally was crushed by police, but shortly afterwards, the government allowed multi-party elections. The original members of FORD are noted below.

I- Mr. Martin Shikuku, what are specific steps that you have taken between the period of 1987 to 1997 to try to advance human rights?

R Well I have all along been a fighter in this country during the colonial days and then during Kenyatta, Jomo Kenyatta's regime, and because of my consistent, persistent advocating for rights of the downtrodden people, I ended up in detention in 1975. I was arrested on 15th of October 1975 and I was detained without trial for 3 years, 1 month and 12 days. Ah I was released on 12th of December 1978.

I What was the reason that you were detained?

R Because I said KANU [government party] was dead on the floor of the House [Parliament].

I And what was your reason for saying that?

R Because it had never held elections for over ten years and when I wanted to substantiate the speaker, the late John, Marie Seroney overruled me by saying that I don't have to substantiate the obvious, so he and me ended up in detention.

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I Let's go right to the period of 87 to 97, ah, at least one of the actions by you that I remember well is your decision to hold a rally, I mean to attend a rally, which was in November, yes November of 1991, the Kamukunji rally.

R Ya

I But before that you had formed FORD, you had been one of the six members of FORD, which was in I think around May of 1991, wasn't it ?

[The original members of FORD included: Oginga Odinga (father of Raila Odinga); Martin Shikuku, Masinde Muliro, Philip Gachoka, George Nthenge, and Ahmed Salim Bamahriz.]

R Well actually we started much earlier, we were doing it underground, way back in 1990, and then to the surface in 1991, and we were trying to get a licence to hold rally , we were refused and of course we should sue the D.C [District Commissioner] or the Provincial Commissioner Nairobi, for failure to licence our meeting. We went to court and we knew of course Moi made a joke of it, he said, who do they think they are, do they know who is the owner of the courts. And of course we realised that , withdrew the case and then decided to go to Kamukunji with or without a licence.

I Two questions. What was your [plan] in terms of a tactic or a strategy of forming FORD in order to advance both human rights and pluralism, what was your idea there, why did you take part in that at that time?

R We took part in that because KANU had become dictatorial to the extreme, whereby way back in 1982, ehh, KANU was declared as the only party by law, and not any other party and it became so strong that even if you said anything in Parliament, which you are privileged to say, which is covered by Chap 6, I think, it is Chap 6 or 7, which gives privilege to a member of parliament not to be sued for anything he says in Parliament. And, you would get if you said something that was not palatable to the powers that be , the party asks your branch, the constituency branch, to submit your name as a rebel, non- conformist, they forward your name to the district branch, which forwards your name to the headquarters here, and you are summoned to appear before the committee , and normally many fellows lost their membership of the party. So we thought that was very dictatorial and against the principles of democracy because you are elected to parliament by a lot of people, some come with majority of thirty thousand and then you have a few, a committee of KANU just saying you are no more a member of parliament. That was dictatorial so we had to do something about it. So the more people were thrown out the more people became bitter and those who were thrown out ganged up and that is how this forum for restoration of democracy had to start.

I But in 1990 underground it is a long way from 1992 , why the timing? Why 1990?

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R Why 1990 because it became very difficult to express yourself in anyway unless you have the approval of the top hierarchy. But from 1982, things were not all that bad, we went on-?? declared Kenya one party state then as we progressed the party became more stronger and stronger and then we reached a time when we could not express, you can't move, you can't hold a meeting and if you are allowed to hold a meeting you can't say something that was not agreeable to the government. Even chief could come and take the microphone

from you, at least this not only happened to us even sometimes from ministers they grabbed the microphone from them.

I Did someone approach you to ask you to be in this organisation of FORD, the one of the six people?

I No. I started it.

R You started it?

R Yes

[Note: several other Kenyans claimed credit for being responsible for launching FORD – Forum for the Restoration of Democracy – a nine person organization that later morphed into several political parties.]

I Explain how you started it

R I thought we should do something so the first person I approached was the late Masinde Muliro...because he was also threatened to be thrown out of Parliament

I He was an MP?

R He was an MP.

I From where?

R For Cherengani [spelling?] Where now Mr. Ruto is , Kirwa

I which ethnic group was he with?

R He is a Luhya

I He is a Luhya also?

R Eeh. I approached him and then

I He agreed?

R He agreed. And later on I approached Mr. G. G. W. Thenge , he is here at the market stall number one.

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I Could you write his name for me?

R Gregory G. G. W

I And where can I locate him?

R In stall number one, city market

I Stall number one?

R Ya

I Stall number one at city market? Here?

R Ya

I Right here?

R Yap

I Okay

R He is a businessman

I And you have - . Again what was your purpose in trying to get this particular group of people together in FORD at a time when parties were not allowed?

R We had to do something about it. We had to surmount this predicament of this one party state which all along have been against because the first time when Kenya became independent we had multi- party but in 1964 due to pressure from the government, some of our members who were KADU, Kenya African Democratic union , members of parliament crossed to the ruling party and I was left alone

I In 1964

R In 1964 November I was alone.

I You were the only KADU?

R I was the only KADU in the opposition. Because I believed and I still believe that you can't have democracy in one party state.

I Okay

R And then in 1966, [Jaramogi Oginga]Odinga who was responsible for the distraction of FORD, of KADU, he was forced out of KANU after the Limuru conference in 1966 and he formed his KPU, Kenya Peoples Union, which was never , was registered later.

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I If I may go back to just a point here, ah ,sorry in 1991 , 1990 underground, I think it was in May but am not sure. Ah in terms of strategy, political strategy and tactics and you are very experienced at this and it is a hard game perhaps when authoritarian government, why was there, how did you make as a tactic, what was the impact, what did you expect to get out of it because obviously it was illegal , you could have had ??, you could have done other things , why did you choose a party and what was the impact of that decision?

R The decision was strategic in the sense that we had to get people who had a name , mass, political mass. So we looked at the provinces, we have got 8 provinces, I come, I happened to come from the western part of the country, western province, Muliro Rift Valley, Odinga was from Nyanza, Gachoka was from Central province, Omare is from Coast

I Coast

R And Thenge was from Eastern province.

I It was well thought out

R Yap

I And what was your reason for trying to get that kind of representation?

R We looked at the question of numbers because western part of Kenya is thickly populated, so is Nyanza , so is Central and then the Coast.

I So you picked on six as the biggest provinces?

R Yes. And of course we wanted nine and we could not get, we had to settle for six

I Nine because you kept saying at the conference nine, nine, nine because you had to retain your.

[Tactic: form what amounts to be an opposition party, but keep the membership under the limit for registration as an organization, which would have been refused.]

R Yes. If you go to ten you have got to register and we all never knew who they were and the excuses they made. [Charles] Rubia told me that he could not join us at that time because his son was getting married , he was getting to wed and they had planned to have their honeymoon in London. So if he joined our group the chances of his son going for a honeymoon would not materialise.

I Ya

R That was his excuse. And when I approached of course I have told you about Dennis Akumu, he is the other man I approached and he said he could not join us because of his tenant patches programme ?? because if he joined us he would cease to enjoy that and he could be thrown out

I Because he had what now?

R Tenant patches scheme. He was living in a house where you live in the house at the same time you keep on paying

I Right, could you write his name because I don't get his name

R He is called Davis Akumu

I Where is he from

R This is, he was trade unionist

I Okay, again an attempt to make a global representation?

R Ya

I Rubia, what was he supposed to represent?

R Rubia was former mayor of Nairobi. So we wanted him in Nairobi.

I Okay. And the third man that you didn't get was Ahmed somebody. No, you explained it...oh, Khalif.

R Hmmh , he was from the North Eastern

I **Okay, your strategy was to make it look like you had the whole country coming together at least in the form of representatives**

R Correct

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I Okay. What were you , I hate to keep pushing this - about trying to get to the heart of the analysis and I guess you are a good strategist that is why I am asking this. **What was the strategy** of trying to get everyone represented, what was the message you were trying to give to whom, to the public or to Moi?

R It was aimed at the powers that be , it was Moi.

I And what was the message you were trying to give him?

R That we were democrats and we were hell bent to democratise the country. In the beginning we thought we had no support but then to prove to him we had support we asked him to give us a licence. They used to call us, even Mr. Kibaki. I remember he called us daydreamers, he also told us we were a bunch of little kids who were trying to cut amugumu?? tree with a razorblade and he referred to us as frogs who were trying to get into the KANU house and KANU would not be moved because frogs never bite; so what they were to do is to get a stick and toss us out and close the door.

I That was an attempt to kind of discredit the effort.

R Of course he was discrediting us

I KANU members?

R He was a KANU man

I He was but were the other six at that time?

R They had all, everybody had come from Kanu because there was only one party.

I So were any of them sitting current MPs at that time?

R None sitting in

I But some had been? All had been?

R Except for Philip [Gachoka] and [Ahmed Salim] Bamahriz.

I So that was the message, to try to show that you had representation that you were hell bent on getting democracy

R Hmmh

I In looking back you think the timing was a good decision?

R I think it was good because if it had , we had not checked on that , a lot of people would have lost their seats in Parliament, in municipalities. If we had not come in , the party would become even strong and there would be no, as a matter of fact in those days one would dare not to mention the name Moi without looking over his shoulders about twice or thrice and then in a whisper: 'Moi'. It was so hard

I It was a police state?

R More or less, yes, it was a police state

I I remember those days

R We were being followed, trailed by the special branch

I Before or after your formation of FORD?

R After formation of FORD

I Okay

R Even before, if you are a radical they would set special branch to trail you

I Do you think that perhaps you would have been put in detention again for doing this?

R This one I didn't worry now, this was now in 19-. After I had I had left detention in 1979, yes I no longer fear detention. Even now I don't fear

detention because I have been to all the maximum prisons, so there is nothing that can threaten me. Actually detention does not tie you down, it hardens you. What else can he do to me now? Nothing. I have been to all the maximum prisons; I have been taken to Manyani ??, which is a maximum prison, security prison. I was later on shifted to this big prison near [here]

I I don't need the name of it so much

R And I went to Shimolatewa ??, which is in the Coast, it is a maximum prison, Naivasha maximum prison. So Moi to date has unfortunately no other maximum prison to threaten me.

I **What do you think the impact was of the formation of FORD?**

R Oh, the impact was that people were also conscious of the fact that there was no freedom for them and they automatically decided to support this movement and though Moi and Kibaki looked down upon us, the day we went to Kamukunji on 16th of November 1991, I don't think Moi has ever seen such a crowd in his life. And we lost one person who was shot by the police, we were being shot at when we were sitting at the top of this pick up. [Fellow activists James Orengo confirms this event, which was photographed in the *Daily Nation*.]

I I wanted to ask you about that, some people said that shots were heard.

R Not only heard, they shot at us three times, one ended up in a fiery return, fortunately it was full of gas [allowing the vehicle to be driven away, though it was later blocked by police after a downtown Nairobi chase], and the other one missed.

I If it was not full tank it would have exploded

R Yes, if the tank was half it would have exploded but the tank, we had just filled at kileleshwa petrol, just below the kileleshwa police station. Below there is a petrol station we had filled

I Full tanks don't explode

R No, when it is too full it can't explode, but if it was half way with a bit of air

I And you were shot at two other times?

R One hit, it ended up in the fuel tank, one went astray and the other one I don't know why they were good, I don't think they were very good shots. We were sitting on top of the pickup surely they should have picked us easily but with the grace of God we escaped it. And then the third one, just whipped past me, in front of me and hit a bystander, he was just watching near the city-

I You could hear it?

R -Council, and it ended in his belly and tore his belly out and his intestines and he died on the spot [verified??].

I Ah, so as far as the impact for formation [of FORD], was there any desire to try to change , make a mental shift here where people would begin to be less fearful to speak out?

R Yes, when you have multiparty system then you have the chance, when you have one party system you have never experienced one yourself because you were born in democracy , in a democratic country so you don't know. But when you are in one party state, it is quite, it just like one living in Russia during the communist days , you would not even trust yourself , let alone your wife.

I And there were a lot of informers?

R A lot of them. But information from special branch was more less gospel truth
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I You mean special branch was sort of-

R Yes, when they report you, you have had it. It was just as bad as that , so we had to do something to restore democracy and when they refused when we tried all the channels, we decided and as a matter of fact I wrote to the president as secretary general informing him that on 16th of November 1991 we'll be, we will hold a rally, a political rally at Kamukunji with or without a licence.

I You were secretary general of FORD?

R Yes, I was secretary

I He immediately declared that it was an illegal gathering and that he would use all the power of his government to stop it

R As a matter of fact he went to Kamukunji three, four days before we held the meeting and warned those who think Kenya has no government let them hold a meeting here.

I Speaking strategically, what was the purpose of that rally?

R The rally was to draw the attention of the powers that be. It is not true that we are just noisemakers, or we are just frogs or day dreamers, little kids trying to cut a mugumu tree

I Would you spell that , you have mentioned that twice

R Mugumu. Mugumu tree. Mugumu is very hard wood, imagine trying to cut that wood with a razorblade and , so we wanted to show that we had the support. It came to pass that we had support.

I Ya, as I remember I was standing on a hill about a walk away, I did not go there I must confess but the people who came to the rally some of them went back and forth even after the police attack.

R Yap, okay

I Okay so going back to that day then, what was the scenario before the rally, because we were called as journalists by the American embassy and tipped off that you would be passing by the embassy...??244, but where were you before then, a few days?

R We were in hiding. They started arresting people before the rally so we decided to hide ourselves to avoid arrests before.

I And where were you hiding , which house ?

R I don't know if this would be good to be mentioned coz I don't think

I Okay. It is not someone who is already known is it, or an individual who is active out there, it is not necessary

R So we hid and some of us were arrested. G.G.W.Thenge ,the late Oginga Odinga was arrested and we got the wind of it because I was busy getting in touch with Reuters, BBC , Voice of America, informing them of what was happening. While I was busy doing that somebody drove in and told me the other two had been arrested

I Oginga Odinga was arrested ?

R Yes, and G.G.W.Thenge

I G.G.W.Kariuki?

R G.G.W that is George Gregory Thenge

I Thenge?

R Wilson Thenge. George, Gregory, Wilson, Thenge

I Okay, one person?

R One person

I He had been arrested?

R One person

I Was Muite with you at the time?

R No, he was not arrested that day, he was with us when we were going to Kamukunji, on 16th, he was later arrested, he didn't reach Kamukunji

I So .. ??266 two people were arrested before the rally again?

R Before the rally, Muite was not arrested before the rally

I So who was ...298??. which of the group of the ...299?? That come out of hiding and went to the rally?

R On the pick up?

I That came out of hiding and went to the rally?

R That was Masinde Muliro on the pick up

I Ya

R And Philip Gachoka, myself and Orengo jumped on it, he was not in the program

I Okay, on the pickup?

R O n the pickup, yes

I But when you pulled up to the American embassy, you were not alone , I remember there was a bunch of several other people on the car with you, who was there?

R I had Muliro there, the same people

I And then you went over there, and Muite got arrested, he somehow hooked up with you and got arrested that day?

R He was arrested before I reached Kamukunji, at the Landies road , near that gate

I When you were changing cars I think

R Yes, he was picked up and Mr. Shamalla

I Shamalla?

R Yes

I Did Japheth

R Japheth Shamalla

I Did he play

- R They were together in one car. They were the lawyers ; Orengo, Shamalla and Muite. They were in one car.
- I Ya. How would you describe the role that Shamalla did in trying to advance human rights in Kenya?
- R He was one of the brave people around who could allow us to use his office. Those days it was dangerous to allow people like ourselves to sit in his office , use his papers, his typewriter, telephone . He gave all those facilities and that is the part he played and for that we had to thank him by campaigning very hard for him to become a member of parliament in Shinyalu.
- I At that time that was considered a dangerous thing to do wasn't it ? All of you were kind of under watch
- R Ya, it was very dangerous but he was daring
- I Someone described Shamalla's office as a kind of war room, a kind of a strategy nerve centre...??318
- R That is where we were meeting, it was the only place we could meet
- I How often would you meet? Am curious about the whole scenario
- R Oh we used to meet whenever we feel like especially if there was a special thing to be considered, no one would issue individual statements , we had to sit and agree on a statement then it is issued
- I Statements in the name of what , the individual?
- R We used to sign all of us
- I It wasn't an organisation or it was you or ...??325. Or the FORD people?
- R The six.
- I Oh okay, okay but were there other attorneys that used to meet there with you at that time ?
- R No
- I Maybe it is a different period because sometime some attorneys they were meeting there , Imanyara and a few others were also meeting in Shamalla's office.
- R I just don't know about that but I know the six used to meet there and only one day the so called young turks invaded our meeting
- I Who were the young turks ?

R Those were Imanyara, James Orengo , Professor Anyang Ny'ong'o, Muite, ah we had . Raila wasn't there

I Raila no?

R No.

I Karua, Martha Karua, Njoki?

R No.No. They came much later.

I Ya. They were just those really?

R Those are the ones that I can remember

I When you say ..??343 was there a kind of competition there?

R It was of the six but little did we know that Odinga had been approached by the youngsters and they wanted also to sit

I They wanted in?

R They wanted to sit in and we objected to that. And that was the beginning of the cracking of FORD.

I Those people ended up in FORD Asili?

R Hmmh?

I Did those people end up in Ford Asili?

R No, they ended up persuading Odinga to leave the FORD to form FORD Kenya

I Okay, they went to FORD Kenya

R And then there again they split where Muite disagreed with Odinga over his receipt of 2 million shillings from Patni and then after his death there was this fighting between Wamalwa who assumed the seat of chairman and Raila breaking up forming his own NDP and the remaining fellows , Orengo went to SDP ...??368

I They were all scattered. Was there a moment as if in retrospect you had said to the young turks , well come on in rather than say no don't come on , would that have made a difference?

R No, we had the decision to have this six, based on the fact that we were grown up enough to face death, that was , we had decided when we decide to move we are old enough to die. We didn't want kids around who still have got hope

of living, we had already brought people in this world and we were ready to die.

I So you really that there was a chance then in fact you might be arrested though?

R Not being arrested , not only being arrested , even die. It was not a small joke. We were ready to die and these people , the six people agreed we are ready to die, we didn't want kids around. And Thenge was very vocal about it. He threatened us of course , he said if you allow these kids to come in then you can count me out, this is old men, contemporaries of Moi and we are ready to face him and he wants to kill us he can do because we are fit to die. So let us not have kids around.

I That was ...??390

R We meant it . If it was rhetoric how could we have gone to Kamukunji in broad daylight on the same day, the date we had told him , and the time , at ten o'clock, we were at Kamukunji.

I I can't help asking you what details ...?? 465 that Kamukunji thing again, it was so important I agree with you. How did you manage to get to Kamukunji?

R Well we only told Moi, that we will be in Kamukunji on 16th of November 1991 at 10.00 am. Because at 10.00 am there is no darkness, we didn't want to do things under darkness , we would go in broad daylight, so perhaps that is the only knowledge he knew, but how to get there, how we would move , what vehicle we were going to use was our secret. So we met coming from different places where we had been hiding and we had organised this pick up to Kileleshwa petrol station, filled it , then we had two cars more. This pickup nobody boarded it from kileleshwa coming through the American embassy there, we only embarked on it , we got , jumped on it at the railway quarters Muthurwa.

I Hmmh

R And the other it went empty. So when we got on the pickup , when we got to Kamukunji,

I You were on the pick up?

R We were on the pick up

I And ...??420 and you actually drove right down the main road down Jogo road into the area did you ?

R Yes we did

I And didn't you address the crowds briefly?

R No, we stopped there and started shouting FORD, FORD

I Okay just a few seconds though, would you like to ...??423

R And the policemen were following us so we found there was going to be a scuffle to come out so we decided to come out

I ..??425 to the grounds

R We got there. Ya, then we came out and took Jogo road up to Outer Ring road , we wanted to go right up to kariobangi, then come in through the other back door through majengo and then get into the ground again but that could not be reached. It's alright , no problem

I Am sorry,...??433

R It is okay

I Why were you sitting up on top?

R I can't explain but somehow we were determined, we were ready to die , who would see us inside the pick up? And of course the masses were there and they wanted to see their leaders coming. We didn't want to have that repeat of the saba saba where meeting was convened , it was applied for by Mr. Matiba and

I And Rubia

R And they ..??443 cold feet , wananchi went to the ground and they ...??454 down. So that was one of them

I It is another important event , what was the difference between the saba saba of 1990 and Kamukunji of 1991? How would you assess the difference between the two events?

R This was organised by Matiba and Rubia

I Right, almost in the same sense that you had organised the rally ...??451

R Ya since he announced that they were going to Kamukunji, but we did not develop cold feet, but they developed cold feet and they never turned up and the masses turned up

I Were they arrested?

R When they cancelled their meeting at the eleventh hour and people were already on the ground so the police went for the people who were down there and more than 21 people died

I Were they in detention at that time?

R They were not detained , they just developed cold feet , they didn't go
I But when were they detained

R They were detained after the meeting had aborted

I After the rally?

R Ya after the rally

I Really , I didn't know that

R No they were not detained before.

I It is an important detail

R Yes, it is their developing of cold feet that led to their being arrested and the loss of over 21 lives at Kamukunji but with us we made good our threat , we said we would be there at 10.00 we were there at 10.00am. Shots were fired at us and we still went

I How many people did you say died ?

R Over 21 am told

I Countywide?

R I don't know ..??475 people there

I You showed up.

R We showed up

I You were not detained afterwards?

R We were later on of course arrested and we were each dispatched

I But only for a short while ?

R No, I was in jail for three weeks ,people being taken to their various districts

I Ya, I mean Matiba was in jail for like almost 11 months so something different happened but dynamics were somehow different. I n your case they didn't put you in detention for like a year, two years at that point, you were out in three weeks after going back to your home area, why do you think the government let you out?

R Because they realised that we got a big support . That rally at Kamukunji jolted..??490 them and they cannot go on keeping such popular people.

I Did you hear from any insiders about Moi's personal reaction to that rally by any chance?

R No

I Okay, but you could tell a joke to him because he let you out ?493??at the rally?

R Yes he let us and without charging us

I Aah, without the charges?

R Yes

I Two other things happened after that rally. November 16th I think the week afterwards the Paris club met, the donors met in Paris and cut off all new aid to Kenya and Malawi, do you remember that?

R No

I Do you remember that?

R No

I See you were in detention?

R Yes

I Your rally was here, around 16th, aid was cut off, a week later it was Kasarani [an indoor sports facility Moi used for some political assemblies in Nairobi]. Kasarani where he went in talking about the problems of multiparty. Moi at that point was telling those delegates multiparty is a bad thing, by the end of the speech he said by the way we are going to go multiparty. Do you see any connection between those three events?

R Ah, at Paris because they wanted some money and they had to behave themselves, and then this part of , what do you call this

I The Paris club, donors meeting

R Paris club, the donors meeting also affected them and here , Kasarani

I Yes

R He decided that we have multi-party now

I Why do you think he made that decision?

R Because of the pressure , both inside and outside, particularly because we owe our gratitude to the American ambassador here Mr

I Hempstone

R Hempstone

I What role did he play?

R He played a major role in bringing pressure upon Moi to allow multi partyism. Both the American embassy, German and the Scandinavian countries here, the English were not with us

I English were very quiet, they are noisier today

R They are noisier today because they were worried of their economic interests in Kenya and remember once I spoke with them the British High Commissioner was asking me if I was not risking by organising these..??543 which can go out of control. You can stay in your, they are staying up here , they are at the embassy somewhere here, simply and nicely and I will show you that I can control the crowds. There will be no violence and if there will be any violence it will come from the police , so you better get in touch with Moi to tell him not to shoot at the people . Nobody is going to throw any stone, they are going to have white handkerchiefs , green leaves and they will be no problem.

I This was for Kamukunji?

R This was for Kamukunji. And as I told him

I Was there a symbol, was there something that you ...??554 white handkerchiefs and what ?

R White handkerchiefs was to show , to depict peace and green also is for peace, green branches

I Green branches

R Green branches

I And were people carrying these green

R They were carrying them ,...??561if you look at the photographs

I Did you suggest that green has been around for a long time,...??562

R I suggested both handkerchiefs and green leaves and this was done.

I What is the importance of symbolism in politics like that?

R It means you are not violent, you are non violent

I Okay, so if you were to take those three things that you have mentioned, your activism by yourself and others, individuals going, organising a rally, two things and the donors cutting out money, which would you say was the most effective or was there no difference between the two in terms of forcing Moi to go multiparty?

R Both had more or less the same effect because locally he realised we were not just hot heads, we had a following. Internationally, the pressure came in through the donors and the embassies here that were

SIDE B

I Do you feel the donors would have come in if there had not been Kamukunji?

R Well, what do you mean?

I Well I you hadn't had FORD, you hadn't had a rally to show that you had support, not you but the idea of multiparty and then the police coming in to Kamukunji, it is speculation, but I the donors had met then, a week after when they met and there had been no Kamukunji, do you think they would have cut off the aid money because of the corruption and the things they were talking about?

R I wish I knew, probably you could ask them that.eeh

I I don't know

R But all I know we internally, that is what I told the British High Commission, we can control ourselves and we did control. I told him openly that you are only worried about yourselves, your economic interests in Kenya, that you are afraid they may go up in flame, they will be nothing of that nature, but in future one day your economic interests will go up in smoke

I So you would assess then, was that your say, greatest contribution you would you say towards the events of human rights was in fact the formation of FORD and that rally at Kamukunji, was that kind of a ..??596 move?

R Oh yes, from that time things have changed in Kenya, today you can say anything, anywhere and nobody will molest you. As a result of multiparty in Kenya, we even got rid of the detention order in this country, it was repealed, now we have no more detention without trial

I In looking ahead after 1992 when multiparty elections were first held, there seems to have been not much of a law in advancement of human rights till about 1997 after multi party came in, the constitution did not change, 1997, you had some change of laws and after mass action there are not a lot of changes until you request for change in 2002 right now. Why do you think there is nothing happening in between elections really in terms of events of human rights?

R One thing, the attitude of the government changed in the sense there was nobody being arrested and being thrown in today's detention , because there was no more detention, there was freedom of expression start oozing up, there was freedom of association though based on the licences, but when we had this IPPG, we removed the powers from the district commissioners who normally issue licences for meetings and gave it to assistant what we call OCS- Officer in charge of any police station to give that up.

I Hmmh. Am aware of those changes I was wondering why there hadn't been more changes between election years. It seems like the only time there are some changes it is just before an election.

R And also the pressure as such , people start seeing some freedom and they start being not very vocal. We tried for a time to try and change the laws, we had a major change in our constitution where we restricted to two terms of five years, we also effected some administrative changes and there were these other commissions being formed, ..??623 review commissions, these other committees were being formed to

I By the president?

R By the attorney general ...??623

I If you would describe Moi's tactics , we have talked about your tactics , Moi's tactics how would you describe them because he doesn't seem to have accepted very much willingly, it is like he has been forced into things

R Yes, up to today of course he didn't believe that Kenya can be a multiparty state. Do you remember once he said we are not cohesive enough and that may take even 50 years

I Did you agree?

R We didn't, I did not agree with him, we continued pressurizing him then he came to 5 years, we continued pressurizing him then he came to one year, pressurizing him until he accepted the multiparty

I Aah, what is your comment on what is happening today in terms of the confrontation between Moi and those who are seeking change?

R This confrontation is in my opinion , was brought about by a bit of confusion, first by those charged the duty of reviewing the constitution who said they wanted certain people to do it within a certain period, later on they said we cannot finish this job and we request for more time and then after sometime again they came back, pressurized ,said oh we can deliver it before that time

I Off and on off and on

R Off and on, so these confusions come, but now that we have got the constitution , we are now insisting that in view of the fact that wananchi people of this country have given their views as to what to be included in the constitution,

that the constitution after spending so much money on it, reviewing the constitution should be allowed to go and be completed before the election.

I Before the election

R Future elections should be held under the new constitution

I If in fact Moi deserves ..??649 before that happens , so you anticipate mass actions or just a lot of grumbling and complaining

R I don't there will be grumbling , he may be asking his , I believe he still says he would like to leave this country in peace but if he believes in that then let him not ignore the views of 31 million people. All the religious institutions , all the NGOs, all the political parties including his own KANU the ruling party , want the constitution to be debated and elections held under the new constitution. We don't mind even if it takes , Prof Ghai says we can hold elections in April, what is the difference between December and April? It is not very much. Where are we hurrying to , Jerusalem ? The answer is that Jerusalem there is no peace there, we can't just run ourselves into Jerusalem where there is no peace.

I You are not a candidate this time round, do you think, or you forgot?

R I am, both parliamentary and presidency

I Could I ask you a personal question on your motivation, you mentioned that briefly and ..??667, most political science studies do not look at motivation because I know some of the people involved ,am wondering what you think your motivation was to push against an authoritarian state and am not asking just a political thing, what am really asking is where back in your background whether as a child , or through parents of at a point did you get this stubborn ..??672 that sometimes you decide to say things that other people weren't saying?

R Well I have been asked that question many times but I much attribute it to my parents. My mother comes from a clan in Butere area who were fighters , they would never let you see their behind , their buttocks, they fight to the finish

I In terms of men fights or wrestle cattle rustlers?

R If there is any fight he will never withdraw

I Physical fights?

R Physical. They will never show you their behind as that is considered to be very cowardly. They fight to the finish. And then on my father's side, I come from, my father comes from a clan that fight using the sticks

I Your mother is she Maragoli [a clan of the Luhya in Kenya]?

R No, she is Kisa, from Kisa

I Kisa?

R And my father is from marama

I Marama . Both Luhya?

R They are all Luhya tribes, my father comes from that and they also

I Are good fighters with sticks

R And even with rungus

I With rungus?

R Rungus and the spear work, they will never show you their behind

I Okay, were the nomadic or were they farmers?

R No, they are just farmers

I So these were the ..??790

R And I think I think I have got the blood of the two sides, I don't fear death , I don't fear anything

I Okay , that one thing , to not be afraid and that is important but sometimes people are not afraid when they do bad things, what got you so interested in the idea of human rights?

R I have suffered right from the time I was six. I come from a humble background

I What were your parents?

R My parents were just peasants

I Peasants, small farmers?

R No, my father was a small farmer then he got employed in Lake Magadi, in a soda company

I I know it

R Where he worked for 34 years

I Down south

R Ya, as a dresser then health inspector and I remember in 1939 I was sitting at the railway station here and those days I was so fascinated , I liked trains you know, locomotive moving forward then coming back forth, having those things moving around so I was busy watching and then all of a sudden somebody pulled me from the back by my shirt almost choking me and then letting me down . When I looked I found it was my own daddy, I asked what it was and he told me don't you see memsab [white lady] is passing. You know those days memsab meant the wife of a European . If you saw a wife of a European coming your way you must stand at attention , if you have got your hut , you remove it. And those days if you annoyed a white man , he can order for your imprisonment , just call any police around and you are taken to prison without going through the courts . And if you are found for example going to a European's , we had different toilets,

I Hmmh

R European toilet was European only, there was Asian only, Arabs only , African there was no word written only. So if you were an African and you were found in these other toilets written on only, you can end up in jail. In this instant I think that is what pushed me to be , despite my father having taken that pain and lifting me so rudely that lady did not acknowledge standing at attention and removing his hat, she just walked on as if she was passing by a dog or something. And from that time , I had this in my brains though I was being trained to become a catholic priest and I gave no suspicion to my teachers in the seminary that I would be a politician.

I ..??838 after that moment you started thinking about

R How unfair this is , this lady is treating my dad like dirt, at least she could have smiled but she just passed as if she was passing by a dog. I was also told to stand at attention because the Europeans wife was passing by and she never acknowledged it , I didn't like it, I was never amused up to today

I So seeing you there kind of being ignored and downtrodden was not much fun

R No it wasn't

I And then as I grew up after my O level , I found my father was being paid after 34 years in that hottest part of Africa, he was asked to retire , it is me who asked him to retire , after he was only earning 285 shillings a month

I A month

R He started with five he told me. And he had to struggle to educate us , he had 8 children, five sons and three daughters, and one is my graduate from my family. I got out from school to educate my young brother. One became an X-ray..??818 graduate and another one, my sister became a diploma in home science

I You were you the oldest?

R No, there was another oldest who died. Am the second born

I So you are second. So you helped to educate your other brothers

R At least I educated my other brothers

I Is that one reason why you never went on to college?

R No I couldn't

I Had you wanted to?

R Yes I wanted to but then my daddy was now getting old so when I got a job I told him to go home in 1956

I What was your job?

R From school I was employed as a laboratory assistant for about 20 days then I applied to join the Railways and I was accepted , I came and did the interview and they took me on the same day I never went back. And I have never 'dreamt' ...?812 my 20 days salary in Lake Magadi.

I What did you do at the railways?

R We were the first Africans to be trained as trained guards straight from school

I So you got to go to the trains that you loved, you know?

R Yes, my father as a matter of fact told me if you like the trains you work hard and you will go to school and you can be

I So you graduated from school in 1956 and went right down to Magadi and then over to the trains?

R Ya. No 1956 that is when I asked my father to retire.

I Oh, okay

R But I started , I joined the training in 1953 in Nairobi here and graduated and I was posted in Nairobi here.

I So you never really had a lot of money

R No, then in Magadi after O level they were paying you 80 shillings

I When did you decide to get into politics?

R I told you from that time in 1939

I You actually started thinking about ...?820 Tell me what happened

R I was about six and I have never forgotten yes

I You actually started thinking about politics that time , some day

R Some day, I didn't like what happened and someday I will have to bring this to the end and my father was an introvert , he liked what I believed in , my mother was an extrovert , she did not , she openly told me my son you are fighting against the impossible, you are , you cannot make even a needle , how can you fight the mzungu, they call him mzungu, the Europeans who are flying over you , they got guns , they got everything. And I told her , mum , my father does not know how to make a hoe, you know we have these hoes for digging but we have got hoes here , there are people to make hoes . The governor , by then Sir ..Barryl..??833 does not know how to make a needle but there are people who make needles so that is not a big problem. Then I recall we went on and my father encouraged me quietly without telling mum , keep it up , keep it up and Kenya became

I Keep it up and what were you doing as he said keep it up for

R Politics (hearty laughter)

I Quietly

R And he was a very good campaigner. He knows how to go around convincing people you know

I So your first political job was MP then?

R My first political job was , I joined politics the colonial ,after the declaration of emergency on 20th October 1952, all political parties were, the political cow was banned and there was no political activity at all.

I After independence you ran for politics the first time in what year?

R 1961

I You won?

R No, I was number three

I Okay

R Ya, but after campaigning for two weeks, but I got involved first in trade union. I was the first African to be employed in Caltex headquarters here, and became a trade unionist, secretary general of the Kenya Petroleum oil workers union

I Pre-independence

R Pre-independence. And then in 1956 I was a founder member of Nairobi People's Convention party of which I became the treasurer, the auditor

I That was not European party ?

R No this was now, we were now to hold , organise political parties on district basis not country wide

I You were the auditor?

R Auditor of?

I Of the party.

R Of the party. Later on I was elected secretary general of the same in 1959. Then

I But the first time you were elected in parliament was when?

R 1963

I Okay and you served how many terms?

R I served 1963 to 1969 , then 1969 to 1974, then I was detained in 1975, came out 1978, got re-elected 1979 to 1983 because parliament was dissolved early , then 1983 to 1988 when I was rigged out and then the guy did not , he died before six months so there was a by election in 1989 for mulolongo (queuing system) where I won but because somebody did not like me , he decided to make the long queue shorter and the shorter longer. And this happened almost around the whole country . That's when

I ..??935Mbugua..??

R That is when actually lying was introduced officially by Moi and KANU party. Because this counting was, this queuing was done at the primary schools, so the kids were there and they could themselves count, they took it as a pleasure to count and see which is the longest queue, and then when they announced at that very venue that the one which had a shorter queue was the winner , Kids could not believe it

I Would you think that that was the beginning of ...?the beginning of loss of legitimacy by Moi?

R Yap

I 1988?

R Yap, 1988,

I Then again

R 1989 precisely

I 1989, Okay. Well there was the 1988 general election too

R Yes, I was rigged out

I But there was queuing in 1989 , was it?

R 1989. Rigging was 1988 where I lost with 500 votes but there were two tins which were not counted ,my tins

I Okay

R Ballot boxes in 1988

I Yes in 1992 you won , 1997 you lost is that so?

R 1997 again I was rigged out.

I And you are running again in 2002?

R Yap

I You don't quit do you?

R No, I have got to fight to the bitter end . We have got to establish truth in this country. Moi regime is allergic to the truth and this country has been governed through lies and ill tricks and I want to fight to restore truth which is God and justice and fight to eliminate if possible corruption. I t doesn't matter what manifesto you have so long as you have corruption it is a waste of time

I Ya, am just thinking ..??930. You mentioned principle one time when you were talking about the six minute reform , the five that you went after

R Ehe

I Is principle an element?

R People of principle , when they say no it remains no when they say yes it remains yes. Not opportunists

I How would you characterize some of the advocates for human rights who are among the young turks , would they be principled in your book or just ambitious?

R They are just ambitious , they are not principled because I do recall we agreed in Limuru that anybody who has lost election fairly or unfairly should not be nominated to parliament as a very serious principle

I Say that again , the point escaped me am sorry

R Anybody who has lost an election fairly or unfairly should not be nominated by the powers that be to parliament.

- I Hmmh, why?
- R Because if the people have rejected you , why should you go through the back door and get to that parliament
- I Would you say if they have lost unfairly ...??000
- R If they have lost unfairly , you have lost. Personally I lost unfairly but I would never accept nomination , you can nominate my dead body. Because you automatically lose the pride of being an elected person who speaks for the people, a person who is ready to lay his own life for the sake of those he represents, a person who is ready to sacrifice. A real politician can never be rich ,he has no time to sit down and plan how to become rich. He is busy sitting down to see how his people can get up. He is a person who believes the government should be rich , not an individual.
- I Did Moi ever try to buy you off?
- R Kenyatta and Moi failed because in 1968 Kenyatta appointed me a chief whip hoping he will silence me by getting other members to vote for whatever bills of motions the government brings around.
- I It didn't work
- R It didn't work because whenever I disagreed with that motion I would go round asking the members, whipping them asking them to oppose the bill so he found I was not useful
- I What did Moi try?
- R Then he Jomo Kenyatta went further and appointed me an Assistant minister in 1959 under the ministry of home.
- I 1969
- R 1969, Ya. He appointed me an Assistant minister in the ministry of Home Affairs under the present president .
- I Ya
- R I never stopped airing my views , wherever something was wrong I spoke for the common man and he always reminded me that once you are in the government you are not supposed to criticise the government. I never listened to the warning so in 1974 I was dropped. I was not appointed again , then I was picked up in 1979 by Moi now when he became the president, he made me an Assistant minister
- I Okay
- R In his government I never stopped talking for the people , I was thrown out in 1983 (laughs)

I ...??124

R Out of the job. I lost it.

I So you were thrown out

R I was thrown out. And that is what I am, I would like to have things , I think it is more or less genetic, I come from a humble family, I have never lost , I have built a big permanent home ...??131 , I am high up in stature in the , am not like any commoner here , I have a car and so forth, but I have never forgotten where I came from so I will always go back and try to lift these people where I came from so that they can live a good life, get education , get their jobs for them and God knows what . And so I don't get one of the powers that be there up and there is nothing I can do about it, and that is what I am.

I I am gonna let you go now because you have been very patient unless there is something else you wanted to add, sometimes I don't get to some points..??139

R With me I can add until ...??139

I (laughs)

R But I have got some friends I want to see

I Okay

END

- II- Mr. Martin Shikuku, what are specific steps that you have taken between the period of 1987 to 1997 to try to advance human rights?
- R Well I have all along been a fighter in this country during the colonial days and then during Kenyatta, Jomo Kenyatta's regime, and because of my consistent , persistent advocating for rights of the downtrodden people , I ended up in detention in 1975. I was arrested on 15th of October 1975 and I was detained without trial for 3 years, 1 month and 12 days . Ah I was released on 12th of December 1978.
- I What was the reason that you were detained?
- R Because I said Kanu was dead on the floor of the house
- I And what was your reason for saying that?
- R Because it had never held elections for over ten years and when I wanted to substantiate the speaker , the late John, Marie Seroney overruled me by saying that I don't have to substantiate the obvious, so he and me ended up in detention.
- I I have a ...??019 of questions, going, let's go right to the period of 87 to 97, ah, at least one of the actions by you that I remember well is your decision to hold a rally, I mean to attend a rally , which was in November, hmm, yes November of 1991, the Kamukunji rally
- R Ya
- I But before that you had formed FORD, you had been one of the six members of FORD, which was in I think around May of 1991, wasn't it ?
- R Well actually we started much earlier, we were doing it underground, way back in 1990, and then to the surface in 1991, and we were trying to get a licence to hold rally , we were refused and of course we should sue the D.C or the Provincial Commissioner Nairobi, for failure to licence our meeting. We went to court and we knew of course Moi made a joke of it , he said, who do they think they are, do they know who is the owner of the courts. And of course we realised that , withdrew the case and then decided to go to Kamukunji with or without a licence.

- I Two questions. What was your in terms of a tactic or a strategy of forming FORD in order to advance both human rights and pluralism, what was your idea there, why did you take part in that at that time?
- R We took part in that because KANU had become dictatorial to the extreme, whereby way back in 1982, ehh, KANU was declared as the only party by law, and no any other party and it became so strong that even if you said anything in parliament, which you are privileged to say, which is covered by Cap 6, I think, it is Cap 6 or 7, which gives privilege to a member of parliament not to be sued for anything he says in parliament. And, you would get if you said something that was not palatable to the powers that be, the party asks your branch, the constituency branch, to submit your name as a rebel, non-conformist, they forward your name to the district branch, which forwards your name to the headquarters here, and you are summoned to appear before the committee, and normally many fellows lost their membership of the party. So we thought that was very dictatorial and against the principles of democracy because you are elected to parliament by a lot of people, some come with majority of thirty thousand and then you have a few, a committee of KANU just saying you are no more a member of parliament. That was dictatorial so we had to do something about it. So the more people were thrown out the more people became bitter and those who were thrown out ganged up and that is how this forum for restoration of democracy had to start.
- I But in 1990 underground it is a long way from 1992, why the timing? Why 1990?
- R Why 1990 because it became very difficult to express yourself in anyway unless you have the approval of the top hierarchy. But from 1982, things were not all that bad, we went on ..?057 declared Kenya one party state then as we progressed the party became more stronger and stronger and then we reached a time when we could not express, you can't move, you can't hold a meeting and if you are allowed to hold a meeting you can't say something that was not agreeable to the government. Even chief could come and take the microphone from you, at least this not only happened to us even sometimes from ministers they grabbed the microphone from them.
- I Did someone approach you to ask you to be in this organisation of FORD, the one of the six people?
- I No. I started it.
- R You started it?
- R Yes
- I Explain how you started it
- R I thought we should do something so the first person I approached was the late Masinde Muliro

I ..??067

R Because he was also threatened to be thrown out of parliament

I He was an MP?

R He was an MP.

I From where?

R For Cherengani. Where now Mr. Ruto is , Kirwa

I which ethnic group was he with?

R He is a muluhya

I He is a Luhya also?

R Eeh. I approached him and then

I He agreed?

R He agreed. And later on I approached Mr. G. G. W. Thenge , he is here at the market stall number one.

I Could you write his name for me . The actual??073 to me.

R Gregory G. G. W

I ...??075 it sounds . And where can I locate him?

R In stall number one, city market

I Stall number one?

R Ya

I Stall number one at city market? Here?

R Ya

I Right here?

R Yap

I Okay

R He is a businessman

- I And you have ...??080. Again what was your purpose in trying to get this particular group of people together in FORD at a time when parties were not allowed?
- R We had to do something about it. We had to surmount this predicament of this one party state which all along have been against because the first time when Kenya became independent we had multi- party but in 1994 due to pressure from the government, some of our members who were KADU, Kenya African Democratic union , members of parliament crossed to the ruling party and I was left alone
- I In 1964
- R In 1964 November I was alone.
- I You were the only KADU?
- R I was the only KADU in the opposition. Because I believed and I still believe that you can't have democracy in one party state.
- I Okay
- R And then in 1966, Odinga who was responsible for the distraction of FORD, of KADU, he was forced out of KANU after the Limuru conference in 1966 and he formed his KPU, Kenya Peoples Union, which was never , was registered later.
- I If I may go back to just a point here, ah ,sorry in 1991 , 1990 ..??100 underground, I think it was in May but am not sure. Ah in terms of strategy, political strategy and tactics and you are very experienced at this and it is a hard game perhaps when ...??102 authoritarian government, why was there, how did you make ..??103 as a tactic, what was the impact, what did you expect to get out of it because obviously it was illegal , you could have had matches, you could have done other things , why did you choose a party and what was the impact of that decision?
- R The decision was strategic in the sense that we had to get people who had a name , mass, political mass. So we looked at the provinces, we have got 8 provinces, I come, I happened to come from the western part of the country, western province, Muliro Rift Valley, Odinga was from Nyanza, Gachoka was from Central province, Omare is from Coast
- I Coast
- R And Thenge was from Eastern province.
- I It was well thought out
- R Yap

I And what was your reason for trying to get that kind of representation?

R We looked at the question of numbers because western part of Kenya is thickly populated, so is Nyanza , so is Central and then the Coast.

I So you picked on six as the biggest provinces?

R Yes. And of course we wanted nine and we could not get, we had to settle for six

I Nine because you kept saying at the conference nine, nine, nine because you had to retain your ..??120

R Yes. If you go to ten you have got to register and we all never you who they were and the excuses they made. Rubia told me that he could not join us at that time because his son was getting married , he was getting to wed and they had planned to have their honeymoon in London. So if he joined our group the chances of his son going for a honeymoon would not materialise.

I Ya

R That was his excuse. And when I approached of course I have told you about Dennis Akumu, he is the other man I approached and he said he could not join us because of his tenant patches programme because if he joined us he would cease to enjoy that and he could be thrown out

I Because he had what now?

R Tenant patches scheme. He was living in a house where you live in the house at the same time you keep on paying

I Right, could you write his name because I don't get his name

R He is called Davis Akumu

I Where is he from

R This is, he was trade unionist

I Okay, again an attempt to make a global representation?

R Ya

I Rubia, what was he supposed to represent?

R Rubia was former mayor of Nairobi. So we wanted him in Nairobi.

I Okay. And the third man that you didn't get was Ahmed somebody. No, you explained it ..??142 Khalif ; Khalif.

R Hmmh , he was from the North Eastern

I Okay, your strategy was to make it look like you had the whole country coming together at least in the form of representatives

R Correct

I Okay. What were you , I hate to keep pushing this ..??146 about trying to get to the heart of the analysis and I guess you are a good strategist that is why am asking this. What was the strategy of trying to get everyone represented, what was the message you were trying to give to whom , to the public or to Moi?

R It was aimed at the powers that be , it was Moi.

I And what was the message you were trying to give him?

R That we were democrats and we were hell bent to democratise the country. In the beginning we thought we had no support but then to prove to him we had support we asked him to give us a licence. They used to call us , even Mr. Kibaki, I remember he called us daydreamers, he also told us we were a bunch of little kids who were trying to cut a mugumu tree with a razorblade and he referred to us as frogs who were trying to get into the KANU house and KANU would not be moved coz frogs never bite so what they were to do is to get a stick and toss us out and close the door.

I That was an attempt to kind of discredit the effort

R Of course he was discrediting us

I ...??162 KANU members?

R He was a KANU man

I He was but were the other six at that time?

R They had all, everybody had come from Kanu because there was only one party.

I So were any of them sitting current MPs at that time?

R None sitting in

I But some had been? All had been?

R Except for Philip and Bamahriz

I So that was the message, to try to show that you had representation that you were hell bent on getting democracy

R Hmmh

I In looking back you think the timing was a good decision?

R I think it was good because if it had , we had not checked on that , a lot of people would have lost their seats in parliament, in municipalities

I In ...??172 you mean?

R If we had not come in , the party would become even stronger and there would be no, as a matter of fact in those days one would dare not to mention the name Moi without looking over his shoulders about twice or thrice and then in a whisper: 'Moi'. It was so hard

I It was a police state?

R More or less, yes, it was a police state

I I remember those days

R We were being followed, trailed by the special branch

I Before or after your formation of FORD?

R After formation of FORD

I Okay

R Even before, if you are a radical they would set special branch to trail you

I Do you think that perhaps you would have been put in detention again for doing this?

R This one I didn't worry now, this was now in nineteen, after I had I had left detention in 1979, yes I no longer fear detention even now I don't fear detention because I have been to all maximum prisons so there is nothing that can threaten me , actually detention does not tie you down , it hardens you. What else can he do to me now, nothing. I have been to all maximum prisons , I have been taken to Manyani which is a maximum prison, security prison, I was later on shifted to this big prison near ...??192

I I don't need the name of it so much

R And I went to Shimolatewa, which is in the Coast, it is a maximum prison, Naivasha maximum prison , so Moi to date has unfortunately no other maximum prison to threaten me.

I What do you think the impact was of the formation of FORD?

R Oh, the impact was that people were also conscious of the fact that there was no freedom for them and they automatically decided to support this movement

and though Moi and Kibaki looked down upon us , the day we went to Kamukunji on 16th of November 1991, I don't think Moi has ever seen such a crowd in his life. And we lost one person who was shot by the police , we were being shot at when we were sitting at the top of this pick up

- I I wanted to ask you about that, some people said that shots were heard
R Not only heard, they shot at us three times, one ended up in a fiery return, fortunately it was full of gas, and the other one missed
- I If it was not full tank it would have exploded
- R Yes, if the tank was half it would have exploded but the tank ,we had just filled at kileleshwa petrol, just below the kileleshwa police station. Below there is a petrol station we had filled
- I Full tanks don't explode
- R No, when it is too full it can't explode, but if it was half way with a bit of air
- I And you were shot at two other times?
- R One hit, it ended up in the fuel tank , one went astray and the other one I don't know why they were good, I don't think they were very good shots. We were sitting on top of the pickup surely they should have picked us easily but with the grace of God we escaped it . And then the third one , just whipped past me, in front of me and hit a bystander , he was just watching near the city
- I You could hear it
- R Council, and it ended in his belly and tore his belly out and his intestines and he died on the spot
- I Ah, so your ...??215 as far as the impact for formation, was there any desire to try to change , make a mental shift here where people would begin to be less fearful to speak out?
- R Yes, when you have multiparty system then you have the chance, when you have one party system you have never experienced one yourself because you were born in democracy , in a democratic country so you don't know. But when you are in one party state, it is quite, it just like one living in Russia during the communist days , you would not even trust yourself , let alone your wife.
- I And there were a lot of informers
- R A lot of them. But information from special branch was more less gospel truth
- I You mean special branch was sort of ...??226

R Yes, when they report you, you have had it. It was just as bad as that, so we had to do something to restore democracy and when they refused when we tried all the channels, we decided and as a matter of fact I wrote to the president as secretary general informing him that on 16th of November 1991 we'll be, we will hold a rally, a political rally at Kamukunji with or without a licence.

I You were secretary general of FORD?

R Yes, I was secretary

I He immediately declared that it was an illegal gathering and that he would use all the power of his government to stop it

R As a matter of fact he went to Kamukunji three four days before we held the meeting and warned those who think Kenya has no government let them hold a meeting here

I Speaking strategically, what was the purpose of that rally?

R The rally was to draw the attention of the powers that be. It is not true that we are just noisemakers, or we are just frogs or day dreamers, little kids trying to cut amugumu tree

I Would you spell that, you have mentioned that twice

R Mugumu. Mugumu tree. Mugumu is very hard wood, imagine trying to cut that wood with a razorblade and, so we wanted to show that we had the support. It came to pass that we had support.

I Ya, as I remember I was standing on a hill about a walk away, I did not go there I must confess but the people who came to the rally some of them went back and forth even after the police attack.

R Yap, okay

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I Okay so going back to that day then, what was the scenario before the rally, because we were called as journalists by the American embassy and tipped off that you would be passing by the embassy; but where were you before then, a few days?

R We were in hiding. They started arresting people before the rally so we decided to hide ourselves to avoid arrests before.

I And where were you hiding, which house?

R I don't know if this would be good to be mentioned because I don't think-

I Okay. It is not someone who is already known is it, or an individual who is active out there? It is not necessary.

R So we hid and some of us were arrested. G.G.W.Thenge ,the late Oginga Odinga were arrested and we got the wind of it because I was busy getting in touch with Reuters, BBC , Voice of America, informing them of what was happening. While I was busy doing that somebody drove in and told me the other two had been arrested

I Oginga Odinga was arrested ?

R Yes, and G.G.W.Thenge

I G.G.W.Kariuki?

R G.G.W that is George Gregory Thenge

I Thenge?

R Wilson Thenge. George, Gregory, Wilson, Thenge

I Okay, one person?

R One person

I He had been arrested?

R One person

I Was Muite with you at the time?

R No, he was not arrested that day, he was with us when we were going to Kamunkunji [the downtown site of the intended rally: an open area in a poor neighbourhood], on 16th, [1991]. He was later arrested, he didn't reach Kamukunji

I So two people were arrested before the rally again?

R Before the rally, Muite was not arrested before the rally

I So who was which of the group that came out of hiding and went to the rally?

R On the pick up?

I That came out of hiding and went to the rally?

R That was Masinde Muliro on the pick up

I Ya

R And Philip Gachoka, myself and Orenge jumped on it, he was not in the program.

I Okay, on the pickup?

R On the pickup, yes

I But when you pulled up to the American Embassy, you were not alone , I remember there was a bunch of several other people on the car with you, who was there?

R I had Muliro there, the same people

I And then you went over there, and Muite got arrested, he somehow hooked up with you and got arrested that day?

R He was arrested before I reached Kamukunji, at the Landies Road , near that gate.

I When you were changing cars I think?

R Yes, he was picked up and Mr. Shamalla

I Shamalla?

R Yes

I Did Japheth

R Japheth Shamalla

I Did he play-

R They were together in one car. They were the lawyers ; Orengo, Shamalla and Muite. They were in one car.

I Ya. How would you describe the role that Shamalla did in trying to advance human rights in Kenya?

R He was one of the brave people around who could allow us to use his office. Those days it was dangerous to allow people like ourselves to sit in his office , use his papers, his typewriter, telephone . He gave all those facilities and that is the part he played and for that we had to thank him by campaigning very hard for him to become a member of parliament in Shinyalu.

I At that time that was considered a dangerous thing to do wasn't it ? All of you were kind of under watch.

R Ya, it was very dangerous but he was daring.

I Someone described Shamalla's office as a kind of war room, a kind of a strategy nerve centre...?318

[Shamalla's office was referred to by Martha Karua as a 'war room' where activists gathered regularly to plan strategy – and to try to keep track of who might have been arrested.]

R That is where we were meeting; it was the only place we could meet.

I How often would you meet? Am curious about the whole scenario.

R Oh we used to meet whenever we feel like especially if there was a special thing to be considered, no one would issue individual statements , we had to sit and agree on a statement then it is issued.

I Statements in the name of what: the individual?

R We used to sign all of us.

I It wasn't an organisation or it - the FORD people?

R The six.

I Oh okay, okay but were there other attorneys that used to meet their with you at that time ?

R No

I Maybe it is a different period because sometime some attorneys were meeting there , Imanyara and a few others were also meeting in Shamalla's office.

R I just don't know about that but I know the six used to meet there and only one day the so called 'Young Turks' invaded our meeting

I Who were the young turks ?

R Those were [Gitobu] Imanyara, James Orengo , Professor Anyang' Nyong'o, [Paul] Muite- Raila wasn't there

[So there was the older generation forming FORD and planning the rally, and the 'Young Turks' who were also politically active, sometimes behind the scenes, sometimes in front.]

I Raila no?

R No.

I Karua, Martha Karua, Njoki?

R No.No. They came much later.

I Ya. They were just those really?

R Those are the ones that I can remember

I When you say -was there a kind of competition there?

R It was of the six but little did we know that Odinga had been approached by the youngsters and they wanted also to sit

I They wanted in?

R They wanted to sit in and we objected to that. And that was the beginning of the cracking of FORD.

I Those people ended up in FORD Asili?

R Hmmh?

I Did those people end up in Ford Asili?

R No, they ended up persuading Odinga to leave the FORD to form FORD Kenya

I Okay, they went to FORD Kenya

[Split among opposition leaders]

R And then there again they split where Muite disagreed with Odinga over his receipt of 2 million shillings from Patni [A controversial Asian Kenya businessman] and then after his death there was this fighting between Wamalwa who assumed the seat of chairman and Raila breaking up forming his own NDP and the remaining fellows , Orengo went to SDP

I They were all scattered. Was there a moment as if in retrospect you had said to the Young Turks , well come on in rather than say no don't come on , would that have made a difference?

[Generational gap in activist leadership was intentional, and explained below: "We are old enough to die."]

R No, we had the decision to have this six, based on the fact that we were grown up enough to face death. That was, **we had decided when we decide to move we are old enough to die. We didn't want kids around who still have got hope of living.** We had already brought people into this world and **we were ready to die.**

I So you really thought that there was a chance then, in fact, you might be arrested [or killed] though?

R Not being arrested , not only being arrested , even die. It was not a small joke. We were ready to die and these people , the six people agreed we are ready to die, we didn't want kids around. And Thenge was very vocal about it. He

threatened us of course , he said: ‘If you allow these kids to come in then you can count me out, this is old men, contemporaries of Moi and we are ready to face him and he wants to kill us he can do so because we are fit to die. So let us not have kids around.’

I That was 1990?

R We meant it . If it was rhetoric how could we have gone to Kamukunji in broad daylight on the same day, the date we had told him , and the time , at ten o'clock, we were at Kamukunji.

I I can't help asking you what details -that Kamukunji thing again, it was so important, I agree with you. How did you manage to get to Kamukunji?

R Well we only told Moi, that we will be in Kamukunji on 16th of November 1991 at 10.00 am. Because at 10.00 am there is no darkness, we didn't want to do things under darkness, we would go in broad daylight, so perhaps that is the only knowledge he knew, but how to get there, how we would move , what vehicle we were going to use was our secret. So we met coming from different places where we had been hiding and we had organised this pick up to Kileleshwa petrol station, filled it , then we had two cars more. This pickup nobody boarded it from kileleshwa coming through the American embassy there, we only embarked on it , we got , jumped on it at the railway quarters Muthurwa ??

I Hmmh

R And the other it went empty. So when we got on the pickup, when we got to Kamukunji,

I You were on the pick up?

R We were on the pick up

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I And you actually drove right down the main road down Jogo Road into the area did you ?

R Yes we did

I And didn't you address the crowds briefly?

R No, we stopped there and started shouting FORD, FORD

I Okay just a few seconds though, would you like to-

R And the policemen were following us so we found there was going to be a scuffle to come out so we decided to come out

I -to the grounds.

R We got there. Ya, then we came out and took Jogo road up to Outer Ring road , we wanted to go right up to kariobangi, then come in through the other back door through majengo and then get into the ground again but that could not be reached. It's alright , no problem

I Why were you sitting up on top?

R I can't explain but somehow we were determined, **we were ready to die** , who would see us inside the pick up? And of course the masses were there and they wanted to see their leaders coming. We didn't want to have that repeat of the Saba Saba [blocked political rally July 1990] where meeting was convened , it was applied for by Mr. Matiba and

I And Rubia

R And they [got] cold feet , Wananchi [citizens] went to the ground and they ??down. So that was one of them??

I It is another important event , what was the difference between the Saba Saba of 1990 and Kamukunji of 1991? How would you assess the difference between the two events?

R This [Saba Saba] was organised by Matiba and Rubia

I Right, almost in the same sense that you had organised the rally.

R Ya since he announced that they were going to Kamukunji, but we did not develop cold feet; but they developed cold feet and they never turned up and the masses turned up

I Were they arrested?

R When they cancelled their meeting at the eleventh hour and people were already on the ground so the police went for the people who were down there and more than 21 people died [verify??]

I Were they in detention at that time?

R They were not detained , they just developed cold feet , they didn't go

I But when were they detained.

R They were detained after the meeting had aborted

I After the rally?

R Ya after the rally

I Really , I didn't know that

R No they were not detained before.

I It is an important detail

R Yes, it is their developing of cold feet that led to their being arrested and the loss of over 21 lives at k Kamukunji. But with us **we made good our threat** , we said we would be there at 10.00 we were there at 10.00am. Shots were fired at us and we still went

I How many people did you say died ?

R Over 21 am told

I Countywide?

R I don't know -

I You showed up.

R We showed up

I You were not detained afterwards?

R We were later on of course arrested and we were each dispatched [to police in their hometowns, a move that helped spread the message of dissent.]

I But only for a short while ?

R No, I was in jail for three weeks ,people were being taken to their various districts.

I Ya, I mean Matiba was in jail for like almost 11 months so something different happened but dynamics were somehow different. In your case they didn't put you in detention for like a year, two years at that point, you were out in three weeks after going back to your home area, why do you think the government let you out?

R Because they realised that we got a big support . That rally at Kamukunji jolted them and they cannot go on keeping such popular people.

I Did you hear from any insiders about Moi's personal reaction to that rally by any chance?

R No

I Okay, but you could tell a joke to him because he let you out at the rally?

R Yes he let us and without charging us

I Aah, without the charges?

R Yes

I Two other things happened after that rally. November 16th I think the week afterwards the Paris club met, the donors met in Paris and cut off all new aid to Kenya and Malawi, do you remember that?

R No

I Do you remember that?

R No

I See you were in detention?

R Yes

I Your rally was here, around 16th, aid was cut off, a week later it was Kasarani. where [President Moi] went in talking about the problems of multiparty. Moi at that point was telling those delegates multiparty is a bad thing. By the end of the speech he said, by the way we are going to go multiparty. Do you see any connection between those three events?

R Ah, at Paris because they wanted some money and they had to behave themselves, and then this part of , what do you call this

I The Paris club, donors meeting

R Paris club, the donors meeting also affected them and here , Kasarani

I Yes

R He decided that we have multi-party now

I Why do you think he made that decision?

R Because of the pressure, both inside and outside [the country], particularly because **we owe our gratitude to the American ambassador here Mr.**

I Hempstone

R Hempstone

I What role did he play?

R **He played a major role in bringing pressure upon Moi to allow multi partyism.** Both the American embassy, German and the Scandinavian countries here; the English were not with us

I English were very quiet; they are noisier today

R They are noisier today because they were worried of their economic interests in Kenya and remember once I spoke with them the British High Commissioner. I was asking me if I was not risking by organising these [rallies??] which can go out of control. You can stay in your, they are staying up here, they are at the embassy somewhere here, simply and nicely and I will show you that I can control the crowds. There will be no violence and if there will be any violence it will come from the police, so you better get in touch with Moi to tell him not to shoot at the people. Nobody is going to throw any[thing]; they are going to have white handkerchiefs, green leaves and they will be no problem.

I This was for Kamukunji?

R This was for Kamukunji. And as I told him

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[Non-violence; and symbols. Classic non-violent social movement]

I Was there a symbol, was there something that you ...white handkerchiefs and what ?

R White handkerchiefs were to show, to depict peace and green also is for peace; green branches

I Green branches?

R Green branches

I And were people carrying these green-

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R They were carrying them - if you look at the photographs

I Did you suggest that green has been around for a long time?

R I suggested both handkerchiefs and green leaves and this was done.

I What is the importance of symbolism in politics like that?

R It means you are not violent, you are non violent.

I Okay, so if you were to take those three things that you have mentioned, your activism by yourself and others, individuals going, organising a rally, two things and the donors cutting out money, which would you say was the most effective or was there no difference between the two in terms of forcing Moi to go multiparty?

R **Both had more or less the same effect** because locally he realised we were not just hot heads, we had a following. Internationally, the pressure came in through the donors and the embassies here that were-

SIDE B of tape

I Do you feel the donors would have come in if there had not been Kamukunji?

R Well , what do you mean?

I Well I you hadn't had FORD, you hadn't had a rally to show that you had support, not you but the idea of multiparty and then the police coming in to Kamukunji, it is speculation, but if the donors had met then, a week after when they met and there had been no Kamunkunji, do you think they would have cut off the aid money because of the corruption and the things they were talking about?

R I wish I knew, probably you could ask them that.

I I don't know

R But all I know we internally , that is what I told the British High Commission , we can control ourselves and we did control. I told him openly that you are only worried about yourselves, your economic interests in Kenya , that you are afraid they may go up in flame, they will be nothing of that nature, but in future one day your economic interests will go up in smoke

I **So you would assess then, was that your say, greatest contribution you would you say towards the events of human rights was in fact the formation of FORD and that rally at Kamukunji, was that kind of a ?? move?**

R **Oh yes, from that time things have changed in Kenya.** Today you can say anything , anywhere and nobody will molest you. As a result of multiparty in Kenya, we even got rid of the detention order in this country, it was repealed, now we have no more detention without trial

I In looking ahead after 1992 when multiparty elections were first held, there seems to have been not much of a law in advancement of human rights till about 1997 after multi party came in, the constitution did not change, 1997, you had some change of laws and after mass action there are not a lot of changes until you request for change in 2002 right now. Why do you think there is nothing happening in between elections really in terms of events of human rights?

R One thing, **the attitude of the government changed in the sense there was nobody being arrested and being thrown in today's detention , because there was no more detention, there was freedom of expression start oozing up, there was freedom of association though based on the licences, but when we had this IPPG, we removed the powers from the district commissioners who normally issue licences for meetings and gave it to assistant what we call OCS- Officer in charge of any police station to give that up.**

- I Hmmh. Am aware of those changes I was wondering why there hadn't been more changes between election years. It seems like the only time there are some changes it is just before an election.
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- R And also the pressure as such , people start seeing some freedom and they start being not very vocal. We tried for a time to try and change the laws, we had a major change in our constitution where we restricted to two terms of five years, we also effected some administrative changes and there were these other commissions being formed, ..review commissions, these other committees were being formed to
- I By the president?
- R By the attorney general.
- I If you would describe Moi's tactics , we have talked about your tactics , Moi's tactics how would you describe them because he doesn't seem to have accepted very much willingly, it is like he has been forced into things.
- R Yes, up to today of course, he didn't believe that Kenya can be a multiparty state. Do you remember once he said are not cohesive enough and that may take even 50 years
- I Did you agree?
- R We didn't, I did not agree with him, we continued pressurizing him then he came to 5 years, we continued pressurizing him then he came to one year, pressurizing him until he accepted the multiparty.
- I Aah, what is your comment on what is happening today in terms of the confrontation between Moi and those who are seeking change?
- R This confrontation is in my opinion , was brought about by a bit of confusion, first by those charged the duty of reviewing the constitution who said they wanted certain people to do it within a certain period, later on they said we cannot finish this job and we request for more time and then after sometime again they came back, pressurized, said oh we can deliver it before that time
- I Off and on off and on
- R Off and on, so these confusions come, but now that we have got the constitution , we are now insisting that in view of the fact that *Wananchi* people of this country have given their views as to what is to be included in the constitution, that the constitution after spending so much money on it, reviewing the constitution should be allowed to go and be completed before the election.
- I Before the election?
- R Future elections should be held under the new constitution.

I If in fact Moi deserves [??] before that happens , so you anticipate mass actions or just a lot of grumbling and complaining?

R I don't think there will be grumbling. He may be asking his, I believe he still says he would like to leave this country in peace but if he believes in that then let him not ignore the views of 31 million people. All the religious institutions, all the NGOs, all the political parties including his own KANU, the ruling party , want the constitution to be debated and elections held under the new constitution. We don't mind even if it takes, Prof Ghai says we can hold elections in April, what is the difference between December and April? It is not very much. Where are we hurrying to? Jerusalem? The answer is that Jerusalem there is no peace there, we can't just run ourselves into Jerusalem where there is no peace.

I You are not a candidate this time round, do you think, or you forgot?

R I am, both parliamentary and presidency.

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Political motivation.

I Could I ask you a personal question on your motivation, you mentioned that briefly and most political science studies do not look at motivation. Because I know some of the people involved a I am wondering what you think your motivation was to push against an authoritarian state and am not asking just a political thing; what I am really asking is where back in your background, whether as a child, or through parents at a point, did you get this stubborn - that sometimes you decide to say things that other people weren't saying?

R Well I have been asked that question many times but **I much attribute it to my parents**. My mother comes from a clan in Butere area who were fighters; they would never let you see their behind , their buttocks, they fight to the finish

I In terms of men fights or wrestling cattle rustlers?

R If there is any fight he will never withdraw

I Physical fights?

R Physical. They will never show you their behind as that is considered to be very cowardly. They fight to the finish. And then on my father's side, I come from, my father comes from a clan that fight using the sticks

I Your mother is she Maragoli?

R No, she is Kisa, from Kisa

I Kisa?

R And my father is from Marama??

I Marama . Both Luhya?

R They are all Luhya tribes, my father comes from that and they also

I Are good fighters with sticks?

R And even with rungus [clubs]

I With rungus?

R Rungus and the spear work, they will never show you their behind

I Okay, were the nomadic or were they farmers?

R No, they are just farmers

I So these were the ??

R And I think I think I have got the blood of the two sides, I don't fear death; I don't fear anything.

I Okay , that one thing, to not be afraid and that is important but sometimes people are not afraid when they do bad things,. What got you so interested in the idea of human rights?

R **I have suffered right from the time I was six. I come from a humble background.**

I What were your parents?

R My parents were just peasants

I Peasants, small farmers?

R No, my father was a small farmer then he got employed in Lake Magadi, in a soda company

I I know it

R Where he worked for 34 years

I Down south

R Ya, as a dresser then health inspector and I remember in 1939 I was sitting at the railway station here and those days I was so fascinated , I liked trains you know, locomotives moving forward then coming back and forth, having those things moving around so I was busy watching and then all of a sudden somebody pulled me from the back by my shirt almost choking me and then

letting me down . When I looked I found it was my own daddy, I asked what it was and he told me don't you see memsab [a white lady] is passing. You know those days memsab meant the wife of a European . If you saw a wife of a European coming your way you must stand at attention , if you have got your hut, you remove it. And those days if you annoyed a white man, he can order for your imprisonment, just call any police around and you are taken to prison without going through the courts. And if you are found for example going to a European's- we had different toilets,

I Hmmh

R European toilet was European only, there was Asian only, Arabs only, African there was no word written only. So if you were an African and you were found in these other toilets written on "only", you can end up in jail. In this instant I think that is what pushed me to be, despite my father having taken that pain and lifting me so rudely that lady did not acknowledge standing at attention and removing his hat, she just walked on as if she was passing by a dog or something. And from that time, I had this in my brains though I was being trained to become a catholic priest and I gave no suspicion to my teachers in the seminary that I would be a politician.

I After that moment you started thinking about-

R How unfair this is , this lady is treating my dad like dirt, at least she could have smiled but she just passed as if she was passing by a dog. **I was also told to stand at attention because the Europeans wife was passing by and she never acknowledged it , I didn't like it, I was never amused up to today**

I So seeing you there kind of being ignored and downtrodden was not much fun

R No it wasn't.

I And then as I grew up after my O level , I found my father was being paid after 34 years in that hottest part of Africa, he was asked to retire , it is me who asked him to retire, after he was only earning 285 shillings a month

I A month?

R He started with five he told me. And he had to struggle to educate us. He had eight children: five sons and three daughters; and one is my graduate from my family. I got out from school to educate my young brother. One became an X-ray graduate and another one, my sister, became a diploma in home science

I You were you the oldest?

R No, there was another oldest who died. I am the second born

I So you are second. So you helped to educate your other brothers?

R At least I educated my other brothers.

I Is that one reason why you never went on to college?

R No; I couldn't

I Had you wanted to?

R Yes I wanted to but then my daddy was now getting old so when I got a job I told him to go home in 1956.

I What was your job?

R From school I was employed as a laboratory assistant for about 20 days then I applied to join the Railways, and I was accepted. I came and did the interview and they took me on the same day I never went back. And I have never ...??... my 20 days salary in Lake Magadi.

I What did you do at the railways?

R We were the first Africans to be trained as trained guards straight from school.

I So you got to go to the trains that you loved, you know?

R Yes, my father as a matter of fact told me if you like the trains you work hard and you will go to school and you can be-

I So you graduated from school in 1956 and went right down to Magadi and then over to the trains?

R Ya. No 1956 that is when I asked my father to retire.

I Oh, okay

R But I started , I joined the training in 1953 in Nairobi here and graduated and I was posted in Nairobi here.

I So you never really had a lot of money.

R No, then in Magadi after O level they were paying you 80 shillings.

I **When did you decide to get into politics?**

R **I told you from that time in 1939**

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I You actually started thinking about -Tell me what happened.

R I was about six and I have never forgotten yes

I You actually started thinking about politics that time, some day

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R Someday, I didn't like what happened and someday I will have to bring this to the end and my father was an introvert, he liked what I believed in, my mother was an extrovert, she did not, she openly told me my son you are fighting against the impossible, you cannot make even a needle; how can you fight the mzungu [white man], they call him mzungu, the Europeans who are flying over you ;they have guns, they got everything. And I told her: mum, my father does not know how to make a hoe, you know we have these hoes for digging but we have got hoes here, there are people to make hoes . The governor, by then Sir Barryl??. does not know how to make a needle but there are people who make needles so that is not a big problem. Then I recall we went on and my father encouraged me quietly without telling mum, keep it up , keep it up and Kenya became-

I Keep it up and what were you doing as he said keep it up for?

R Politics (hearty laughter)

I Quietly

R And he was a very good campaigner. He knows how to go around convincing people you know.

I So your first political job was MP [Member of Parliament] then?

R My first political job was, I joined politics the colonial, after the declaration of emergency on 20th October 1952, all political parties were, the political cow was banned and there was no political activity at all.

I After independence you ran for politics the first time in what year?

R 1961

I You won?

R No, I was number three

I Okay

R Ya, but after campaigning for two weeks. But I got involved first in trade union. I was the first African to be employed in Caltex headquarters here, and became a trade unionist, secretary general of the Kenya Petroleum oil workers union

I Pre-independence

R Pre-independence. And then in 1956 I was a founder member of Nairobi People's Convention party of which I became the treasurer, the auditor

I That was not European party ?

R No this was now, we were now to hold , organise political parties on district basis not country wide

I You were the auditor?

R Auditor of-

I Of the party.

R Of the party. Later on I was elected secretary general of the same in 1959. Then

I But the first time you were elected in parliament was when?

R 1963

I Okay and you served how many terms?

[Moi government rigs 1989 election; a widely-reported act. Electors voted in long lines (queuing)]

R I served 1963 to 1969 , then 1969 to 1974, then I was detained in 1975, came out 1978, got re-elected 1979 to 1983 because parliament was dissolved early; then 1983 to 1988 when I was rigged out and then the guy did not , he died before six months so there was a by election in 1988 for mulolongo (queuing system) where I won but because somebody did not like me , he decided to make the long queue shorter and the shorter longer. And this happened almost around the whole country . That's when

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I Mbugua? [Kenyan journalist who exposed the rigging]

R That is when actually lying was introduced officially by Moi and KANU party. Because this counting was, this queuing was done at the primary schools, so the kids were there and they could themselves count, they took it as a pleasure to count and see which is the longest queue, and then when they announced at that very venue that the one which had a shorter queue was the winner , Kids could not believe it

I Would you think that that was the beginning of ...? the beginning of loss of legitimacy by Moi?

R Yap

I 1988?

R Yap, 1988. I was rigged out. I lost with 500 votes but there were two tins which were not counted...1997 again I was rigged out.

I And you are running again in 2002?

R Yap

I You don't quit do you?

R No, I have got to fight to the bitter end . We have got to establish truth in this country. Moi regime is allergic to the truth and this country has been governed through lies and ill tricks and I want to fight to restore truth which is God and justice and fight to eliminate if possible corruption. It doesn't matter what manifesto you have: so long as you have corruption it is a waste of time

I Ya, am just thinking You mentioned principle one time when you were talking about the six minute reform , the five that you went after

R Ehe

I Is principle an element?

R People of principle, when they say no it remains no; when they say yes, it remains yes. Not opportunists.

'Young Turks' [younger generation of activists] labelled 'not principled.'

I **How would you characterize some of the advocates for human rights who are among the Young Turks: would they be principled in your book or just ambitious?**

R **They are just ambitious , they are not principled** because I do recall we agreed in Limuru that anybody who has lost election fairly or unfairly should not be nominated to parliament as a very serious principle

I Say that again, the point escaped me; I'm sorry

R Anybody who has lost an election fairly or unfairly should not be nominated by the powers that be [the President can nominate people to some Parliamentary seats] to Parliament.

I Hmmh, why?

R Because if the people have rejected you , why should you go through the back door and get to that parliament.

I Would you say that if they have lost unfairly?

R If they have lost unfairly , you have lost. Personally I lost unfairly but I would never accept nomination. You can nominate my dead body. Because you automatically loose pride of being an elected person who speaks for the people, a person who is ready to lay his own life for the sake of those he represents, a person who is ready to sacrifice. **A real politician can never be rich; he has no time to sit down and plan how to become rich.** He is busy sitting down to see how his people can get up. He is a person who believes the government should be rich, not an individual. ??

- I Did Moi ever try to buy you off?
- R Kenyatta and Moi failed because in 1968 Kenyatta appointed me a chief whip hoping he will silence me by getting other members to vote for whatever bills or motions the government brings around.
- I It didn't work?
- R It didn't work because whenever I disagreed with that motion I would go round asking the members, whipping them, asking them to oppose the bill so he found I was not useful
- I What did Moi try?
- R Then he Jomo Kenyatta went further and appointed me an Assistant Minister in 1959 under the Ministry of home [exact title??]
- I 1969
- R 1969. Ya. He appointed me an Assistant Minister in the Ministry of Home Affairs under the present president [at the time of the interview: Moi]
- I Ya
- R I never stopped airing my views, wherever something was wrong I spoke for the common man and he always reminded me that once you are in the government you are not supposed to criticise the government. I never listened to the warning so in 1974 I was dropped. I was not appointed again, then I was picked up in 1979 by Moi now when he became the president, he made me an Assistant Minister
- I Okay
- R In his government I never stopped talking for the people, I was thrown out in 1983 (laughs). Out of the job. I lost it.
- I So you were thrown out?
- R I was thrown out. And that is what I am, I would like to have things , I think it is more or less genetic, I come from a humble family, I have never lost , I have built a big permanent home. **I am high up in stature** in the; I am not like any commoner here. I have a car and so forth. **But I have never forgotten where I came from** so I will always go back and try to lift these people where I came from so that they can live a good life, get education , get their jobs for them and God knows what . And so I don't get one of the powers that be...and there is nothing I can do about it, and that is what I am.
- I I am gonna let you go now because you have been very patient unless there is something else you wanted to add, sometimes I don't get to some points.

End