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KENYA

Tom MBOYA

Minister of Economic Planning and Development

Tom Mboya, Kenya's Minister for Economic Planning and Development, has for many years played a major role in the labor, political, constitutional and economic life of Kenya. Articulate, brilliantly logical, and a master political tactician, Mboya is by far the most able and intelligent man in the Kenya Cabinet. He is also the most controversial political personality in Kenya today. In the behind-the-scenes race already being run for the presidential successor to Jomo Kenyatta, Mboya suffers from the liabilities of being too young (he is 37), too Westernized and too detribalized.



Although he has surrounded himself with bright, moderate politicians and civil servants who look to him for leadership and guidance, Mboya

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vehemently opposed by the younger Kikuyus

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Their efforts to neutralize him have been a significant factor in recent Kenya internal politics.

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Kenyatta himself

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is well aware of the skills and talents the Minister brings to the government, and he is not averse to having Mboya do work in Parliament and elsewhere where intelligence and political skill are required.

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For a long time Mboya was better known abroad than any other Kenya politician.

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opponents have used this close identification with the US as a weapon against him. In 1965, one of his fellow Luo tribesmen in the House of Representatives referred to Mboya as the "American Ambassador to Kenya."

It is a reflection, nevertheless, of Mboya's competence and resilience that he has been able to survive the jealousies and rivalries of Kenya politics and remain an important political factor in the country. At the present time he realizes that having deliberately established his reputation as a non-tribal politician from a Nairobi constituency whose main interest was the problems of the urban worker, he now lacks any solid tribal political base. His recent efforts have been aimed at trying to build a new image of himself as a leader of the Luo tribe, the second largest in Kenya, and as one who is interested in the fate of the peasantry.

In 1965, Mboya wrote a policy paper defining African socialism which Kenyatta proclaimed as the "Bible" of Kenya and which was to guide national policy. Among other things, the paper recommended progressive taxes to guarantee equitable distribution of wealth and income, a diffusion of ownership to avoid a concentration of economic power, a range of controls to ensure that property is used in the interests of society, various forms of ownership ranging from private to state; political democracy and mutual social responsibility. He has also pushed much controversial legislation through Parliament, including a hotly-contested vote of confidence in the government

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[REDACTED] Mboya was also involved in almost all the negotiations leading to the formation of the East African Community.

Recently Mboya warned that the current austerity measures in the UK and the restrictions in the US balance of payments program would result in an increasing shortage of foreign capital, both public and private, for development in Kenya, and he stressed the need for intensified self-reliance within the country. Mboya sees "Kenyanization" as an integral part of self-reliance, and he feels that the country

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cannot tolerate any monopoly of its economic and social life by non-Africans.

Born of Luo parents on 15 August 1930 at Rusinga Island, Lake Victoria, Mboya was baptized into the Roman Catholic Church with the name Thomas Joseph Adhiambo Mboya. He was educated at Kabaa mission, St. Mary's School, and at Holy Ghost College, a secondary school from which he had to withdraw when his father could no longer afford the tuition. He then took a free three-year public health course and qualified as a sanitation inspector for the Nairobi City Council. It was in this job that he began to take an interest in the labor movement. About 1951 he became president of the African Staff Association and built it into the Kenya Local Government Workers Union. He became the union's national general secretary. By 1953 he had become secretary general of the KFL, a post he held for the next ten years. It was the leadership of the KFL that served as the foundation for his future political successes. Mboya first became generally known in 1955, when he served as mediator in a Mombasa port strike and won a large pay raise for the dockworkers. The following year he obtained a scholarship to Ruskin College, Oxford, England. During that year he visited the US and other countries. In the course of these travels he made a number of contacts in the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

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It was during these years that Mboya's political star began to rise. In 1953 he was treasurer of the Kenya African Union just before it was proscribed for its alleged connection with the Mau Mau terrorist organization. In March 1957 he won the Nairobi seat in the first African constituency elections, and he immediately proceeded to bind the eight African Elected Members into a solid group strongly opposed to the Lyttleton constitution under which they had been elected. He demanded that the British government recognize Kenya as an independent African country which should be advanced gradually toward self government. His tactics were largely responsible for the breakdown of the Lyttleton constitution and for the

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subsequent imposition of the Lennox-Boyd constitution on Kenya. This constitution gave the Africans six more elected members in Parliament. Mboya became president of the Nairobi People's Convention Party in 1957, and two years later, after disagreeing with the Constituency Elected Members Organization on land policy, he helped form the Kenya Independence Movement.

In April 1960 Mboya became secretary general of the newly formed Kenya African National Union (KANU), the vitally important political post that he still holds. The following year he was re-elected to Parliament by an overwhelming majority, and in April 1962 he was named Minister of Labor. During the ensuing year he was credited with Kenya's successes in constitutional talks with the UK and was rewarded with the portfolios for Justice and Constitutional Affairs in the first all-KANU cabinet formed in June 1963. In this post he performed brilliantly in preparing the republican constitution and seeing it through Parliament. When Kenya became a republic in December 1964, Mboya was given the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development. The ministry, though important, represented something less than Mboya had wanted, but he has worked hard and energetically at it over the past three and a half years.

Mboya has held responsible positions in several international organizations, including the African Trade Union Federation, the ICFTU, the Pan-African Freedom Movement for East, Central and Southern Africa, the All-African Peoples Conference, and the UN Economic Commission for Africa.

Personable and articulate, Mboya is a superb orator in both English and Swahili, and he usually speaks extemporaneously. His answers in any interview are so well organized that they can be printed as spoken without any change and he generally has his emotions well under control.

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In December 1967 he was involved in a shooting incident which was rumored to have been an attempt to assassinate him.

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In 1959 Mboya was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws by Howard University. In 1963 he published a book entitled *Freedom and After*. Mboya, who has had two unsuccessful marriages outside the church, was married in a Catholic ceremony in 1962 to Pamela Odede, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The Mboyas now have four children [REDACTED]

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