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Jomo Kenyatta

Father of Modern Kenya

Jomo Kenyatta was Kenya's founding father, a nationalist who led the nation to independence in 1963. Kenyatta became involved in African protest movements. He emerged as a leader. In 1931 Kenyatta visited England to demand the return of African land lost to European settlers. While in England Kenyatta had the opportunity to meet India's Mohandas Gandhi.

After World War II, Kenyatta became a nationalist, demanding Kenyan self-government and independence from Britain. Together with other African nationalists like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Kenyatta helped organize the 5th Pan-African Congress in Britain in 1945, which was attended by black leaders from around the world affirming the goals of African nationalism and unity. In 1946 Kenyatta returned to Kenya, and

in 1947 he became president of the first colony-wide African political party, the Kenya African Union (KAU).

Kenyatta devoted his energy to KAU's efforts to win self-government. KAU was unsuccessful, and African resistance to colonial policies took on a more militant tone. In 1952 a guerrilla movement called Mau Mau began using violence against the colonial government and white settlers. Never a radical, Kenyatta did not advocate violence to achieve independence. Nevertheless, the colonial authorities arrested him and five other leaders in October 1952 for allegedly leading the Mau Mau. The six leaders were tried and, convicted. Kenyatta spent nine years in jail. when he was freed in 1961, Kenyatta had been embraced as the colony's most important independence leader.

After his release. Kenyatta led Kenya to independence. Kenya was established as a republic and Kenyatta was elected Kenya's first president. As president, Kenyatta, strove to unify the new nation. He worked to establish harmonious



Kenya is located in East Africa just to the south of Ethiopia.

race relations, safeguarding whites' property rights and appealing to both whites and the blacks to forget past injustices. Kenyatta adopted the slogan "Harambee" (Swahili for "let's all pull together).

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QUESTIONS

- Why do you think the British locked up Kenyatta after the Mau Mau uprising?
- Why do you think Kenyatta opposed violent uprisings against the British?
- Why do you think Kenyatta chose "Harambee" as his slogan?

"Harambee" Swahili for "let's all pull together.