

# **KENYA:** **The National Epic**



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# Kenya

EAST AFRICANA COLLECTION

## The National Epic

From the pages of DRUM magazine

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## NAIROBI CAMPUS CLASH



**GENERAL SERVICE UNIT MEMBERS** check the identity of students arrested after being flushed out of the dorms.

### **DRUM: November 1987**

**T**he University of Nairobi has established itself as a hotbed of radicalism. But in November this year it paid dearly for it. Some 10,000 students were expelled and ordered to report to their respective chiefs twice a week. Around 40 of them were under arrest and several others seriously injured following a two-day clash with the Kenya Police.

The current crop of students will surely recall the Black Monday of November 16, 1987, when the paramilitary police, the General Service Unit (GSU), and the police broke the barricades set along State

House Road and stormed the halls of residence. It all started on Friday, November 13 when the newly elected officials of the Students' Organisation of Nairobi University (SONU) were sworn in. The new Chairman, Wafula Buke, pledged a new era in which he promised he would be loyal only to the students, and the student leaders did not recognise any other authority except themselves.

Mr Buke went on to criticise the university administration for not allowing them to invite speakers who are known for being outspoken on national issues. The students also vowed that they would

not go on official overseas trips unless they were sanctioned by SONU. They promised to revive a radical students' newspaper. This was enough for the government. Seven students were whisked away for questioning that night.

The students at once held a meeting the following morning but the police immediately stepped in armed with truncheons, tear gas and G3 rifles. The students armed themselves with stones and, like the army of Alice Lakwena, hit back hard. The battle began and several policemen and students were injured in the first day of the fracas.



The crack GSU was called in the following day and this time the students' stones were of no avail. The GSU stormed into the halls of residence and flushed out the students who had locked themselves in their rooms. They were beaten and many were arrested.

Several university workers and passerby were caught in the fracas and seriously injured. The Vice Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, Professor PM Mbithi, also had a rough time with the students. His car was stoned and the windscreen shattered as he drove to calm down the angry students. □

*STUDENTS AND POLICE CLASH* after students demonstrated in support of greater political freedom on campus.