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KANU

145 Political Conflict in
Kiharu

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As Kamotho calls Kiharu elections free and fair . . .

Matiba group in another boycott

By MUTEGI NJAU

Mr Kenneth Matiba and his supporters yesterday boycotted the Kiharu Kanu sub-branch elections, accusing the returning officer of blatant rigging.

"We are back to square one," he said in a statement.

The situation was tense at Kahuro market in Kiharu, Murang'a, from early in the morning to noon when the returning officer, Mr Fred Mwango, started conducting the elections.

The elections, which were being repeated following an order from President Moi on Sunday, were conducted in the absence of Mr Matiba and all his supporters.

The bone of contention between Mr Matiba, the Minister for Transport and Communications, and Mr Mwango, who is also the Nyandarua District Commissioner, was over delegates to represent Weithaga Location.



The MP for Kiharu, Mr Kenneth Matiba (right), argues with the returning officer for the Kanu sub-branch elections, Mr Fred Mwango, who is the Nyandarua DC, before he and his supporters boycotted the polls and left.

Tempers started rising even before the returning officer arrived, as the Murang'a Kanu branch chairman, Mr Joseph Kamotho, explained to reporters that his branch would not allow a group of 20 delegates from

Weithaga Location who were elected on September 23 under the supervision of Mr Etemesi to take part.

During the ruling party elections at the location level on September 20, Mr Matiba claimed

(Picture by TONY MBUGGUS) delegates had been irregularly "planted" in Weithaga and three other locations.

The Central Provincial Commissioner, Mr John Etemesi,

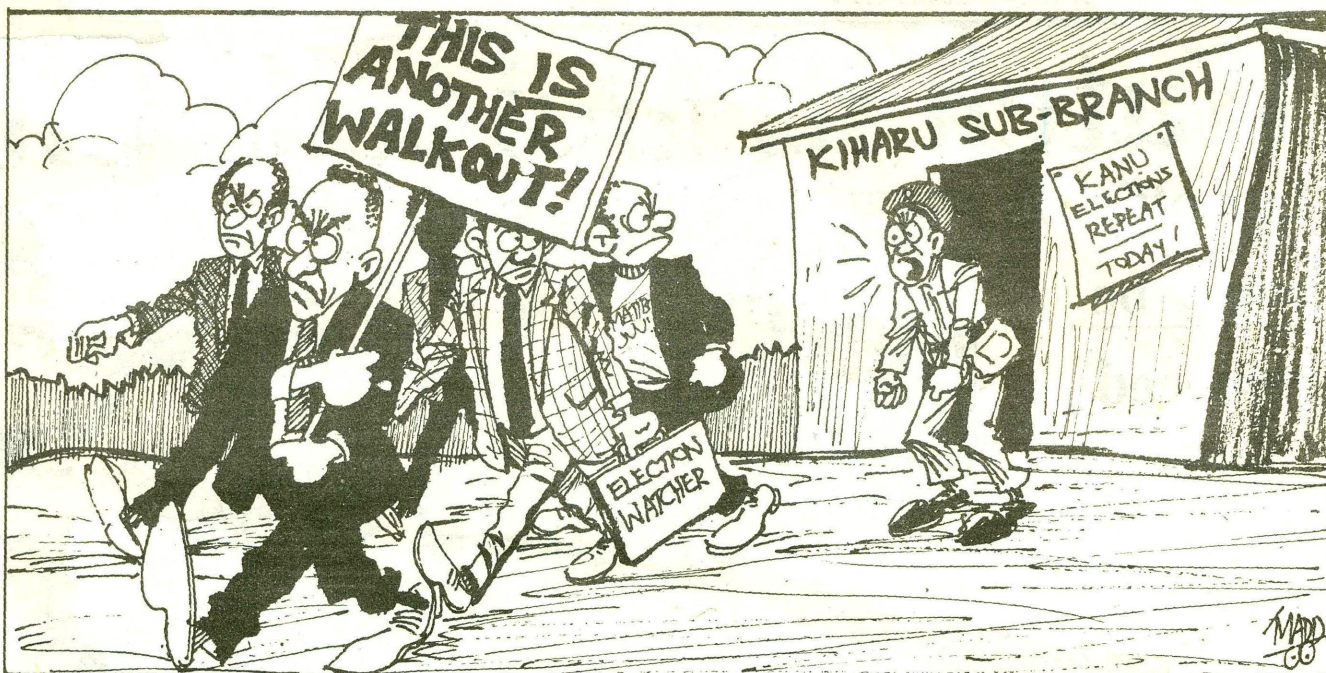
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"I don't understand this! Is this a repeat election or a repeat boycott!"

NATIONAL NEWS

Kanu election: Matiba bloc in another boycott

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then went to the locations on September 23 and conducted fresh elections.

During yesterday's repeat of the sub-branch elections, Weithaga Location had two sets of delegates - those voted for on September 20 and recognised by the branch officials, and those voted for on September 23 when Mr Etemesi supervised a repeat and are recognised by Mr Matiba and his supporters.

Before the elections started, Mr Kamotho said the PC had no business conducting the locational repeat at Weithaga, since he was not a gazetted returning officer.

But Mr Matiba insisted that if the 20 delegates elected at Weithaga on September 23 were not among the delegates, there was no point in repeating the sub-branch elections.

When Mr Mwango announced that as the returning officer he had decided to strike a compromise by allowing 10 delegates from those elected on September 20 at Weithaga and 10 of those elected on September 23 to take part in yesterday's elections, Mr Matiba hit the roof.

He jumped out of his seat and declared: "Absolutely nothing of that kind. If those are your instructions, I'm sorry I can't abide by them."

Mr Matiba went to where the returning officer was standing and told him he and his supporters could not take part in the election if he (the DC) was not recognising the genuinely elected delegates.

Mr Matiba's supporters went rowdy, shouting: "Uuuu! Nitwarega! Uuuu! Nitwarega kuhenio muthenya! (Ooh! We refuse! We refuse to be cheated, cheated in daylight!!)"

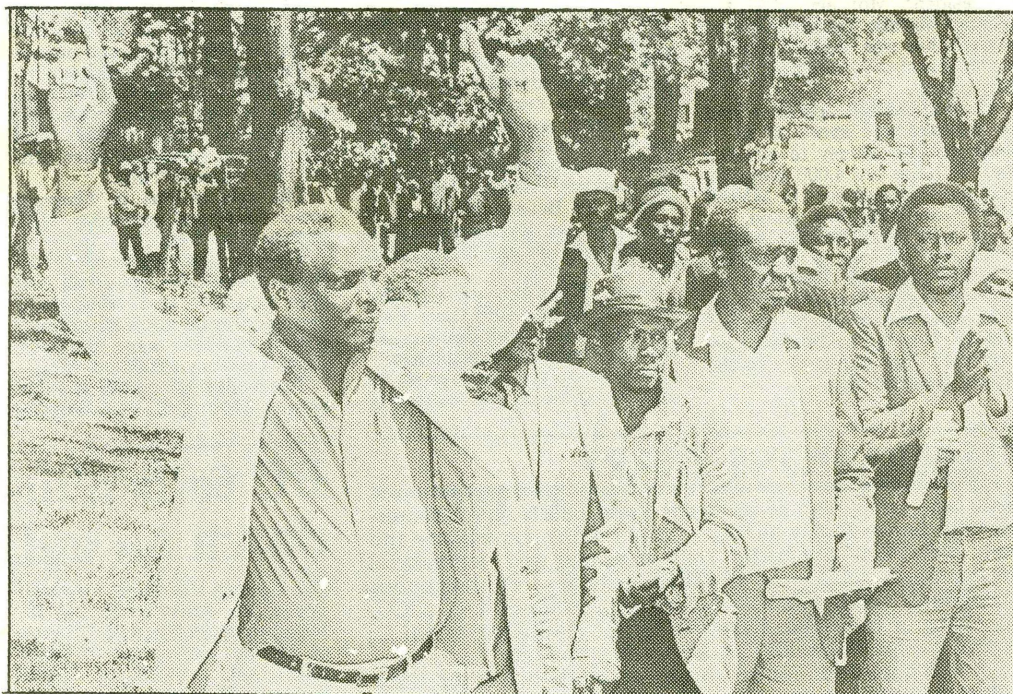
Mr Matiba and his supporters walked out of the polling station as the returning officer was reading the list of the 10 Weithaga delegates elected on September 20.

Outside the polling station, Mr Mwango interrupted Mr Matiba as he addressed his supporters and ordered the police to chase them away.

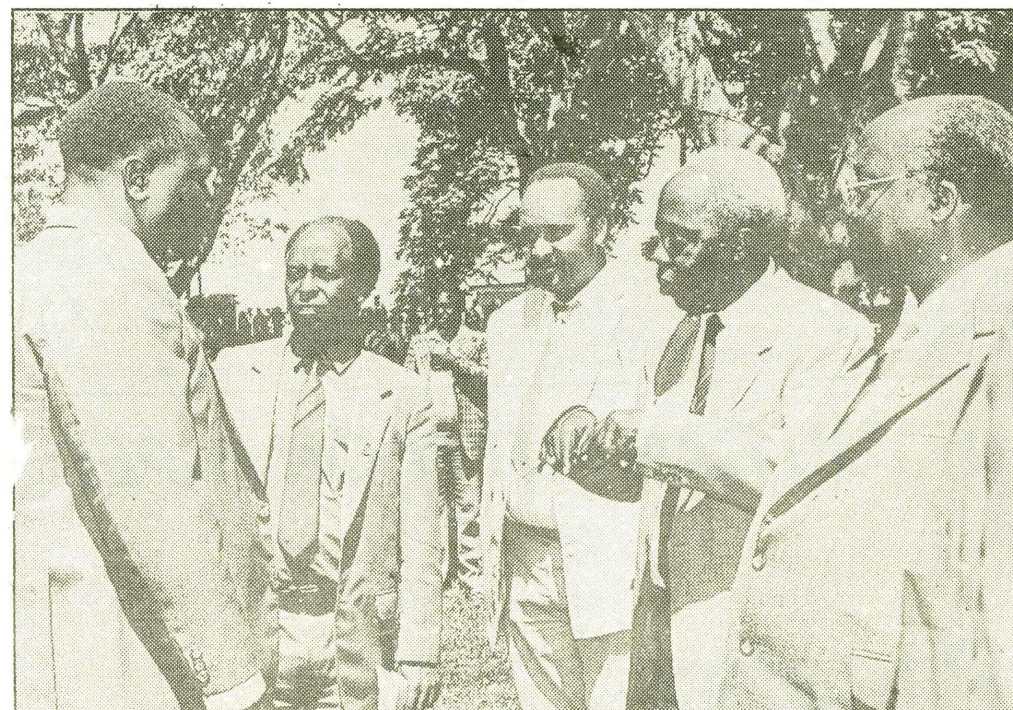
"Who is in charge of the police here? Chase those people away!" he ordered through a loudspeaker.

However, Mr Matiba and his group drove off peacefully and the elections continued without further interruption, ending with the singing of "Kanu yajenga nchi".

Asked about the fate of the



The new Kiharu sub-branch chairman, Mr Mwangi Mweru, raises his arms after his election.
Picture by TONY MBUGGUSS



Some of the observers at the elections of the Kiharu Kanu sub-branch office bearers were (from left) the Central PC, Mr John Etemesi, the MP for Kangema, Mr Joseph Kamotho, Mr Joseph Kiboti of the Ministry of National Guidance and Political Affairs, Mr Julius Kiano the chairman of the Oil Refineries and the MP for Mukurweini, Mr Ngumbu Njururi. (Picture by TONY MBUGGUSS).