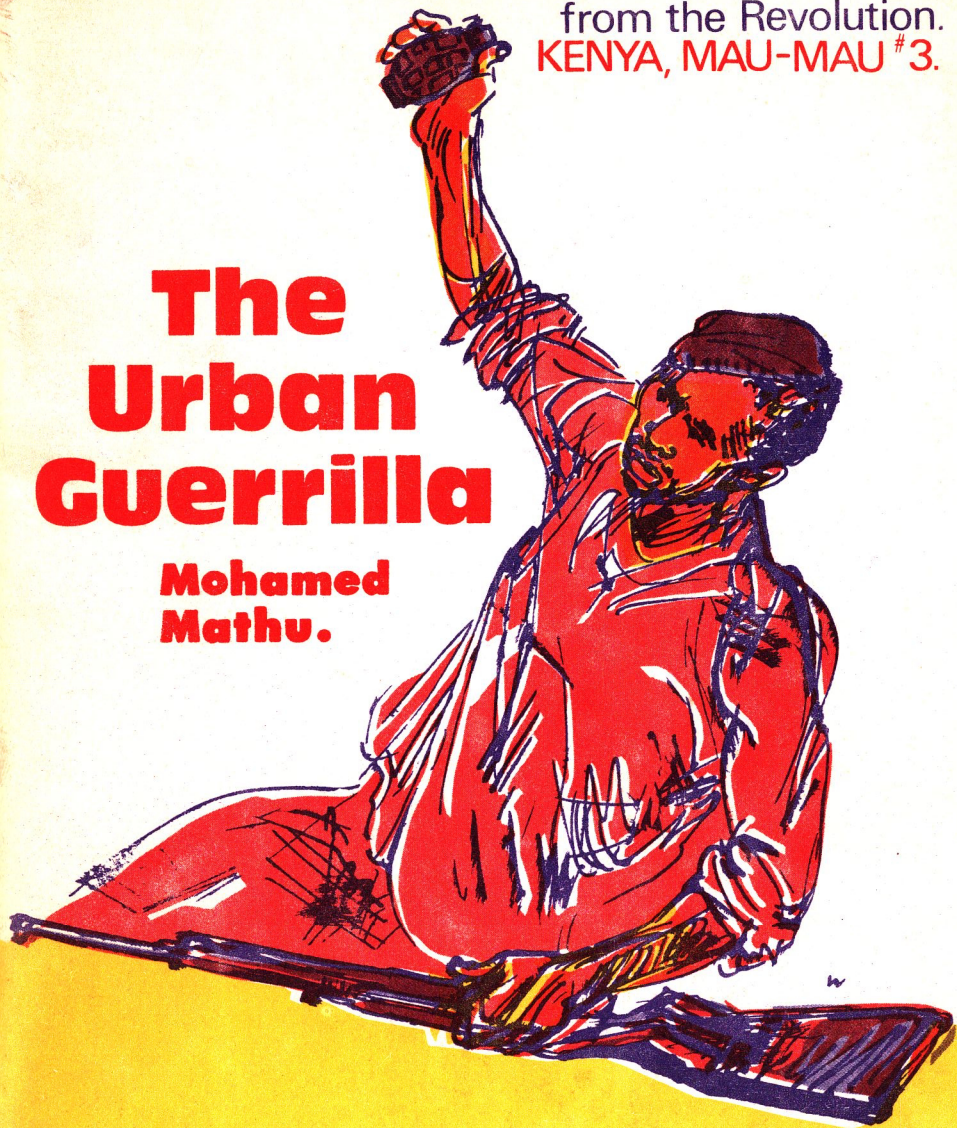
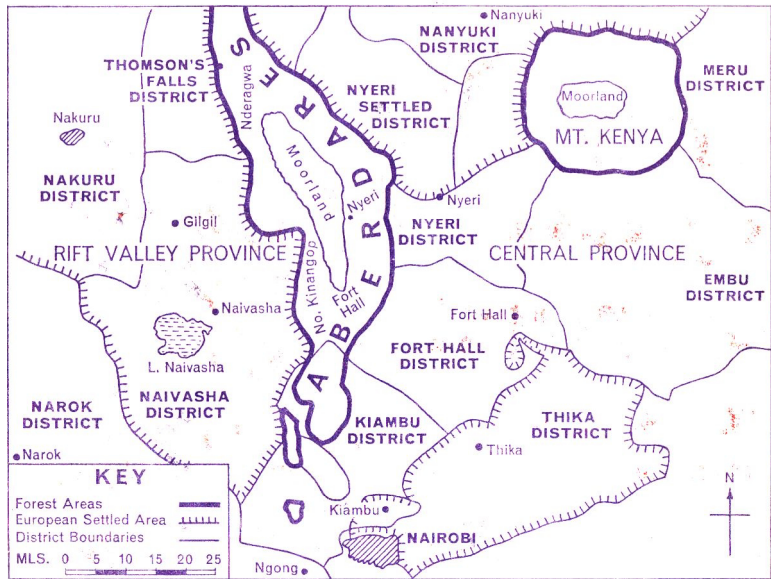


Life Histories
from the Revolution.
KENYA, MAU-MAU #3.

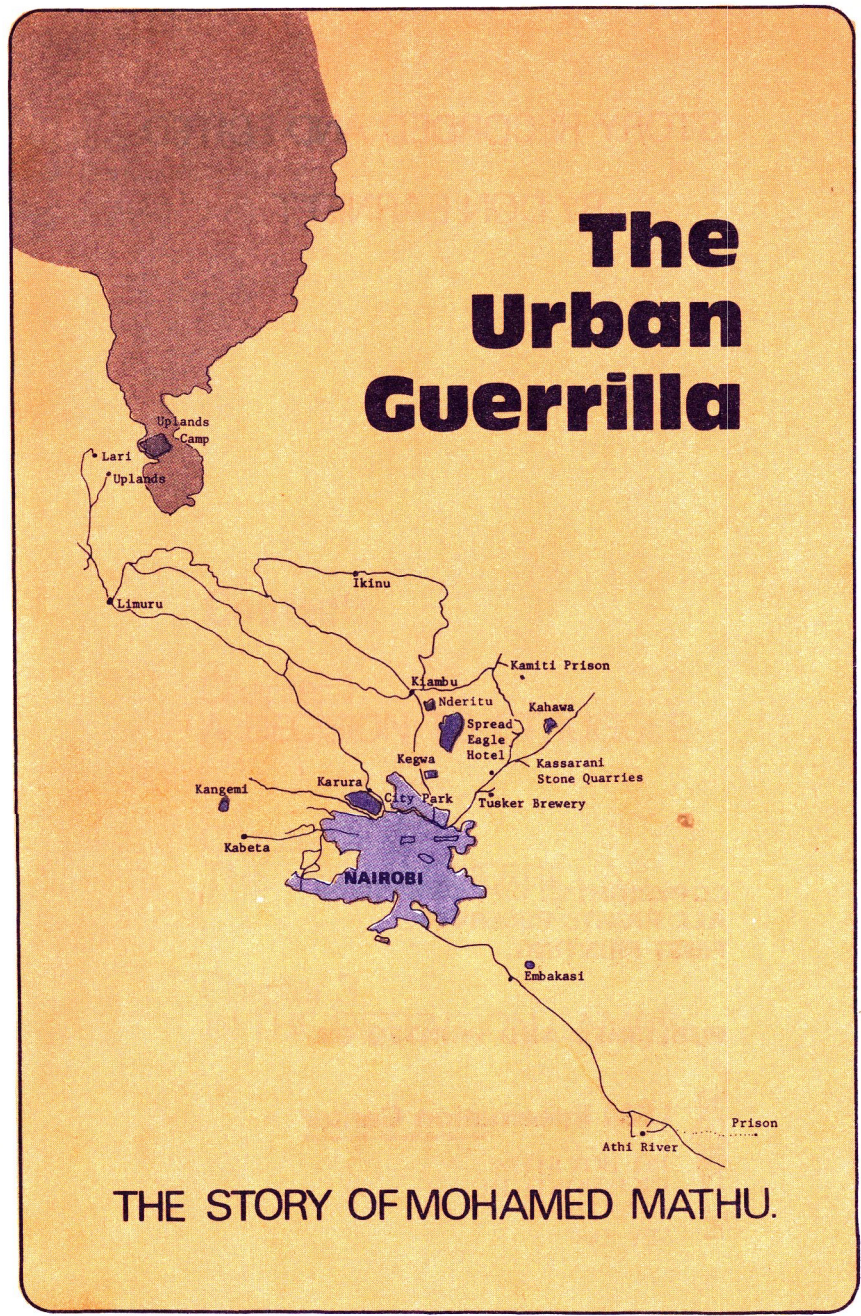
The Urban Guerrilla

**Mohamed
Mathu.**





The Urban Guerrilla



THE STORY OF MOHAMED MATHU.

STORY RECORDED AND EDITED

BY DON BARNETT

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Contents

Chapter 1
A DECISION TO STRUGGLE

Chapter 2
THE URBAN GUERRILLAS

Chapter 3
IN THE DETENTION CAMPS

Does Mau Mau still exist, asks counsel

MR. KENYATTA CONDEMNS SUBVERSION

KIKUYU who were organising or supporting subversive secret societies were condemned by Kanu's president Mr. Kenyatta, when he addressed a meeting at Githungu Kiambo on Saturday.

U.S. steps up exports to Kenya 20 PER CENT RISE IN FIRST QUARTER

WITH an increase of nearly 20 per cent in its exports to Kenya in the first quarter of this year, the United States rose from its position as sixth supplier to become the third main exporter to the Colony.

The value of the United States imports into Kenya rose from £1,146,660 in the first quarter of 1960 to £1,376,660 in the first quarter of this year — comprising nearly seven per cent of total imports.

Pyrethrum growers praised in London

BRITISH Member of Parliament, a Kenyan scientist and a prominent journalist

Kenya Police to Oust Africans From Farms Owned by Whites

DISCUSS ANTI-OATH CAMPAIGN

The sisal industry

MR. ODINGA GIVES THANKS TO MAU MAU

vice-chairman, Mr. Odinga, has thanked the Mau Mau Braves for their part in the liberation of Kenya.

RELEASED DETAINEE JAILED FOR A YEAR

Oath charges Four Meru have been charged with administering Mau Mau oaths in the lower Chure Location of Meru. They have been remanded in custody.

LARGE-SCALE BUYING

START SO

START is to be completed this year on a large-scale land purchase and settlement scheme.

Foreword

The vast majority of peasants and workers in the super-exploited hinterland of the imperialist system are illiterate. It is part of their oppression. They comprise almost half of the world's total population, some 75% of the population within the "free world," and the emiserated broad base from which all contemporary anti-imperialist revolutions draw their essential moral and material strength. These are the masses who, under the leadership of revolutionary vanguards, are making modern history. Yet, due largely to the chains of their enforced illiteracy, these makers of history rarely have the opportunity to document their own experiences within it. Their "backwardness" condemns them to literary silence as well as to poverty, disease and a short life.

One of our objectives in launching this series of LIFE HISTORIES FROM THE REVOLUTION is to provide a medium through which individual members of these classes-in-motion within the revolution can speak. We also believe it important that they be heard by those of us who comprise imperialism's privileged and literate metropolitan minority. Their recounted lives throw our own into sharp relief, while at the same time they offer us fresh perspectives on the processes of repression and revolution from a unique vantage point: from below. Their life stories provide us with a window into the qualitative - as distinct from the merely statistical and quantitative - aspects of class conflict, thus enabling us to better understand and weigh the various factors at work in transforming oppressed masses into revolutionary classes. Again, their remembered life experiences can provide us with significant insights into the dialectical relationships between material and subjective conditions which shape the revolutionary situation, embrace the revolutionary transformation of individuals and classes alike, and move humanity forward toward a new international social formation.

Not all of the individuals whose life histories are included in this series are illiterate peasants or workers. Some are educated defectors from petty bourgeois classes who have joined the revolution and identified their interests with those of the oppressed masses in a very concrete way. They constitute a very important part of the revolutionary vanguard - i.e., the middle cadres who articulate the relationship between leadership and base, who carry forward the military and civilian programs in day-to-day contact with the armed militants and popular masses. The selfless dedication, integrity, comportment and skill of the middle cadres is an essential ingredient within any successful revolutionary process.

other people Nobody will respect you if you don't respect him first.

remember the Kikuyu proverb that if you hate someone he will get hold of your nose and stick it to it. We must have no hatred towards one another. Mau Mau was a disease which had to be eradicated and must never be remembered again.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

The life histories in this series have been recorded and prepared as historical documents from the revolutionary struggles of our time. The techniques and methods employed at each stage of the process, from initial contact to final editing, have therefore been chosen or fashioned with the purpose of guaranteeing the authenticity and integrity of the life history concerned. These stories, then, to the best of our ability to make them so, constitute a body of data and testimony as revealed by a few of those history-makers normally condemned to silence while others speak on their behalf.

Don Barnett
Director
LSM Information Center

Introduction

I met David "Mohamed" Mathu for the first time in one of Nairobi's dingy back street hotels. It was late 1961, Kenya was still a British colony, and several thousand "Mau Mau" members and a number of important nationalist leaders remained in detention camps or exile. Our meeting had been arranged by a mutual friend, Ngugi Kabiro.* Mathu was somewhat taller than most Kikuyu, with a gaunt frame and anxious, almost frightened, eyes. His whispered conversation, over-the-shoulder glances and cautious responses reflected long experience as an urban guerrilla and prisoner in numerous detention camps. The anxiety and uncertainty revealed in Mathu's manner had become ubiquitous among Kenya's million or so Kikuyu. Perhaps 100,000 (some say a quarter of a million) had been killed in four years of armed struggle (1952-56); more than that number had been "detained" in British-style concentration camps for as long as nine years and subjected to various forms of torture, humiliation and "rehabilitative" brainwashing. The remaining population in the "reserves" - mainly women, children and old people - had suffered a terrible repression which included rape and torture, forced labor, loss of land and stock, "resettlement" in concentration camp hamlets, collective punishments, restricted movement, curfews and a wave of hunger and starvation which took the lives of many thousands.

Despite fierce white-settler resistance, Kenya's five to six million Africans had recently been granted "Internal Self-Government" and a promise of early independence. For the vast majority of Kikuyu, however, there remained considerable apprehension, confusion and unanswered questions: "Why was their struggle being ignored or condemned by the new African parliamentarians?" "Would independence bring appreciation and compensation for their great sacrifices and losses?" "How would ex-Home Guards and other 'loyalist' traitors be dealt with?" "What would be done about the stolen 'White Highlands' and long-standing Kikuyu land claims?"

And what of Jomo Kenyatta, whose strange and often contradictory statements caused many to wonder? Eight years earlier, during the Kapenguria trial, his claim that he knew nothing about "Mau Mau" was viewed by most Kikuyu as a sign of determination not

*The autobiography of Ngugi Kabiro was subsequently taped and recently published by LSM Press under the title, MAN IN THE MIDDLE: Kenya/Mau Mau #2. See also LSM's THE HARDCORE: Kenya/Mau Mau #1, and MAU MAU FROM WITHIN, Monthly Review Press.

to betray the secrecy vows of the Unity Oath. Now, just released from his "restriction order," Kenyatta was offering guarantees to the settlers and foreign investors, pledging that "The Government of an independent Kenya will not be a 'gangster government' and will not deprive people of their property."* (*East African Standard [EAS]*, 1 September 1961) At the same time, he and other high ranking KANU (Kenya African National Union) leaders were condemning "...categorically any illegal or subversive movement" (*Sunday Post*, 20 August 1961) and urging everyone to: "Please forget about the past and remember we are all citizens of Kenya of equal status [sic!]." (*Daily Nation*, 2 October 1961.)

Many became restless. Oathing started up again and the newspapers were full of it. Kariuki Chotara, whom you will meet in the following pages, was once more arrested and charged with being a leader of the Kenya Land Freedom Army (KLFA).** Defense Minister Swann, in proscribing it on 8 August 1961, said the KLFA was: "anarchist, bolshevik and terrorist," planning a coup "at some future date," and "...composed of ('500 to 2,000') former Mau Mau who intend to make sure that those who fought during the Emergency reap the sweets of success." (*Daily Nation*, 9 August 1961) Also banned were the Kenya Parliament, the Kenya Land Freedom Party, the Rift Valley Government and the Rift Valley Province Parliament.

Nevertheless, history was to repeat itself. The vast majority of Kikuyu interpreted Kenyatta's condemnation of Mau Mau and the new KLFA, together with his promises to foreign investors and settlers, as a clever deception of the British intended to hasten Kenya's independence - an event which many still hoped would usher in a bright new future, filled with all the things they had longed and struggled for, especially land, jobs and education for their children. But these hopes were mixed with the fears and scepti-

*The essentials of KANU's Land Policy were summarized as follows: "(1) Security of title to agricultural land will only be given to Kenya citizens, and the principle of 'Absentee Landlords' will not be accepted. (2) Large commercial companies owning agricultural land for the development of tea, coffee and sisal plantations will not be bound by this[sic!]." (*Sunday Post*, 16 July 1961.)

**The *East African Standard* reported on August 9, 1961 that: "At Lokitaung, Chotara attacked Jomo Kenyatta and tried to beat him up. He was pulled away by the self-styled 'General' China." The rest of the story, from those who were there, is that the fight started when Kenyatta scornfully asked Chotara, in effect, "Why do you people go on fighting? Don't you know that the longer you fight, the longer they will keep me here?" This helps explain one arrested KLFA member's comment that "If Kenyatta gets in our way, we'll cut him down just the same as any other Kanu or Kadu leader." (ibid.)

cism born of past broken promises and bitter years of suffering. Many remembered Kenyatta's Nyeri speech in 1947 when he said: "The freedom tree can only grow when you pour blood on it ... I shall firmly hold the lion's jaws so that it will not bite you. Will you bear its claws?" The Kikuyu masses had certainly born the lion's claws, but unfortunately its jaws were also left free to attack them as KAU (Kenya African Union) leaders, including Kenyatta, ignored pre-Emergency warnings* and allowed themselves to be arrested without a struggle, none ever even attempting to escape and join the peasant guerrillas fighting in the forests of Mount Kenya and the Aberdares.

Strangely, as Kenya approached the eve of its independence, it was only a few non-Kikuyu nationalist leaders who dared acknowledge the contribution of "Mau Mau." Oginga Odinga, a Luo, said that "Had it not been for the heroism of the Mau Mau freedom fighters, maybe we could be another South Africa today!" (*EAS*, 4 Aug. 1961) John Keen, a Masai leader, commented that "Mau Mau had been called bad, but when Kenya's *uhuru* was finally won, it would be described as the 'War of Independence'." (*EAS*, 28 August 1961) And Martin Chokwe, Coast Province, and Paul Ngei of Ukambani, made similar statements.

These contradictions and the doubt and confusion they generated were clearly revealed in the manner of Muhamed Mathu, and the basis for them became evident as his story unfolded. After completing two years of high school (much more than most Africans), Mathu gained employment as an apprentice draftsman in 1950. He was working for the Nairobi City Council when the Emergency was declared and held his job right through April 1954, when the British "Operation Anvil" was launched in Nairobi and forced him into full-time guerrilla activity. In the intervening period, Mathu had become active in one of the several guerrilla groups operating in and around the capital city. Disorganized when its top, and much of its middle, leadership was removed at the outset of the struggle, the underground movement entered a period of confusion and decentralization - a period from which it never fully recovered. It was thus unable to take advantage either of its own potential strengths or the enemy's numerous weaknesses. Most of Nairobi's 86,000 Africans (some 55,000) were Kikuyu and they were employed in virtually every important aspect of the city's life - in domestic service, industry, communications and transport, and as clerks in the lower reaches of the Government and business bureaucracies. Most, as well, were members of Mau Mau. Nairobi itself, unlike the

*It is widely believed among Kikuyu that KAU leaders gained knowledge of the Emergency Declaration some 24 hours before the 20 October 1952 announcement, when most of the top leadership was picked up in pre-dawn raids code-named the "Jock Scott Operation."

capitals in other African colonies with a seaboard, was situated some 300 miles of sandy road inland from Mombasa on the coast. It had only one small airport (Embakazi International Airport was built during and after the revolution, largely with forced detainee labour), a single water reservoir and very vulnerable power and communications facilities. In addition, almost all Europeans employed at least one Kikuyu servant, cook, garden "boy" or chauffeur ... and there is little doubt that most would have panicked in response to a well-organized and coordinated guerrilla attack in the early stages of the Emergency.

Such an attack, however, was not to come; and by the time it was conceived as a strategic possibility by a somewhat reorganized urban guerrilla "Kenya Parliament,"* the colonial-settler forces had regrouped and seized the initiative, which they never again relinquished. The urban guerrilla groups, though able to achieve numerous isolated successes in Nairobi, never really succeeded in overcoming their major weaknesses and realizing their potential strengths - a transformation which, had it been achieved, would most certainly have altered the results of the otherwise abortive Kenya revolution.

Mathu, who became secretary of the Kenya Parliament at the time of its formation, both shared and mirrored the movement's frailties and inadequacies. From the time of his first oath in June 1950, Mathu was plagued by doubts and fears. He tells us that he "...found certain aspects of the oath-taking ceremony ugly and resented having been tricked into attending it;" also of his "doubts about the future," which "...buzzed noisily around in my head. Guns and ammunition meant violence. What would this bring to me and my people?"

These and other questions and reservations continually arose. They were seated, for the most part, in the organizational and ideological weaknesses of "Mau Mau," as well as in the various contradictions engendered by fifty years of British-settler rule. The underground movement's lack of an educated and revolutionary leadership, knowledgeable about modern guerrilla warfare and the nature of colonialism and imperialism, resulted in the absence of an overall politico-military strategy and little or no political education for the militants or masses. Mau Mau ideology was, in addition, burdened with a narrow and negative nationalism and debilitating magical beliefs and superstition. Confusion and conflict arose between local, tribal and national objectives as well as between traditional and scientific ideas, the educated and the illiterate, men and women, personal and collective gain. In such circumstances,

revolutionary self-discipline, comportment and integrity are difficult to achieve (or even understand), and opportunism, adventurism and defeatism inevitably assume a large and ultimately commanding role.

In the case of Mathu, these contradictions and shortcomings are manifested in a continuing flow of events. The attack against Asians at a Muslim mosque was clearly the outcome of serious ideological confusion and a "roving rebel band" mentality. His attitude toward the necessity for organizational- and self-discipline is reflected in the comment that he "...thought many of the Mau Mau rules were rather stupid." And that: "Despite the fine I'd been forced to pay...I continued living with the prostitute, drinking beer and smoking in the privacy of my room."

There were also numerous instances of opportunism, as when Mathu buys a rifle for 400 shillings and, figuring that he "...should make something" for himself, "told the elders it cost 600s. and pocketed the difference." Again, there was his flirtation with the Special Branch and the personal advantage he saw in a mock double-agent role. "When the other men left," he tells us, "Seedon gave me 80s. and an informer card bearing his name and phone number...Obtaining the card was my own idea. I knew I would soon enter the forest and the card could prove useful if I was ever captured by security forces."

Nevertheless, despite these and other contradictions and non-revolutionary practices, Mathu's story reveals at many points a genuine sensitivity and concern for the African and Kikuyu masses. Being intellectually and morally opposed to magical practices and tribal chauvinism, he continually fights against these tendencies - both before his capture and while in detention. This, as we shall see, took considerable courage...as does Mathu's final comment and warning about Kenya's new African leadership. "Remembering how many of these leaders abandoned us during the revolution, I am suspicious of those who now claim to speak in our name. Are they not abandoning us again in their quest for personal power and wealth? The vast majority of Africans remain very poor. Are the masses of Kenyans simply to become the slaves of a handful of wealthy Black men?"

That was in 1962! - still a year-and-a-half before Kenya would achieve its political "independence." Now, unfortunately, some dozen years later and with the benefit of hindsight, we must note that history has answered Mathu's questions in the affirmative.

*The *EAS* of 18 July 1961 contained a copy of revived Land Freedom Army documents and oaths. See Appendix.

Chapter 1

A DECISION TO STRUGGLE

The night of 19 June 1952 was the most remarkable of my life. When I returned from work at about 5 p.m. I was visited in my room in Ziwani African location of Nairobi by two men. One was from my own division in Nyeri, South Tetu. The other was from Othaya Division in this same district of the Central Province. They told me one of my brothers was very sick and wanted to see me as soon as possible.

Before I could ask any questions, Githuku, the man from my division, said they were going to my brother's place on business and would give me a lift in his car. I accepted without question or suspicion and jumped into the waiting car.

We started our journey, passing the main gate of the Royal Airforce Base and continuing along the Fort Hall road to a place near the stone quarries at Kassarani. Here we turned off onto one of the dirt roads. It was just after 7 p.m. and we were about five or six miles from Nairobi when I started to become suspicious. Strange greetings were exchanged between my escorts and people we were passing on the road and a few hundred yards further I saw several men guarding a hidden area a short distance ahead. It dawned on me that instead of going to visit my sick brother I had been tricked into attending an oathing ceremony.

My heart was beating as we got out of the car and went on foot along a narrow path. I had heard on the radio that Kikuyu were being taken into the bush for initiation into the Mau Mau secret society and that those who refused the oath had been killed. I made up my mind not to resist.

After passing several sentries we came to a large, secluded valley. It was just like one of our market centers in the reserves, filled with about 10,000 men and women. It was dusk and I could make out the faces of many people I knew among the larger number of complete strangers.

Within a matter of minutes one of the oath administrators, a man from my own village named Gathiu wa Gichuki, ordered a group of us from the same sub-location to form a circle around one of several banana leaf arches which had been set up in the valley.

Each of the new initiates was to be sworn in separately and when my turn came a thin strip of twisted goat skin was placed around my neck, bracelets of this same skin were put on my wrists

and I was given a small, dampened ball of soil to hold against my stomach. Repeating the vows spoken by the oath administrator, I passed under the arch seven times, took seven bites from the chest meat of a ram, sank my teeth seven times into the heart and lungs of a goat, sipped blood seven times from a traditional Kikuyu gourd, inserted small sticks cut from the *mugere* tree into the seven holes of an *ngata* [the bone which joins the neck and spinal column of a goat], and jumped seven times over seven pieces of wild fruit called *ndongu*. This is what I swore:

1. I am taking this oath so as to unite the black men of Kenya, and particularly the Kikuyu people, in the struggle for freedom and the return of our stolen lands.
2. If I meet any member of this society who is in need of assistance or a place to hide, I will help him.
3. If guns or ammunition are brought to me for hiding, I will do so and never reveal the matter to Government or anyone not a member of this society.
4. I will never reveal the existence or secrets of this Society to the white man or his friends or to anyone not of the House of *Gikuyu na Mumbi*.

After repeating each of these vows, I said: "If I violate this sacred pledge, may this oath kill me." The crowd of people surrounding the arch would then chant in unison: "The oath kills he who lies."

When all of us had been initiated, we were given some final words of advice by the oath administrator and told to return to our homes. As I walked back toward Ziwani my head was spinning. I felt confused emotions about what I had just experienced.

Up to this time I had never thought seriously about politics. Born and raised on a small *shamba*, like most Kikuyu children, I started schooling in 1943 at the age of 12. After completing Form 2, I found myself without money to complete my education and went to Nairobi in search of employment. In 1950 I was hired as an apprentice draftsman by the East African Railways and Harbours and 13 months later, having gained some experience, got a similar job at a higher wage with the City Council of Nairobi.

As a young boy I had heard of Harry Thuku, the Kikuyu Central Association and Johnston Kenyatta's visit to England to fight for the return of Kikuyu land. But I just wasn't interested in politics or the activities of the Kenya African Union (KAU). Entering Nairobi I took up a life of petty pleasures, drinking and women. After awhile I moved in with a woman hawker, started to drink hea-

vily and had no thoughts about my own or Kenya's future.

Now, walking home in the darkness from the oath I had just taken, I considered what had been said and done. It was certainly true that the white man had stolen our lands and substituted a degrading kind of slavery for the freedoms we had previously enjoyed. Somehow the European had stripped us of our manhood. For over fifty years he treated us like monkeys just down from the trees and now, they told me, it was time we fought back like men. True! Every word of it true! The white man was the natural enemy of the black and could only be defeated by the force of African unity.

Nevertheless, while the evening awakened in me the sleeping emotions and thoughts of my political and social condition as an African in a white-ruled Kenya, I found certain aspects of the oath-taking ceremony ugly and resented having been tricked into attending it. Doubt about the future buzzed noisily around in my head. Guns and ammunition meant violence. What would this bring to my and my people?

These were the kind of thoughts and doubts running through my head as I reached my room at about 5 a.m. and lay down for a few hours of much-needed sleep. When I got up and rushed to get to the office by 8 o'clock the confusion was still there, but I made up my mind not to violate the vows I took the night before.

The following evening after returning from work I was visited by my brother and two friends. All three had been members of Mau Mau for some time and they tried to make me understand the nature of the organization and the meaning of the oath. They explained how, in Nairobi, our members were organized on a sub-location, location, division and district basis, with committees on each level electing a few men to represent them on the next highest committee. At the top, said my brother, was the Central Province Committee with members from the various district committees. The CPC and district committees had groups of young fighters whose job it was to eliminate traitors. None of the lower committees had fighting groups and none of the fighters could take action against a man without instructions from the elders of the Central Province or district committees.

We discussed the relation of the Kenya African Union to our organization. They said that the top leaders of KAU knew about and sympathized with our Movement and that we, in turn, were strong supporters of KAU. Both were working to forge an ironclad unity among all Africans, a unity which would enable us to fight successfully for our land and freedom. We would throw off white-settler rule and after winning our independence the land would be ours, salaries would rise and education would be free. Gradually,

as we talked into the late hours of the night, my fears fell away one by one.

I learned that sub-location groups met on Saturdays and Sundays and that each group had messengers whose job it was to inform members where and when the meetings were to be held. My brother, who was on the South Tetu Division Committee, said I could assist the organization by using my evenings and weekends trying to recruit new members and collecting entrance fees and dues from persons who had taken the oath. In recruiting members I was not to mention the oath but simply to assess the attitudes and sympathies of potential members toward the Movement.

At this time I was living in Ziwani with a prostitute. I was told that, according to Mau Mau rules, no one was to stay with prostitutes. If I wanted to continue living with this woman I should marry her. They also told me about the rules prohibiting the drinking of European beer and the smoking of European cigarettes.

By the time they left, after many hours of discussion, I was fully convinced that our Movement - known to the Europeans as "Mau Mau" - was just and good and that I would do my best to help in reaching its aims.

Though I will use the term "Mau Mau" it should be understood that this name was popularized by the European press and wasn't used by us when referring in private conversation to our Association. We often spoke of the movement as *Uiguano wa Muingi* or *Uiguano wa Kikuyu na Mumbi*. The meaning of "*uiguano*" is "unity" and hence the above expressions translate into English as "The Unity of the Community" and "The Unity of Kikuyu and Mumbi." Another term, "*muma*," means "the oath" but was often used when referring to the Organization as a whole. The so-called "Mau Mau" oath was most frequently called "*Muma wa Uiguano*" or the "Oath of Unity." Finally there was the term "*Muigithania*" which means "The Unifier" and was often used when referring to the Movement which sought a united Kikuyu people.

The following morning I went to work as usual and it wasn't until three weeks later, in early July, that I attended my first sub-location meeting. It was held at night and about 20 of us met in Bahati within the single unlit room of a member. The chairman told us that the time had arrived when all Kikuyu must rise in unity and fight for freedom and the return of our lands. We should try to collect money for the purchase of guns and ammunition and should never turn our backs on any opportunity to acquire arms - regardless of the means. Whenever we got any weapons or ammunition we should bring them immediately to him.

The money we collected would also be used to assist unemployed members and to pay legal fees for persons arrested on Mau Mau charges. Later, after the Emergency was declared, the wives and children of men who were arrested or killed were given financial assistance.

The discussion continued along this line until about 10 p.m. when the meeting broke up and I returned to Ziwani. For the next month or two I continued to work with the City Council as a draftsman but spent more and more time trying to recruit new members and collect outstanding entrance fees and dues from members of my sub-location. While moving around the city contacting potential initiates and members I made an effort to assess their feelings toward the Organization and build up their morale and courage. Winning the confidence of friends and acquaintances, I took several people to oathing ceremonies usually held at night in the darkened rooms of members living in African locations such as Kariokor, Shauri Moyo, Bahati, Ziwani and Makongeni.

One Sunday I took two recruits to an oathing ceremony in Shauri Moyo. It began at 2 o'clock in the afternoon and lasted until midnight. Over 200 people were given the oath and when the ceremony was over my two friends and I returned to my Ziwani room. I tried to explain to them the meaning of the oath they had just taken. I said the oath served only to unify our people in the struggle to regain our stolen lands and freedom and that even leading members of KAU were active in the Association. By the time they left most of their fears and doubts had been eliminated.

I attended many meetings during this period, but one held in September I remember vividly. Though I knew it was against Mau Mau regulations I continued to live with the prostitute who was brewing beer. I was told that my offences were to be discussed and only reluctantly attended the meeting. When I confessed, the chairman passed sentence. I was fined 80s. This was a large amount of money to me as I was earning only 210s. a month. At first I refused to pay. On instruction from the chairman I was then stuffed into a gunnysack which was tied and pushed under the bed. After a few minutes, and not knowing what was to follow, I shouted my willingness to pay and was let out of the bag.

I must admit at this point that I thought many of the Mau Mau rules were rather stupid. Despite the fine I'd been forced to pay and the harsher punishment I would face if caught again, I continued living with the prostitute, drinking beer and smoking in the privacy of my room.

I still considered myself, however, a loyal member of Mau Mau and with Government pressures mounting, frequently made my house available for roasting the meat used in oathing ceremonies and for

hiding or repairing guns. Many times members gathered in my house to count the money they'd collected or the rounds of ammunition they had stolen or purchased. Again, as I wasn't the only member to violate the "no smoking or drinking" rule, my friends often came by in the evenings for a bottle of beer and conversation.

All those who were enemies of Mau Mau, whether Europeans, Asians or Africans, were called "settlers." This term had come to represent the essence of evil itself to virtually every Kenya African. Nairobi fighters were stepping up their campaign to eliminate these "settlers" and on 7 October 1952 Chief Waruhiu was assassinated just outside Nairobi as he was driving back to Kiambu. As early as 1922 a song was sung by the people prophesying that Chiefs Waruhiu and Koinange would be buried alive for the wrongs they had committed against their Kikuyu brothers. Koinange changed his ways after the return of his son Peter Mbiu from England. He was soon detained and died shortly after his release in 1961.

Waruhiu, on the other hand, remained an enemy and most Kikuyu celebrated his death with three days of beer drinking. They were happy that one of Kenya's "Black Europeans" had left the earth. With few exceptions our imposed chiefs (we had no chiefs before the Europeans came) were simply stooges and tools of the white man and his Government.

Noting our continued growth and strength despite all efforts to crush our Movement, Government declared a State of Emergency on the night of 20 October 1952. In the early hours of the following morning 82 top KAU officials were arrested. Some like Jomo Kenyatta were held for trial while others were sent into detention. From this day Kenya was to become an island of death, terror and brutality.

Who was to blame for this? As one who participated I have to admit that Mau Mau initiated the violent taking of lives. The white man, however, for over 50 years had subjected the African to a slow, agonizing death. By paying the African slave wages for his labour, denying him access to secondary and higher education, removing from him the best land in Kenya and treating him with less respect than a dog, the white man of Kenya had created over the years a resentment and hatred amongst Africans which had to explode into violence. The European created the very thing he now condemns.

When an African, regardless of his education or skills, is made to crawl on the ground at the foot of any white man regardless of his abilities, manner or education, how can you expect anything but intense hatred? When being white is enough to make a man think he is superior to *any* African, and when being black is enough to condemn a man to permanent inferiority, how can anything

but hatred and violence result? No people whether black, white or yellow who are treated as something less than human can resist indefinitely the urge to revolt against such degrading circumstances.

For these reasons I believe that history will condemn the white man rather than the black for the suffering and death which plagued Kenya for over eight years. This is not to say that we Africans made no mistakes or did no wrong. Of course we did. But we would have been in no position to commit these errors if it weren't for the far greater wrongs inflicted upon us by an inhuman British colonialism.

On the afternoon of 21 October as I was returning to the office after lunch with a friend, a group of *askari* rushed up and pushed us into a long stream of Africans who were being directed toward the Caledonia playing field in Nairobi. Reaching this huge open area across the main highway opposite the Coryndon Museum, I was put into a line of men to be screened by African loyalists brought from every location in the Kikuyu reserve. Thousands of us were herded into the field and we all suffered the abusive language and occasional jab in the back by the rifle-carrying *askari*. Luckily none of the screeners from my location in Nyeri knew or suspected anything about my political activities. As they passed along the line they studied each man and then gave their opinions to the European officers accompanying them. Though I was soon released to return to the office, hundreds of others were identified as Mau Mau activists and sent into the detention camps.

As Government daily intensified its anti-Mau Mau activities, brutally imposing the restrictive measures of the Emergency legislation, the European settler felt he had full power to kill any Kikuyu at the slightest whim, wish or suspicion. It was to be an open-season on Kikuyu and some European "hunters" were already beginning to put notches on their gun-handles. Guilty or innocent it made little difference to many who, operating on the premise of collective punishment for collective guilt, believed the only good "Kiyuk" was a dead one.

At first none of us knew just what this State of Emergency would entail. As Government brought in troop reinforcements from England and formed their African loyalists into Home Guard units there was much confusion within our Organization. For a month or so, while our leaders in Nairobi tried to figure out the lines of action open to us in the new circumstances, we remained relatively inactive. Perhaps, though I don't know this to be a fact, our leaders were waiting for some hint, advice or subtle directive from Kenyatta or the other detained KAU officials. If so, they waited in vain. All KAU officials - including those tried at Kapenguria - and the vast majority of educated Kikuyu quickly detached

themselves from the revolution. I am not saying this to condemn these men as individuals, but whether they were members, supporters or even opponents of Mau Mau it must in all honesty be said that the minds of the Kikuyu people were turned toward violence and revolt by the preachings and political agitation of men such as Kenyatta, Koinange and other KAU leaders. The question we now ask is, "Why did these men abandon us in our hour of greatest need?"

With the arrest and detention of many educated leaders and the failure of other qualified men to step into their shoes, leadership of the Movement fell into the hands of men who lacked the political experience, education and knowledge of warfare necessary for the success of a popular revolution.

While violent methods had been adopted to eliminate traitors, to my knowledge we had no plan for an open clash with Government prior to the Emergency declaration. Our principal aim was to forge an ironclad unity among Kikuyu, Embu and Meru tribesmen - and all other Africans whose support could be won - so that we might take action as a single body to achieve our political objectives. The most talked-about means of putting pressure on Government was the general strike. We would paralyse the economy of Kenya by a mass refusal to work and a boycott of European and Asian shops and goods. It was also rumored that if all else failed we might rise up one night and kill every European in Kenya. This, however, was seen as a last resort and I don't think any agreement had been reached or plans worked out.

When the Emergency was declared it seems we had neither a plan for revolt nor the leadership to carry through such a plan. For many months we were clearly on the defensive, simply reacting to Government's repressive measures rather than putting into effect our own program of revolt.

Government, on the other hand, with the assistance of its black stooges, informers, Home Guards and other so-called "loyalists," set about attacking Mau Mau with a brutality and disregard for human life which few of us had expected. Restrictive measures, collective forms of punishment and inhuman techniques of extracting confessions and "winning" cooperation were the methods employed. The fear and hatred of the settler toward Africans was unleashed and with military personnel pouring in from Great Britain it was a common belief that the Europeans were trying to exterminate the whole Kikuyu people.

Government round-ups and sweeps of African locations in Nairobi increased. Early one morning at about 3 a.m. security forces surrounded Ziwani and called all of us out of our houses into an open area within the location. Screeners and Home Guards were brought in prepared with lists of KAU officials and persons

suspected of holding office within Mau Mau. It was generally assumed that all of us were members or supporters of Mau Mau but Government concentrated its efforts in an attempt to round up leaders or active fighters in the Organization.

As in the many sweeps which were to follow, none of the screeners knew anything about my activities and seeing that I was a City Council employee and that my documents were in order released me without much trouble. It was about 7 a.m. when the security forces left. I had just enough time, if I hurried, to dress, have a cup of tea, and catch a bus for work.

One afternoon in December at about 5 p.m. five men came to visit me in Ziwani. They spoke about an *askari* in Kariokor who was badly mistreating Kikuyu and asked if I would join them in teaching him a lesson, while at the same time removing his pistol. I agreed and we set out singly toward Kariokor. Spotting the *askari* checking someone's identity papers, we surrounded him and moved in from different directions. The man approaching from the rear jumped on the *askari's* back and grabbed him around the neck. The rest of us rushed forward and wrestled the *askari* to the ground, landing a few blows in the process, then grabbing his gun and running off in different directions. We met back at Ziwani and later that night took the pistol and sold it for 200s. to the chairman of the Nyeri District Committee.

I must mention, at this point, that in Nairobi our Movement had attracted many men who had earlier been driven by unemployment and hunger into a life of crime. These men were employed in eliminating traitors and were very active in stealing guns, ammunition, other necessary supplies and money. They would not, however, perform these services for nothing. They always insisted on being paid for the goods they managed to acquire. This selfish desire to make personal gains out of the revolution did much, as I now look back, to damage and perhaps even destroy what began as a just struggle against British colonial rule. Too often the high principles of the revolution were thrown aside for personal wealth, power or safety.

When I took my share of the money we made on the pistol, I wrongly thought: "Why shouldn't I make a little money for my efforts?" I knew that even some of the elders on the Central Committee were putting money from the dues we paid (each member paid a monthly "poll tax" of 20s.) into the bank for their private use.

It should not be thought, however, that this strain of narrow self-interest infected everyone. I believe the vast majority of Kikuyu men, women and children faced death and suffering bravely and thousands of young fighters entered the forests shouting Free-

dom and Land and thinking only of the collective good of our people.

Throughout the early months of 1953 I continued my job with the City Council and my activities in Mau Mau. I attended meetings and oathing ceremonies, recruited members and collected dues. I also allowed my house to be used for a variety of purposes including the hiding, cleaning and manufacture of guns and as a place where hunted men, or women whose husbands had been killed or arrested, might spend a night or two before moving on.

It was during this period that cards containing a person's name and rank within the Organization were issued to every member. These cards were carefully hidden behind other documents in a man's Government identification and employment booklet.

One night in May I was visited by Wambugu Gacoya, a close friend from my division. Wambugu, a rather short, slight man, was very talkative and liked to think of himself as being more clever than he actually was. He was one of the men who spoke to me that night after I'd taken the oath and, as a friend, had a strong influence on my activities within the Organization. We talked about practical matters and Wambugu asked me if I wanted to be Secretary for the Muhito Location Committee. He had recommended me for the job because of the good work I was doing for the Organization and I could begin immediately. I was pleased to hear this and gladly accepted.

My main task on the location committee was to fill in cards for new recruits who were about to enter the forest. When meeting fighters from different areas this card would identify the man as a comrade and remove suspicion of his being a Government spy. I also assisted in distributing the necessary equipment to newly formed fighting groups. Late at night, in an area of Bahati location called Far-Bahati, shoes, raincoats, shirts, pants and jackets were allocated to recruits before they were escorted to our arms depot at Kassarani. About five miles from Nairobi near the rock quarries and the Spread Eagle Hotel on the Fort Hall road these recruits were issued guns, *pangas* or *simis* and were instructed for a day or two on the use of firearms.

Several times I helped escort these men to Kassarani. After turning them over to our permanent guard, Muchina, for instruction I would return to Nairobi in the early hours of the morning. The new fighting groups, usually numbering from 100 to 200 men would then be escorted in small groups, first to Thika, then to Fort Hall and finally into the Aberdare or Mount Kenya forests.

In June 1953 I was deeply saddened by the news that one of my

brothers, Kiromo, had been killed. He was fighting in the forests but was captured when he returned home one day to see his wife and children and our parents. After his arrest the Home Guards, instead of taking Kiromo back to their post, shot him in cold blood.

While still pondering my elder brother's death, less than a month later, I learned that Mwenja, one of my younger brothers, had also been killed. He had just been recruited into an Aberdare fighting group and was shot while making his way into the forest. To my desire for land and freedom was now added a strong urge to avenge the death of my brothers.

In September 1953 after thousands of men had entered the forests and formed themselves into fighting units, the Central Province Committee in Nairobi decided to change its name to the Kenya Parliament. The center of the battle had shifted to the forests of Mount Kenya and the Aberdares and with regular communications difficult to maintain and a new leadership emerging in the forest, the committee of elders in Nairobi took on a new role in the revolution. The Kenya Parliament concerned itself primarily with leading the activities of Mau Mau in Nairobi and supplying the forest fighters with recruits, money, arms and other necessary materials.

Of the 50,000 Kikuyu living in Nairobi at this time only about 300 of us were actively engaged as fighters authorized to possess arms and acting on instruction from the Kenya Parliament. After several informal meetings held by the leaders of the fighting group, it was decided to organize a Kenya Land Freedom Army (LFA) which would combine all Nairobi fighters under a single command acting on orders of the Kenya Parliament.

Wambugu, by this time a general, was to act as a link between the Land Freedom Army and the Kenya Parliament. He came to visit me in Bondeni Location where I had moved a short time earlier. He asked me to be Secretary of the LFA saying that as an honest, educated young man I could then be of much greater service to the Organization.

Three weeks later, at the end of September, Wambugu called me to attend a meeting of the LFA. It was held in a vacant Asian house in Far-Bahati. We made our way to the meeting at night, having to crawl under the barbed-wire fence surrounding the area. Near the house I saw many armed *askari*. The first to see us gave a signal. He clicked his tongue three times against the roof of his mouth and gave three short whistles. Responding in a similar way, we identified ourselves as comrades and the sentry came forward to lead us into the house.

Inside were about 15 leaders of the LFA who had called this

first formal meeting to establish the rules and regulations of the Army and to properly confirm its founding. The meeting was called to order by Commanding General Mwangi Enok. I sat down in the rear with my notebook, prepared to record the minutes. I was too busy writing to participate in the discussions but after much talk and the passing of 13 rules, I was called forward and introduced to the men as their new Secretary. Mwangi Enok asked me to read the minutes I had recorded. Following are some of the more important rules we passed:

1. No one was to be in possession of arms or ammunition without the knowledge and approval of the LFA Committee in Nairobi.
2. No fighter was to carry his weapon unless on a specific mission; otherwise, weapons were to be kept well hidden.
3. If any fighter was arrested while he still had ammunition in his gun, he would not be given legal assistance by the Committee.
4. No one was to take his weapon and join another fighting group without the knowledge and permission of the Committee.
5. No fighter was ever to intimidate or threaten with arms any other member of the LFA.
6. Any fighter injured in battle and unable to be moved to safety must be shot and not left alive for capture and interrogation by Government.
7. No one was to drink European-manufactured beer unless obliged to while on official business, such as attempting to bribe an *askari*, etc.
8. No one was to smoke European-manufactured cigarettes, though the smoking of *kiraiko* and *bhangji* was permitted.
9. No one was to ride in European-owned buses.
10. No one was to disclose any information concerning the LFA to any person not a member of the group, even if they were members of Mau Mau or fighters attached to different groups.

The punishment for violating these rules was simple. For the first offence, a man would be warned. Second offenders would be killed. It was felt that only through the threat of this severe punishment could the members of the Committee be assured that its rules would be obeyed.

We had no formal court system in Nairobi, though any committee, from the sub-location level to the Kenya Parliament, could sit in judgement of a man accused of having violated a rule. As in my case, minor offenders otherwise considered to be good men were usually fined and sometimes caned. Persons who committed serious crimes such as giving information to Government, or who were known to be regularly violating well established rules (such as riding on European-owned buses or drinking beer) rarely got a hearing. The case was discussed by a district committee or the Kenya Parliament elders and fighters were instructed to execute the guilty person.

After the official business was completed discussion about the rules continued. One man asked if it were all right for a fighter to marry. And after some discussion it was decided that this was a personal matter and shouldn't be covered by LFA rules.

It was during this informal talk that one of our sentries was pushed into the house by some of his comrades. He had abandoned his post and gone to the nearby home of a woman-friend. The others tracked him down and now wanted to punish him. We calmed the man down and discussed the case at some length, finally deciding that since it was his first offence we would let him off lightly. He was demoted in rank from a colonel to a captain.

I hadn't attended any of the leaders' informal meetings and didn't know how these ranks were originally decided upon. The officers present at this meeting aside from Mwangi Enok and Wambugu were Brigadier General Gitonga Gathanju and four colonels: Muturi Gacoya (Wambugu's brother), Mwangi Toto, Kagema Kiniaru and Kariuki Chotara.

It was about 4 a.m. when the meeting finally broke up. Before leaving the house Gitonga Gathanju instructed all of us including the guards to grease, wrap and bury our arms in Far-Bahati field, which was to be our permanent arms hide. I walked out with Wambugu who spent the rest of the night with me in Bondeni.

One day in early October 1953 I was told by Wambugu to visit a certain Asian print shop on Grogan Road. An African employee would give me some blank I.D. cards, writing paper with a "Kenya Land Freedom Army" letterhead, envelopes, stamps and a rubber stamp with our name on it. I got these things and after filling in the name and rank of each LFA fighter on an I.D. card, distributed them to over a hundred men in Far-Bahati.

Later that month Mwangi Enok and Wambugu came to Bondeni and asked me to help them write a letter to the *East African Standard*. They wanted Government to believe that Mau Mau was quickly spreading to the other Kenya tribes. We wrote the following letter:

"To all African comrades: General Ogutu, our Luo comrade, has been appointed to contact the leaders of all non-Kikuyu tribes such as the Kamba, Baluhya, Masai and his own Luo tribe and assess the strength of their fighting forces. Ogutu is now in Nairobi discussing the details of his mission with the Kenya Parliament."

There was no General Ogutu, of course, and the only non-Kikuyu support we had came from a small segment of Wakamba and the Narok Masai. Our policy and the attitude of some members helped to isolate us from the other Kenya tribes. First there was the oath itself which was essentially Kikuyu and not liked by people of other tribes. Many of us felt that a more general and flexible oath, adapted to suit all Kenya Africans, was what we needed. A second reason for our isolation was the belief held by some Kikuyu leaders that this was *our* struggle and that the rewards of victory, such as high positions in the future government and military, should not be shared with men of other tribes. I didn't share this attitude and now believe it was a major factor contributing to our eventual defeat. Nevertheless, I could not see the error of our ways as clearly then as now and I continued working as secretary of the LFA and doing my best to propagate the ideas of the revolution. I wrote out many of the songs which were being sung in the forests and even created a few new ones about our struggle in Nairobi. Here is a song I wrote about one of the Bahati sweeps:

1. On January 7th we were surrounded at Bahati
By the white community.

(Chorus)

We will never be silent until we get land to cultivate
And Freedom in this country of ours, Kenya.

2. Home Guards were the first to go and close the gates
And Johnnies entered while the police surrounded the
location.

(Chorus)

3. When we were surrounded we were ordered out of our
houses
And told to pack-up our belongings as we were to be
detained.

(Chorus)

4. We packed our things and were taken to an opening
just outside the location
Where many Kikuyu and other tribesmen were selected
for detention.

(Chorus)

5. Some of those chosen were sent to Manyani,
Others to MacKinnon Road, the region of sandy soil.

(Chorus)

6. You, traitors! You dislike your children, caring
only for your stomachs;
You are the enemies of our people.

(Chorus)

We will never be silent until we get land to
cultivate
And Freedom in this country of ours, Kenya.

During this period, the main task of the LFA in Nairobi was to acquire arms, money and other supplies - through either theft or purchase - and to eliminate traitors and enforce the rules of our organization. On the whole, I would say we had the sympathy and support of the vast majority of Nairobi Africans.

Men from Nairobi were continually being recruited and sent into the forest. Often we received a report that Waruingi, who fought in and around Kiambu, or one of the leaders of the Aberdares or Mount Kenya fighters needed a certain number of men. This information was sent to the Kenya Parliament which would have its representatives from the district committees ask each location to contribute a certain number of young men for the forest.

I continued to help escort these new fighters to Kassarani, and as time went on we had to take ever greater precautions against Government agents slipping in amongst the recruits. In addition to supplying no weapons until we reached the Kassarani depot, none of the recruits were told where they were heading and they were escorted by heavily armed guards all the way to the forest edge guaranteeing that none should turn back. At Kassarani all Government documents (work cards, poll tax receipts, etc.) possessed by the recruits were taken and burned. This further ensured that the men would remain in the forest, for if they came out each knew he would soon be caught without the proper documents and immediately detained if not shot by Government.

In November another meeting was held in Far-Bahati. I remember discussing the procedure to be followed if a man were captured and interrogated by Special Branch. We decided that each man should prepare for himself a simple, harmless and misleading confession in the event of his arrest. He was to say (1) that he was

forcibly administered the Mau Mau oath in (2) an area strange to him, such as the Masai reserve, and that (3) he didn't know the oath administrator or any other persons present at the ceremony. It was necessary at this time for any arrested Kikuyu to admit having taken at least the first oath. Government assumed that all Kikuyu had taken the oath and men were known to have been summarily shot for refusing to admit this. Our main concern was to guard against a comrade implicating and endangering others through his own confession.

We also discussed what to do if a comrade was captured by Government and then escaped or was released. We agreed that such a man would have to be carefully screened and kept under close observation for a time before being allowed to take up his old duties within the Organization. Every precaution had to be taken against those who might have gained their release by promising to act as Government agents and informers.

A resolution was also passed that members could drink European beer in situations where refusing would arouse the suspicion of *askari* or other Government servants. Our rule against drinking beer was well known and if a man refused a bottle offered by an *askari* he would immediately be thought a member of Mau Mau.

There were certain members of the Kenya Parliament with whom we maintained contact and after the meeting I wrote a report on all important matters discussed and gave it to Wambugu for review and approval by the elders.

Guns and ammunition were difficult to get in large enough quantities and this was one of the main tasks of the Nairobi fighters. Though usually stolen from Europeans or purchased from a few Asian dealers, it was not unusual for us to buy weapons from Home Guards, Tribal Police or other *askari*. I remember one occasion in December when I learned of a Nandi KAR man who had a .303 rifle he wanted to sell. Through Wambugu I got permission from the elders and contacted the Nandi. He wanted 1,000s. for the rifle but finally, as he couldn't easily return it, he accepted 400s. Figuring I should make something for myself, I told the elders it cost 600s. and pocketed the difference.

In January 1954 a man calling himself General Ndiritu Kirigu arrived in Nairobi with 30 fighters. He had just come from the forest, he told us, and was badly in need of money and supplies. He told many tales about Dedan Kimathi, Stanley Mathenge and Generals China and Tanganyika, and about the fight in the forests. Thinking him a good man we decided to help Ndiritu, giving him two rifles, three shot-guns, clothing and some medical supplies. In addition, as he was a Nyeri man, the Nyeri District Committee

voted to give him 5,000s.

It was only later that we discovered Ndiritu had fled from the forest and was acting on his own like a common criminal. This was not an exceptional case and the term "*komerera*" was used in describing men like Ndiritu who were simply hiding from Government in the reserves or forests. These men were feared and disliked. Since they frequently stole animals and other food from the peasants and rarely did anything but run and hide from the security forces they gained a reputation as cowards.

Early in February Ndiritu was shot through the thigh while going to his hide-out in Karura Forest, which adjoins the wooded area of City Park. His other permanent camp was in the bush near the Kenya Girl's High School in Kililleshwa. He was taken to the quarters of a comrade who worked as a servant for a European in Kilimani. Here, under our care, he slowly recovered.

Throughout this period I had retained my job with the City Council and continued to live in Bondeni. This was a location lived in mainly by Government loyalists and very few Kikuyu. It was relatively safe and my house was increasingly used to clean and hide guns. We did this right under the noses of neighboring Home Guards who assumed this type of thing only happened in Kikuyu locations like Bahati and Kariokor.

My work as a draftsman continually deteriorated as my activities within Mau Mau forced me to keep irregular hours and miss many days at the office. My relations with my European and Asian superiors were not good and I began to feel that my days with the City Council were numbered.

For about six months now I had been keeping company with a young girl from a neighboring sub-location in Nyeri. She was in Nairobi living with her brother at Kariokor. Toward the end of March we decided to get married. A marriage ceremony of either the traditional or civil type, however, was very impractical under the circumstances then prevailing in Nairobi. Finally, after I'd convinced her brother of my good intentions, Helena moved in with me at Bondeni. She was my wife and we would take care of the formalities later. Shortly thereafter, on 1 April, I was given notice by the City Council. I would be unemployed at the end of the month.

Government had for some time now tried to cut the connection between Nairobi and the forests. They knew that Nairobi was the main source of arms, recruits and other supplies for the fighters in the Aberdares and Mount Kenya but found it difficult to stop the flow. On 22 April Government forces launched Operation Anvil, an all-out attempt to crush our organization in Nairobi and iso-

late the city from the rest of Kenya.

The operation began very early in the morning with security forces surrounding the major Kikuyu locations of Bahati, Makongeni, Ziwani, Pumwani and Kariokor. At about 3 a.m. residents were called out of their homes by loud-speakers and told to prepare for a small *safari*. Most of the locations were surrounded by barbed wire fences leaving only a small gateway through which to enter or leave. With this entrance guarded, those caught inside the locations had little chance of escape. Through our agents working in Government offices or posing as Home Guards or *askari* we generally got advance warning of a major Government action. There had been rumbles about a large Government sweep several days before Anvil and most of our activists managed to sleep outside the locations on the night of the 21st. Those rounded up were mainly passive supporters; others were completely "innocent" or even Government sympathizers.

Everyone was screened and we learned that Government had several informers planted in our Organization. Different coloured cards were used; those given green or yellow cards were eventually released while those given red cards were sent into fields surrounded by barbed wire fences and then taken to waiting trains for transfer to Manyani or MacKinnon Road Detention camps. The operation continued in Nairobi for three days and I would say that around 30,000 Kikuyu, Embu and Meru were sent into detention.

After Anvil all remaining Kikuyu were forced to move to Bahati and Makadara where they could be kept under close supervision. Only those Kikuyu living in the railway workers' quarters or staying on the premises of Europeans as house servants were exempted from this ruling.

I had not yet left the City Council and living at Bondeni, wasn't bothered during Anvil. A short time later Bondeni was surrounded and *askari* entered each house giving us forms to fill out. We were told to put down our name, location of origin, occupation and everything we knew about Mau Mau including our own activities within the Organization. They also told us to name anyone we suspected of being a Mau Mau "terrorist."

I put down that I'd earlier been forced to take the oath but had since had no connection with Mau Mau...that I didn't know any of the people at the oathing ceremony except the administrator. I gave his name knowing he had since been killed.

I locked myself in my room as ordered by the *askari* and when they came back I opened the door and put the form into the slit of a small wooden box. They told me to pack my things. Being a Kikuyu I would have to move to Bahati. They gave me the key to

room number T2 and I moved in that same day.

About a week later I let Brigadier General Kagema Kinyaru and his wife move in with Helena and me. I got to know Kagema when he lived with my eldest brother at Kassarani in 1952. In September that year Kagema was charged with being involved in the murder of a settler named Wright. To save himself he testified on behalf of the Government prosecutor and a short time later was invited by Special Branch to work as an informer. He told the Organization about the Special Branch offer and was instructed to accept. It was very useful to have men like Kagema (already a leader in the Movement at the time I became a member) infiltrate key branches of Government. The Emergency had just been declared and we needed all the information we could get about Government plans and intentions.

I liked Kagema and thought he was a very clever person. A short stocky man, he was good natured and always with an interesting or funny story to tell. I knew about the informer card he carried and was not really surprised when he had a European visitor late one night at Bahati. I was awakened by knocking at the door and saw the European enter holding some watches. He talked to Kagema about them and then came over and asked me if I'd ever seen them before. Apparently they were stolen and later recovered by the CID (Criminal Investigation Division). I said I'd never laid eyes on the watches before and showed him my own. At this point Kagema stepped outside with the man and I went back to sleep, having drunk too much beer earlier in the evening. In the morning Kagema told me the man was from Special Branch and came to check on a certain Mkamba in the location. The man was found in possession of stolen goods and arrested.

Being now unemployed I decided to devote all my time and energy to the Movement. In addition to keeping all the records of the LFA I joined the fighters whenever they needed help in a raid or in eliminating traitors. In May a meeting was held at Far-Bahati. Among other things the question of Nairobi Muslims was discussed. It was felt by some of the men that these people were using their evil magic to help Government destroy our Movement. I remained silent, neither believing in magic nor feeling free to criticize the others. It was finally decided that 20 of us should raid one of the large mosques the next night.

Armed with three Sten guns, five rifles and the pistol, which I carried, we approached the Eastleigh Mosque in groups of two or three and took up positions outside the low wall around the front courtyard. It was about 8 p.m. and a number of Muslims milled about, some talking, others engaged in prayer. Gitonga Gathanju gave the signal to open fire. Caught in our cross-fire the Muslims in the courtyard panicked and others rushed out of the mosque to see what was happening.

Knowing the security forces would soon be there we kept up our fire for only a minute or two then dispersed and made our way back to Bahati. There we quickly buried our arms and returned to normal activities. Next morning the newspapers headlined the attack, reporting that eight people had been killed and many more injured.

About a week later we attempted a similar raid on the Pumwani African Mosque. This time, however, armed with only a Sten gun and pistol, we were unsuccessful. The Sten failed to fire and we pulled back before doing any damage. Some believed that the Muslims used magic to cause our guns not to fire.

It was a wet rainy night and though we were unaware of it, European police had followed our tracks to Bahati. They surrounded the area and brought in Geiger counters to search for weapons. Though we had already left the location the enemy discovered our



"Each of us was instructed by the seer to cover himself with the blanket. . . she then picked up a calabash filled with goat's blood and moved about mumbling certain traditional Kikuyu sayings. . ."

Far-Bahati arms hide and recovered 11 revolvers, two homemade guns, two hammers and several *pangas*. A picture of these weapons appeared on the front page of the *Standard* the following morning.

Shortly after this incident the Kenya Parliament decided that all fighters should go through a purification ceremony. They believed the misfortunes we were having, including the loss of men in battle, were being caused by failure to remove the evils contaminating us.

We were to go to the Eastleigh garbage dump where, at 8 p.m. on Saturday night, a woman seer would purify us. I walked to Eastleigh with Mwangi Toto, Kariuki Chotara and a few others. On arrival I saw that over 100 of our fighters had assembled for the ceremony. Each of us was instructed by the seer to cover himself with the blanket he had been asked to bring. The women passed amongst us sprinkling the contents from the stomach of a slaughtered goat on every man. She then picked up a calabash filled with the goat's blood and moved about mumbling certain traditional Kikuyu sayings which I couldn't quite make out.

At this point, just as the seer entered a nearby caretaker's hut for more paraphernalia, I heard several shots ring out in the darkness. We had been spotted by a small enemy patrol and they were firing in our direction, though still some distance away. I threw off my blanket and ran quickly to the Nairobi River which I crossed, coming up on the other side and entering Bahati. Spending the rest of the night with a friend, I learned the following morning that none of our fighters had been captured or injured. The old seer, however, was arrested and sent to Kamiti Women's Prison where, as Helena later informed me, she continued with her magical practices.

Not long after this incident Kagema and I decided to visit Ndiritu, who was staying with a Mau Mau member in the staff quarters of Mathari Mental Hospital. Just as we entered the compound I noticed a group of *askari* coming toward the quarters. It was obviously going to be a sweep. I quickly moved toward one of the exits trying to escape the net. The place was surrounded already, however, and I walked right into the arms of some *askari*. Not knowing what happened to Kagema I was taken with some others to Mathari police station and thrown in a cell. Soon I was taken out and driven to Special Branch Headquarters, Nairobi. Here, in a cluster of wooden buildings near the City Hall, I was subjected to the usual abuses of the *askari*. I spotted Kagema in the crowd but was led with two other men into a small room. We were ordered to take off all our clothes and then inspected closely by a European officer. Apparently they were looking for Ndiritu, as the man carefully examined my thigh in the place where Ndiritu had been injured.

Told to put on my clothes, I was taken into another office where I saw Kagema smoking and talking to a European officer. The man was saying that when released Kagema should tell his Mau Mau comrades that he'd bribed an *askari* at Kileleshwa and gotten out that way. I listened as Kagema spun a tall tale about how he and I had gone to Mathari to gain information about Ndiritu and Mwangi Toto for Special Branch. It was all a pack of lies but when the Europeans turned to me for confirmation of the story I nodded my head in approval. A few minutes later we were released and went back to Bahati. I could see how useful it was to pose as an informer and was impressed by the clever way Kagema had convinced the Europeans through his card and lies that he was a loyal servant of Government. He said he'd told them I was his assistant and I was thankful, knowing full well that he'd saved me a lot of trouble and, with no employment card, from almost certain detention.

It was still in May when Ndiritu, who had recovered from his injury but failed to leave Nairobi for the forest, committed a grave mistake. He and some of his men raided our Kassarani depot and forced Muchino to give them arms and ammunition. When we learned of this a meeting was held and it was decided that Ndiritu would have to pay with his life. He was captured about a month later, taken into Karura Forest and executed with a hammer. His body was buried on the bank of the Ruiruaka River which runs through the forest. I took part in none of this, but felt little sympathy for the man.

Ndiritu's raid, plus our losses at Far-Bahati, had left us very short of weapons and ammunition. Prompted by the elders we decided to let Mwangi Toto, Kariuki Chotara and Mwangi Kirigi take some of the men into Kiambu with most of our remaining weapons. They were to raid police and Home Guard posts in an effort to replenish our depleted arms supply.

In late June 1954 Wambugu Gacoya was arrested. As I walked down Hardinge Street with Kagema a few days later he asked me to wait outside Gailey & Roberts while he went in to see a European friend with whom he'd served in the Second World War. In about 15 minutes Kagema came out and said his friend told him that Wambugu had confessed and given Special Branch the names of almost all our Nairobi leaders - including his and mine. Kagema told the European that he and I were working for Special Branch and that Wambugu's mentioning our names just proved he had no idea about our real activities. We left quickly as I felt the situation was extremely dangerous.

After warning the elders about Wambugu's confession I decided to stay in hiding. For the next week I stayed with friends, only

returning to T2 Bahati for a few hours at night. I learned that Mwangi Toto was at the Kigwa coffee plantation in Kiambu and had made up my mind to join him there.

When I told my plan to one of the elders he said a joint meeting of the Kenya Parliament and Land Freedom Army was to take place in a few days to decide on future activities and that I should not leave the city yet. This meeting was held during the first week of July and was attended by over 30 leaders. In the darkness of the Kasarani stone quarries it was decided that the LFA fighters should take all the remaining supplies and enter the forests around the city to fight. After Anvil there had been several other major enemy operations in Nairobi and it was now difficult to operate in the city. Successes were hard to achieve and with Government pressure mounting, the flow of arms and ammunition into the Movement had steadily decreased. In addition, with Government having the names of our leaders, staying in the city was becoming more and more dangerous.

Just after we'd decided to send for Mwangi Toto to help us organize ourselves into a forest army, the meeting was interrupted by three of Ndiritu's men. They were very angry and it seemed they wanted to avenge the death of their leader. We tried to persuade them of Ndiritu's guilt and to abandon any plans they might have for getting even with his executioners. Not satisfied with our arguments they insisted on taking one of our leaders aside for questioning. When we refused the only armed man among them drew his pistol and started firing. Kagema was hit by a stray bullet and though we fired a few shots after them the three men fled into the darkness and escaped.

The meeting broke up after this incident and I stayed behind to see what I could do for Kagema. He had been shot through the groin and couldn't walk. I dragged him to a safe place and asked him what he thought I should do.

"My best chance," he said, "is for you to go see my European friend. His name is Major Seedon and you can find him at Gailey & Roberts offices on Hardinge Street. Tell him we were trying to get information for Special Branch about Mwangi Toto and Ndiritu and that I was shot by one of Ndiritu's men near Kasarani. Ask him to come pick me up as I've been badly injured."

It was quite late and I set off on foot toward the city. When I arrived the sun was already up. After a few bites of breakfast I went to see Major Seedon. I asked one of the employees in the building where I could find the man saying that Kagema Kiniaru had sent me to see him. The office said that Seedon was an important man and that I'd have to wait while he delivered my message.

In a few minutes I was ushered into Seedon's office. "Come in Mr. Mathu and have a seat." I didn't know that he knew me by name or, as I soon discovered, that he was a senior Special Branch officer. He asked me about Kagema and what we had been doing. I quickly decided not to mention Kagema's bullet wound. Seedon would ask more questions and I didn't want to give him any details about what had happened. "Kagema is fine," I said. "He's at Kassarani near the Spread Eagle Hotel, where we've been trying to get information about Mwangi Toto's gang. He sent me to ask you for some spending money and a card to keep me from being arrested by security forces in the area."

Seedon began asking questions about what we had learned at Kassarani and I said that Mwangi Toto had been at Kassarani a few days earlier but had since left with his gang for Naivasha. He seemed pleased with my report, calling in three other Europeans whom I took to be fellow Special Branch men and telling them what I'd said. He also told them about me saying I was a good man and a friend of Kagema.

When the other men left Seedon gave me 80s. and an informer card bearing his name and phone number. I thanked him, said goodbye and left the office. Obtaining the card was my own idea. Knowing I would soon enter the forest the card could prove useful if I was ever captured by security forces.

I walked down to River Road to make arrangements for Kagema. Two plain clothes Asian CID men stopped me in one of the shops and, finding I was without an employment card, arrested me. When I produced my card from Seedon, however, they phoned him, verifying my story and telling me to go on my way. I went immediately to a comrade who owned a truck and together we drove to Kassarani. We picked up Kagema and took him to the quarters of a cook in Kilimani. I went to see a medical assistant friend of mine at King George VI Hospital to arrange for treatment and medication. When I returned to tell Kagema, I learned that he'd left a few hours earlier. He called a taxi from the house and left without saying a word to the cook.

"Kagema will go directly to Seedon," I thought. "And he might say something to contradict my story." I fitted the card from Seedon between my other documents and decided to have nothing more to do with Special Branch. My fears were confirmed in the next few days. While in hiding I heard rumors that Kagema had been arrested and sent to a prison hospital.

Before entering the forest I had to make arrangements for Helena as it wasn't safe for her to remain at Bahati. I contacted two African constables who had taken the second Mau Mau oath and were trusted members of the Movement. It was agreed that one of

them would take Helena to the Mathari police station quarters where, posing as the sister of a constable, she would be safe.

I then went to Kassarani with our truck driver to bring some supplies into Nairobi and when I returned I waited in the Bahati house of a friend. At about midnight I went to T2 to tell Helena of my plans and the accommodations I'd arranged for her. Within a few minutes of entering my house, however, there was a knock at the door. The place was surrounded by security forces and we were trapped inside. Later I learned that my "friend" had reported my presence to the Home Guards at the chief's post in the location.

After thoroughly searching me and the house the *askari* led me to the chief's camp. Though they had found nothing in their search and my documents - except for the employment card - were in perfect order, it seemed they had some information about me, perhaps from Kagema. Helena was left in T2. I hadn't even had a chance to tell her of the arrangement I'd made and felt I had to escape.

They had taken all my documents and I made a deal with one of the prisoners assigned to clean up the chief's quarters. I offered him 10s. to find my papers and return them to me. Luckily the plan worked and when the man brought my documents I hid them in the bathroom, later slipping them to my wife when she came by to pay me a visit.

The following evening the D.O. and three *askari* drove me over to the Shauri Moyo Home Guard post. The *askari* stripped me of my watch and clothing - leaving me with only a pair of undershorts - and began to interrogate me. I refused to answer any of their questions and was severely beaten and kicked. After an hour or so, with my face badly cut and bleeding, I pretended to be unconscious and was dragged into the kitchen area of a house within the post. Thinking I was badly hurt and unable to move, they left me there on the floor leaning against a bag of charcoal.

Late that night the *askari* posted to guard me fell asleep. I bided my time until about 4 a.m. and then, in the dead silence of the early morning darkness, I crept slowly past the guard and toward the fence. Moving on my stomach all the way, I crawled under the barbed wire and made my way quickly to the nearby house of a friend. He gave me food and drink and after I'd cleaned up he let me have one of his suits and a pair of shoes. The morning sun was up by the time I'd gotten dressed and asked my friend to deliver a message to Helena. I wanted her to come see me at Shauri Moyo and she arrived a few hours later. We spent that night together and I explained the plans I'd made for both of us. The following morning as she was returning to T2 Bahati to collect her belongings, she was arrested. On hearing this I went straight to my two constable friends. I asked them to go to the chief's camp at Bahati and say

they'd been sent by Special Branch to bring David Mathu's wife in for screening. If there were any questions they could say that I'd been recaptured and that Special Branch wanted to interrogate Helena and me together.

With all the confusion that existed in the security forces at this time - the various branches, such as Tribal Police, Home Guards, Special Branch, CID, military personnel, etc., were not well coordinated - it was not difficult for the African constables to walk out with Helena. The chief placed her in their custody and they took her directly to Mathari police post where she remained safely with their wives for almost two months.

Next day a friend, Icharia Waiti, came to see me at Shauri Moyo. He had two pistols and invited me to take one and go with him to Kariokor location. That afternoon and evening we talked, drank Kikuyu beer and made plans to leave Nairobi and join Mwangi Toto. The following morning I went to see Helena at a pre-arranged spot and gave her the 80 shillings I'd received from Seeton. She was feeling alright though still a bit shaken by her experience with the police. We talked for awhile and then parted.

Returning to Kariokor, I went with Icharia to collect three pistols and some ammunition he'd hidden and we then set off to find Mwangi Toto. Night had already fallen. We made our way through the bush bordering the Nairobi-Fort Hall road. About three miles from the city, we passed through the Karura Forest and moved on to the huge Kigwa plantation. Luckily, while moving through the dense coffee groves, we ran into one of Mwangi's sentries. After returning his signal we were escorted to the camp. Mwangi had about 40 men with him and was glad to see us.

I turned over the guns we brought and took back the record books which Mwangi had taken with him to Kiambu. I told him about my experiences in the city since he'd left and explained about Kagema and of the informer card I'd gotten from Seeton. He agreed that I should keep it with me, so while my other documents were being burnt I sewed the card into the collar of my leather jacket.

I had known Mwangi Toto since mid-1953 when I became active in the underground Movement. He had a good sense of humour and never acted superior or demanded any special privileges for himself, eating and living just like the rest of us. Though I came to realize later how jealously he guarded his position as leader of the group, he was a brave fighter and well-liked by the men under his command. Mwangi had entered the forest to fight, not just to hide from the security forces like Ndiritu and other *komereras*. While he had little formal education, Mwangi was not too concerned with religious or magical practices and usually kept the political objectives of the revolution clearly in mind.

After hearing about the group's activities in Kiambu and entering some information in the records, I ate and sat around talking with the fighters. Finally I decided to turn in, very tired from the day's journey and excitement.

'ARMY PLANS' LIST PUNISHMENTS

THE following is a trans-
lation of the alleged
"army plans" in the Kenya
Parliament:

Every person should obey the party in which he is, and should respect the day fixed for meeting;

There is no permission to leak out the news of the party in which you are if it has not been agreed, and what has been agreed upon may be revealed;

No one is allowed by the Kenya Parliament to have his own separate party which is not known by the Government of the Africans, if he is known that he has his own separate party, this rule will convict him.

There is no permission for a leader to keep a prostitute or seduce somebody's wife so as to make her a prostitute. If he is known to have done that, there is judgement reserved for it.

No one should keep for himself weapons while he is a member of the party, keeping a

weapon as his own. If he is known, judgement is reserved for him;

There is no permission for the leaders to quarrel, if they have disputes among themselves, they should let the leader know the reason of their dispute;

There is no permission for the weapons to be kept by more than three persons, they should be kept as follows — by the general, by his assistant, by the commandant,

There is no permission for any party member to take beer or spirit unless it is opened for consumption by the African Government. If anybody consumes it, the fine is 200/- or alternatively 30 strokes;

There is no permission to receive anybody unless he has passed through the party scouts;

There is no permission to receive someone who has passed through pipe-line, if such a person is found, he should be sent to the army scouts.

Chapter 2 THE URBAN GUERRILLAS

My immediate feeling upon rejoining my friends was one of excited happiness. I would be the group's secretary and could now openly and actively struggle for our land and freedom. I don't think I really believed we could defeat the British, but I did think we could force the colonial government to yield to our political demands. By fighting we could draw the attention of the outside world to our plight, to the slave-like conditions under which our people were made to live. Poorly trained and equipped, our only answer to British power and repression was terrorism and the destruction of European property and security.

That night I slept with the others under a clump of coffee trees. I put my raincoat on the ground and covered myself with one thin blanket. I spent the rest of the night shivering and tossing on my new earthen bed.

We remained at Kigwa for three days then moved on to another hide-out on the Ndiritu farm near Kiambu police station. We spent the next four days planning a raid on Kamiti Prison. Three of us, Mwangi Toto, Kariuki Chotara and myself, did most of the planning and then presented our ideas to the others for discussion.

Mwangi explained that we were running short of ammunition and for this reason had decided to raid Kamiti. He would lead ten men armed with our two Stens and eight rifles. They would leave the camp that night soon after dark. Chotara and I would remain behind with the others.

I knew Kariuki as a boy but when we met in Nairobi after I joined the Movement it was the first time we'd seen one another since 1943. In his mid-twenties, Kariuki still looked like a boy of 15 or 16, his short slender build adding to this impression of youth. We once again became good friends and I admired his courage in fighting and his strong feelings toward our people. He was gentle and warm toward his comrades and the uneducated masses but could be hard and fierce in battle against the enemy. I think it was his honesty of purpose and humility that I liked best; he was fighting for the people and felt a pride and dignity in doing so.

That night as we spoke while awaiting Mwangi's return, Kariuki talked of the Kenya which lay ahead for the Africans, of a life of dignity, respect and material comfort. We would drive the white man out and then become leaders in the army of an



"Late that night the ambush was set. The *askari* walked right into it and were quietly cut down with pangas."

independent Kenya.

It was around midnight when I heard the call of the *Kanyuaajwi* bird piercing the silence of the night. Three times, then silence, followed by three more calls. It was Mwangi and the others signaling our sentries. Life in the forest demanded a set of signals and each group usually had its own distinctive bird or animal calls. When on the move at night through the forest or bush we identified ourselves by the use of two names, *Kilima* ("mountain" in Swahili) and *Gituku* ("skin cap" in Kikuyu). Anyone failing to respond to one or another of these names by answering with the alternate term was taken as an enemy.

Soon Mwangi entered the hide-out. I noticed as he sat down to tell us what happened that all ten men had returned safely. "The raid," he said "was unsuccessful. We reached the prison at 9 p.m. and only a few *askari* were guarding the entrance. I decided to attack the main gate but when we opened fire after creeping to within 20 feet of the gate, we met stiff resistance. The prison was heavily guarded and I was convinced it would be suicide to rush the gate; so I ordered the men to cease fire and withdraw."



"Karanja Kirai was our strongest believer in Kikuyu religion and magic . . . he insisted on performing traditional practices which I considered useless."

Two days later we made our way into the Uplands Forest of Limuru. We were now 45 fighters and our food supply was very low. On reaching the camp where two small shelters had previously been built, 20 of the men were sent to raid the stock of a Home Guard who would be spending his night at the post. They returned several hours later with 16 sheep which we slaughtered, roasted and ate to our fill.

In the morning we sent 30 fighters to guard the approach to our camp near the forest edge. At about 9 o'clock security forces were spotted heading our way, a small group of Tribal Police and Home Guards. When they came within range we opened fire, forcing them to retreat. Coming back with reinforcements, they were once more driven off. On their third attempt at about noon, however, security forces arrived in large numbers and drove our fighters back toward the camp. We had packed all our belongings except for some utensils and moved to the far edge of the forest, planning to circle the enemy and leave the area. The enemy forces split up into small units to hunt for us and the rest of the afternoon we stayed hidden in the forest. There were two or three small skirmishes, but when darkness came the enemy withdrew.

We knew that by morning we would be surrounded and that Government would probably call in planes to bomb the forest. So we couldn't rest. Moving silently we made our way hurriedly toward the coffee fields near the Brackenhurst Hotel. It was a 20-mile walk taking about eight hours. We arrived in the darkness of early morning and I was asleep before the sun rose.

The following day one of our new recruits told us that two *askari* were posted at night to guard the European school near the hotel. They each had a rifle and ammunition which we could easily acquire. Mwangi, Kariuki and I discussed the matter and decided to send seven men armed only with *pangas* to ambush the *askari*. Late that night the ambush was set. The *askari* walked right into it and were quietly cut down with *pangas*. We gained two .303 rifles and 120 rounds of ammunition.

One of the fighters who took part in the ambush, Karanja Kirai, insisted that we all undergo a ritual purification. A sheep was slaughtered and the stomach contents were rubbed on our feet and weapons in order (it was believed) to cleanse us of the evil we had contacted and protect us from the curses of the dying *askari*.

Karanja Kirai was our strongest believer in Kikuyu religion and magic. He was a simple, uneducated man and liked by all the others. I didn't like it, however, when he insisted on performing traditional practices which I thought were useless. Each morning and night he would lead us in prayers. Facing Mount Kenya with some of the men holding soil in their right hands, we would listen

as Karanja spoke the prayer. Though they varied from day to day, the prayers always expressed our need for *Ngai's* help and went something like this:

"Oh God of Mount Kenya, help us fight our enemy and don't let him take us by surprise. Help us win the struggle against the European by giving our fighters guns and ammunition. Please, oh God, protect Jomo Kenyatta and our other great leaders from the evils of the white man."

To end the prayer we would all say: "*Thaaithataya Ngai, thai*", which means "Praise God. Peace be with us."

Karanja also insisted that we shake our blankets each night before going to sleep and in the morning as soon as we awoke. After shaking the blanket each man was to spit on it to remove the evil spirits. I never did this, thinking it a bit silly, and was sometimes ridiculed by the others who thought it was I who was stupid. They would jokingly accuse me of being "just like the rest of the *tieties*."

Karanja could never convince Mwangi that we needed a permanent seer, but he did persuade us to visit one who lived in his sub-location of Kiambu. While the others were in the old woman's hut I remained outside, thinking it safer and being unconcerned about what the seer had to say.

When the men came out after about an hour Mwangi told me what the woman said. We were not to have any contact with women while carrying our weapons, and when we killed someone in battle we were to go to the nearest river, wash ourselves and if possible be cleansed by a seer. Before being used again all our weapons were to be rubbed with the stomach contents of a sheep.

At Ndiritu farm a few days later I learned that arrangements had been made to give the second oath to some Kikuyu living nearby. An oath administrator named Gakuru was living among the workers on the labour line of the farm and would be in charge of the ceremony.

Gakuru came to the hut where the oath was to be administered bringing several strips of roasted goat's meat. It was late at night. Inside the darkened hut lit only by a small paraffin candle several people had gathered. Three men and six women, including two Wakamba, were to take the oath.

It began with the women who were called in and asked by Gakuru to remove all their clothing except the short underskirt. They formed a circle around Gakuru who laid a long strip of meat across their shoulders so as to join them. He then uttered a

series of vows similar to those of the first oath, which the women repeated. The only new vows I could hear while sitting in the corner of the hut were that the initiate should assist the fighters with food and lodging when called upon and that they should always warn the fighters when the security forces approached.

With the vows completed Gakuru handed each woman a small piece of meat and asked her to insert it momentarily in her vagina. Then, taking a small bite of the meat they held in their right hands, the women swore: "If I reveal the secrets of the Mau Mau fighters or inform Government of their presence or activities, may this oath kill me." The women were then told to put on their clothes and wait outside.

The three men were called in and after removing all their clothes were joined, like the women, with a long strip of meat. Another piece about two feet long was handed to each man. They were to insert their penis into the hole cut in one end and hold the other in their right hand. The vows were the same as those taken by the women except that after each one the men would take a bite of the meat and swear that if they violated the vow the oath should destroy them. When the men had dressed and left the hut I was asked by Mwangi to give the initiates their final instructions and advice. I was upset by the ceremony, which was my first contact with the second oath, and had little heart for the task. Nevertheless, I couldn't refuse.

The initiates were called back into the hut and I said: "This oath is given only to those in a position to help the fighters. You can help us with food and by warning us when the enemy approaches. You should have no worries about the oath you've just taken. It is not something bad, but rather makes you better people who can now join us in the struggle for land and freedom."

As I spoke these words my heart was heavy. I couldn't really believe that this was a good thing; nor would it make these people want to help us if they didn't already.

At Kigwa Estate in late August I got permission from Mwangi Toto to visit my wife. I shaved, got a haircut from a nearby barber, polished my shoes, dressed as a typical Nairobi office worker and boarded the bus to Mathari police station. At the gate was an *askari* who wanted to see my papers and seemed suspicious. Luckily he was as stupid as he was curious. I handed him ten Clipper cigarettes and said I worked as a plumber for the City Council and had left my papers in my overalls. I was there to visit a friend. He was satisfied and he opened the gate so I could enter.

I talked with Helena and gave her the 50s. I'd brought. Then

I went to see some relatives who lived not far from the station. I spent that night and the next with my wife in the *askari's* quarters and then returned to Kigwa. When I arrived at the camp I learned that the men had gone to raid Ikinu Home Guard post in Limuru. They left a comrade behind to wait for me and he said they were planning to go to Ndiritu farm after the raid and that we should meet them there.

At Ndiritu Mwangi told me about the raid and I entered it in my books. They had successfully attacked the post, gaining two shot guns and a pistol and killing or wounding a number of Home Guards. I was saddened to learn, however, that my good friend Icharia Waiti, the man I had entered the forest with, was killed trying to break into the house of a Home Guard.

I asked Njoroge Kihara, who kept the record books in my absence, if he had entered anything. He said no, then told me the following story. He and some other fighters went on patrol in the Limuru area and ran across a Kipsigis night watchman guarding the home of a European settler. "We killed him," said Kihara, "and removed his heart, liver and a calabash of blood. Then we took an oath with these things, swearing not to reveal what we'd done." He went on to give some of the details, but I was too upset to listen very carefully. I didn't enter the incident in my record books.

That night I lay back and instead of sleeping spent many hours pondering Kihara's story. I hated what they did and wouldn't have allowed it if I'd been present, but to criticize them would be dangerous. I had entered the forest to fight for land and freedom against the European oppressors, not to kill Africans and practice useless oaths and magic. Our real enemy and goals, I feared, was being lost sight of.

A thunder storm broke and the rain began pounding down on my raincoat and seeping slowly along the ground under my blanket. My head was still spinning with a terrible sense of confusion when I dropped off into an uneasy sleep.

After spending about a week at Ndiritu farm we moved back to Uplands Forest and made our camp in a densely covered area near a silent flowing stream. We had begun our 20-mile *safari* soon after nightfall and arrived while it was still dark.

The following morning we slept late and at noon prepared some sheep we stole the night before from a Home Guard's farm. When we'd finished eating at about 3 p.m. I was called aside by Karanja Kirai and a few others. They took me a short distance from the camp and then, looking very serious and with murder in their eyes, started accusing me of being a traitor. Karanja, leader of the

small group, began by saying: "You're a Government informer and traitor, David Mathu, and we are going to kill you. Many brave fighters have been captured or killed because of the information you have given Special Branch. Do you have anything to say for yourself?"

"I am completely innocent," I shouted, "and have done none of the things you accuse me of." They formed a tight circle around me and as I pleaded my case some made threatening moves with their *simis* and *pangas*. One man called Dururu strongly supported what Karanja said. Acting as if he wanted to kill me straight away, he lunged forward with a pocket knife and cut a three inch gash on my right shoulder. "You're just like the other *tieties* [referring to the hated Black "Europeans" who always wore ties and dressed like their masters] and should be killed," he shouted. "Do as you like," I said, "but you know I'm innocent!"

At this point, with sweat pouring from my brow, Karanja stepped forward and laughed, saying, "Don't fear for your life David, we've only been preparing you for the *Kindu* oath." Feeling great relief mixed with resentment, I dropped to the ground and joined the others in a hearty laugh, relieving the tensions which had mounted.

Karanja then told me to remove my clothes and shoes. He pulled two rounds of ammunition out of his pocket and rolled two balls of dampened soil between his hands. He ordered me to put my hands behind my neck and bend forward from the waist. A bullet and ball of soil were put in each of my hands and then they bound my wrists with reed.

In this position, standing naked under the high trees in the narrow rays of the afternoon sun, I took the *Kindu* oath. I repeated the following vows spoken by Karanja while the other men slapped my back and buttocks with the flat sides of their *simis*, an action intended to strengthen the courage the oath was supposed to instill in me.

I will never reveal that I have taken this *Kindu* oath to anyone not a member of our group.

I will never disclose the secrets of the fighters to Government, and if I do you should kill me.

I will never desert the Land Freedom Army or leave for any reason without informing our leaders and getting permission.

I will never violate the rules or regulations of the Land Freedom Army.

If you kill me because I have betrayed you, I shall not curse you over my blood.

I will never take the "Moscow" oath. [An anti-Mau Mau oath invented by Government and administered to spies and informers. The oath began with music and the term "Moscow" is a distortion of "Musical."]

I will never refer to guns and ammunition in the usual ways but always as "*kindu*" ("thing") and "*mbembe*" ("maize kernels").

I will never reveal or expose my *kindu* or *mbembe* to anyone not himself a fighter.

If I am sent to kill someone I will never refuse or allow myself to sympathize with the victim.

I shall remain a servant of Jomo Kenyatta, respect the leadership of Mbiu Koinange and remember our old comrade Jesse Kariuki until the day we win our independence.

I will never serve any but an all African Government.

When the vows were over they sprinkled some crushed aspirin on my wound. After having put on my clothes, I returned to the camp. Two other fighters were then given this same *Kindu* oath.

Early September found us back at Ndiritu farm where we were joined by one of our old members, Waithaka Mutungi. He had been captured and only recently escaped from the Lukenya Prison. He told us of the horrible conditions there and said it would not be difficult for us to attack. There were not many guards and if successful we could release the prisoners and get a large amount of arms and ammunition. We discussed the matter and Mwangi decided to send one of our scouts to the prison with Waithaka to investigate. They returned three days later and our scout confirmed Waithaka's story. The camp was poorly guarded and had not been reinforced since Waithaka's escape.

Mwangi, Kariuki and myself, together with Waithaka, set about planning the attack. We would send in 20 well-armed fighters, out of our total force of around 50, and plan to attack the prison between 8 and 9 p.m. when a raid would be least expected. The prison was about 20 miles from Ndiritu, some five miles south of Athi River detention camp. We discussed the route we should take and decided to make two stops for food; one at the Tusker brewery four miles from Nairobi, and the other at a place near Embakasi airport.

Wanting to repair some guns and finish two homemade rifles, Mwangi Toto accompanied by Kariuki and two others went to one of

the abandoned huts on the farm's labour line a couple of hundred yards from our camp. It was around mid-day when we heard shots coming from the direction of the labour line. Enemy forces had spotted Mwangi and the others and had them pinned down in the hut.

We decided to leave the area immediately but after moving a hundred yards or so we came upon an old man who had a *shamba* nearby. He told us we were surrounded and pointed to a small clump of trees a short distance away saying it was the only way to escape. We moved quickly but by the time we reached the trees the security forces had already closed the gap. Our only chance at this point was to try and break through the Government encirclement. We crept to within 20 yards of the line of Tribal Police and Home Guards, then opened fire and started to move forward. When the enemy held their positions and returned our fire, we retreated a few yards. As the Government forces on our flanks and rear moved in for the kill, we decided to use our only hand grenade. It exploded a few feet in front of the enemy cordon barring our path. Running out through the hole we'd created, we were several hundred yards away before the dust from the grenade had settled.

Moving at top speed for over two miles, and thinking we were just about out of danger, we ran straight into a small group of Tribal Police heading toward Ndiritu. We exchanged fire but the Tribal Police withdrew when they saw they were outnumbered. It was now about 3 p.m. and after a few more encounters with Government patrols, night finally fell and we made our way safely in the darkness toward the Fort Hall road.

Crossing the highway a few miles on the Nairobi side of Kassarani, we entered the Tusker labour line. Most of these workers were either members of the Movement or sympathizers. We were taken in and given food and drink. By sunup we had built a temporary camp in the forested area near the plant.

Late that morning I was sent with a comrade to Nairobi in order to get supplies and money. We entered Muthaiga and went directly to the quarters of a member who worked as a cook for a European. I wrote a message to one of the Kenya Parliament elders telling him what we needed and had it delivered by a friend of the cook. We spent the night in a thicket of trees on Muthaiga golf course.

Next morning we returned to the cook's quarters. Talking and drinking Kikuyu beer we awaited a reply to my message. Late that afternoon our messenger returned bringing us 500s. but no supplies. In the early hours of the morning after another night on the golf course, we walked back to Tuskers.

One of the brewery workers was sent to the local shops to buy



"Kariuki was gentle and warm toward his comrades and the uneducated masses but could be hard and fierce in battle against the enemy. . . he was fighting for the people and felt a pride and dignity in doing so. . ."



"They formed a tight circle around me and . . . made threatening moves with their *simis* and *pangas*. . . he lunged forward with a pocket knife and cut a three inch gash in my right shoulder."

us several shirts, cigarettes, and some meat, maize-meal and potatoes. With Mwangi and Kariuki gone, a man called Kariuki the Black (so named because of his very dark skin) took over leadership of the group with me as his assistant.

That night we moved on to Embakasi where a large airport was being built with the forced labour of detainees. We hid in the bush during the day and at night Kariuki went to see a friend who worked at Embakasi railway station. The man gave us some food and we began the night's *safari*. At about 10 p.m. we reached a hill overlooking the prison about two miles away. Here we stopped, sending our scouts ahead to make a reconnaissance of the area, and settling down to spend the night.

Next day, Friday the 17th of September, we remained in hiding and at about 8 p.m. began our move toward the prison. It was a large, rectangular structure surrounded by barbed wire and a deep moat and protected by several watchtowers. There was only one entrance and to get to it we had to pass through a cluster of huts occupied by Wakamba tribesmen. As anticipated, they were drinking and talking and paid no attention as we walked by. They probably took us for Wakamba coming to visit relatives. It was good there were only 20 of us. If we'd brought the other men it almost certainly wouldn't have worked.

Just past the Wakamba huts one of our men noticed he had dropped a handkerchief containing over 30 rounds of ammunition. We stopped for a moment to try and find them but failed and then hurried on our way. Coming to within 15 yards of the entrance we lay down and pointed our guns toward the gate. Kariuki gave the signal. He whispered "fire" to alert the men then shouted "fire!" Githongo blew the bugle and another man sent up a red and blue flare as we opened fire on the guards. They returned our fire but we ran toward the gate, shooting and shouting "kill and capture."

In seconds we reached the entrance and finding one of the guards dead and the other wounded we started hacking down the wooden gate with *pangas* and long heavy poles. Once inside we met



". . . we entered the labour line. Most of these workers were either members of the Movement or sympathizers. We were taken and given food and drink."



"Our only chance at this point was to try to break through the Government encirclement. . . we decided to use our only hand grenade."

surprisingly little resistance. Most of the tower guards were too frightened to stand up and fire, merely taking cover in their high shelters. The *askari* in the barracks locked their doors while those in the compound area ran for cover. The European prison commander ran and shut himself in his house a short distance away. He would probably send out a radio message about the raid. I hoped his *askari* didn't realize we were only a handful of men and recover their lost courage.

I was one of the first men through the gate and headed straight toward what I thought was the arms store. A few of us smashed down the door and went inside. To our disappointment we

found only three rifles, two shot guns, a revolver and about 300 rounds of ammunition. Waitthaka was not to be seen in the melee and in the action that followed none of us discovered the major armoury located in another compound.

Hearing the shouts of the prisoners we broke down the doors of the corrugated iron barracks and told them to grab their blankets and take off their prison uniforms. When the 200 prisoners were freed we decided it was time for us to leave. We'd taken the prison by surprise and I'm sure our strength was vastly overestimated.

Outside we told the prisoners they were free to leave and go either to Nairobi or into the forests to join the other fighters. The bush around Nairobi was too sparse to safely contain a fighting group of more than 60 or 70 men.

About 300 yards from the prison I noticed that one of our men was missing. Glancing around I spotted Githongo lying on the ground a short distance away. Standing to sound the bugle, he had exposed himself to the fire of the guards. I found he had been shot in the thigh. The bone was badly fractured. Kariuki was with me and we called over four men from the injured comrade's district. We quickly discussed the matter. We knew that within minutes the security forces would be swarming all over the place. Githongo couldn't move and we couldn't afford to carry him and thus endanger the whole group. The terrain around Athi River was flat and coverless. If we were to escape we had to move fast.

The Fort Hall men sadly decided that since Githongo could not be carried to safety or left to be captured and interrogated by Government, he would have to be shot. Githongo was then consulted and told about our decision. "Do what you think best for the group," he said, "and leave quickly."

One of Githongo's Fort Hall comrades then put a revolver bullet into his friend's head killing him instantly. We quickly removed his watch, jacket, trousers and shoes and rushed to catch up with the others.

Some of the prisoners came back with us toward Nairobi while most disappeared in the darkness in groups of two or three. Near Embakasi airport we came across three British soldiers who had fallen asleep while on guard duty. We were tempted to kill them but didn't want to alert the enemy forces in the nearby camp.

It was 6 a.m. when we finally reached Tusker brewery. A messenger had been sent ahead so our comrades knew we were coming. Crossing the road we entered Karura forest and made our way to a temporary camp. Kariuki and I decided to go to Nairobi. We want-

ed to tell the Kenya Parliament about our successful raid and to see the morning newspaper.

Before we left, one of the prisoners who had stayed with us now asked if he might join the group. A few of us thought it was all right, but Kariuki rejected the idea because the man was a Luo. "This is a Kikuyu struggle," he said, as most of the others nodded their heads in approval, "and we don't want any Luo to have claims on us after the victory is won." I felt this was a very narrow view. It was an "African" as well as a "Kikuyu" struggle we were engaged in; why weaken ourselves by rejecting the help of other tribes? Looking back I think this type of thing did much to destroy our chances of success.

Going to the cook's quarters in Muthaiga, Kariuki and I sent a message to one of the elders asking him to bring us the morning newspapers. In about two hours three members of the Kenya Parliament arrived to congratulate us on the raid. They brought some cigarettes, 300s, and the papers. It was Saturday and the *Standard* had not yet gotten news of the raid. Another paper, however, carried headlines of the "LUKENYA PRISON RAID" and we discovered that our gang of 21 men had been reported as a "body of over 100 well-armed gangsters."

After a long discussion about our attack and other matters, the elders left and Kariuki and I slept the rest of the afternoon. That night he went to rejoin the others and I remained for the next two nights with Helena at the Mathari police post quarters. Monday morning while heading back to Karura, I read a detailed account of our raid in the *Standard*. An inquiry was being made by Government and I was surprised to learn that: "Security forces in the search, which numbered nearly 1,000 on Saturday, were reduced to 400 yesterday...and included two companies of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, three troops of police armored cars and a large number of Kikuyu Home Guards. Tracker dogs were used and spotter planes from the KPR Air Wing flew over the area."

The article went on to say that, "The attack itself was obviously carefully planned. It began at about 8:45 on Friday night and was all over in about 20 minutes. The gangsters crept silently upon the camp, which is in an open plain with a 100-foot high ridge about 500 yards away. The attack was launched suddenly, signaled by bugle calls and the firing of a Very-Red light into the sky. Terrorists charged, shouting, and poured a fusillade of shots into the corrugated aluminium huts and at the sentries, one of whom was killed as he stood outside the Guard Room."

At Karura I rejoined the men and we set off that night toward Ndiritu. To commemorate the raid I wrote a song. It was sung



"... we broke down the doors of the corrugated iron barracks and told them to grab their blankets and take off their prison uniforms."

proudly by the fighters during the next few days:

While fighting in the forests, encamped in the coffee fields,
We young fighters planned our raid on Lukenya Prison.

When the discussion was over and we had all agreed,
Our scouts were sent to investigate.

They went and returned, giving us a report;
We should prepare ourselves for the attack.

We began our journey, we young fighters, toward Lukenya;
Keeping well-hidden all the way.

When we arrived our fighters lay down;
We opened fire and killed two guards.

The Black people imprisoned were crying for help
Saying, "Oh, our people, open the doors for us."

After fighting and releasing the prisoners, we prayed
to *Ngai*
So that he might assist us to escape safely.

All Black people of Nairobi were happy
Congratulating us for our brave deed.

Soon after our return to Ndiritu we were pleased by the re-appearance of Mwangi Toto and Kariuki Chotara. Trapped in the hut, with one of our men already killed, three of them surrendered. Kariuki managed to escape before they could get him to Kiambu police station and Mwangi broke out of the post a few days later. The third man, Dick Mwangi, was killed when he refused to cooperate with interrogators.

On the evening of our third day at Ndiritu a large patrol of Home Guards was spotted moving along the dirt paths which criss-crossed the plantation. They had seen one of our sentries who, thinking quickly, said he was from the nearby Guard post (we often had sentries wear Home Guard armbands for just such an occasion). He asked them to follow him as he thought there were Mau Mau in the area. He led them toward our position and when they came within range we had prepared our ambush. We opened fire, killing six, wounding several others and gaining four shot guns and a few spears.

We knew the shooting would attract security forces so we left in a hurry. Crossing the Kiambu-Nairobi road we made our way through the bush in a south-easterly direction, approaching Nairobi from the east. Near Kangemi, a village occupied by land-

less Kikuyu a couple of miles from the city, we set up camp for the night. Most of the villagers sympathized with the Movement and provided us with food and drink.

We were told that General Waruingi was in the area and just after we'd finished eating he came to see us with 25 fighters. We spoke for several hours and I asked Waruingi about his activities in Kiambu, saying I wanted to record them in my record book and show it to the Kenya Parliament. He told us of raids he had carried out against Home Guard and police posts and we, in turn, explained our raid on Lukenya and other activities.

It was late when Waruingi left to return to his own hideout. We arose early in the morning so as to reach Kileleshwa before sunup. There we set up temporary camp near a small stream in the thicket not far from the police station.

On the morning of the third day a man and his son accidentally passed fairly close to our hideout. They were stopped by one of our sentries and brought into the camp. The man worked for a nearby nursery and had a card, like the one I carried, indicating that he was attached to Special Branch as an informer. Most of the men wanted to kill him but I argued that perhaps he was innocent.

I got permission to talk to the man alone and we walked a short distance away. He explained how he'd taken the card from Special Branch in order to move around Nairobi in safety. Without it, being a Kikuyu, he would have been killed or detained long ago. "I'm a Kikuyu like yourselves," he said, "and have never done anything against the Movement of our people. This card proves nothing for I am a true son of *Gikuyu*."

I sympathized with the man and believed him innocent. I also thought about the young boy at his side. How must a son feel when his father is killed before his eyes. Returning to the others I found them still set on killing him, even after they heard what I had to say. Finally, I suggested that since he might be innocent we could keep him with us till nightfall, when we planned to leave Nairobi anyway. One of our men moved aggressively toward the man and I stepped between them saying, "I think the poor man is innocent! If you kill him, you'll have to kill me too!" Luckily, most of the men had been won over by my arguments and Mwangi decided the issue by saying we would keep him with us until we left. I was very relieved.

Our next stop was Muthangari, a couple of miles from Kileleshwa police station. We arrived shortly after dark and when we finished eating I discovered that four girls had been brought into the hideout from a nearby village. They spent the night with four fighters and returned to their homes the next morning. This

was the first time any of our men did something like this and I didn't like it. It wasn't that I believed in the traditional taboo against fighters having sex; but this just wasn't the time or place for it. Having the girls in the camp also put their lives in danger.

Before sunup we were back at Kangemi where we again met Waruingi. He and his men spent the day with us and at night Waruingi asked if he could share our hideout with his men. We discussed the matter but decided it would be safer if he camped elsewhere. If attacked by Government there was no sense endangering both groups. Waruingi agreed and left with his men.

Next day found us in Mukuru, an area just beyond the African locations south of the city. We had made up our minds to re-enter Nairobi and eliminate some notorious "tieties." These traitors were particularly brutal to the people in Bahati. After work they would put on Home Guard armbands and enter the location, forcing themselves upon women, beating and even shooting innocent people and robbing the inhabitants of money and valuables. Afraid of fighters like ourselves, these cowards amused and enriched themselves at the expense of old and disabled men, women and children.

It was decided that ten of us would enter Bahati at night with a couple of the men dressed as "Black Europeans." The latter went to a loyalist bar and started buying drinks for the traitors. When the bar closed they invited them to their house in the location for a few beers. Once in the trap they were killed. Karanja Kirai poured a libation of beer on the ground for the ancestral spirits, pleading for their approval and assistance in the struggle.

A few days later at Mukuru we were contacted by a man called Captain Nyaga. He learned of our whereabouts from a sweeper and wanted to talk with the leaders of the group. Nyaga was a friendly, talkative man. He told us many stories about Kimathi, Mathenge and the fight in the Aberdare forests. When we asked why he'd come to Nairobi he said his men, then waiting near Kahawa, were urgently in need of arms, ammunition and other supplies and he thought we might help him.

We trusted Nyaga and since he planned to return to the Aberdares immediately it was decided we would give him seven shot guns, some ammunition and clothing and 200s.

We provided Nyaga with a 30-man escort as far as Kahawa. Here, joined by his 60 fighters, he headed off toward the forests. It was only later, when I shared a cell with Nyaga at Kileleshwa police station just before he was hung, that I learned how he and his men had been ambushed and most of them captured. They had only



"... when the askari were almost upon us we opened fire. Armed only with pistols they turned and ran."

gotten a mile or so from where our escort left them.

The four of us who remained behind hid in a large sisal plantation called Mukuru Estate. Mwangi knew one of the farm labourers, who gave us food and drink. That night our 30 fighters returned from Kahawa and we slept in the fields, hidden only by the short sisal plants.

We told the farm worker to come see us in the morning and at about 10 a.m. we spotted a man walking toward us. Mwangi, thinking it was his friend, stood up and walked out to greet him. It was a stranger, however, and seeing Mwangi holding a pistol, the man turned and ran. He was too far away to shoot and it would have been unwise anyway. Though the man might report us to the security forces, we had to take the chance that he wouldn't. In broad daylight we couldn't risk leaving the plantation. The area was flat and barren with little cover or natural protection. This close to Nairobi it would have been suicide to leave the sisal.



"Mwangi Toto . . . struggled forward a few yards and died in my arms."



"Perhaps I could get a few of them before they finished me. As I grappled with the black man (who should have been my brother) a European moved up from behind and wrestled me down. . ."

At about 3 in the afternoon we heard shots fired some distance away in the plantation. A guard spotted two Europeans and several African *askari* moving through the sisal looking for us. The *askari* were firing wildly into the field hoping we would expose our position. Though they hadn't seen us, they were walking almost directly toward our position. The Europeans stayed back about 200 yards away and when the *askari* were almost upon us we opened fire. Armed only with pistols they turned and ran. We followed closely in their tracks. Not that we intended to chase them; it just happened that they fled along the path of escape we earlier decided upon.

Coming out on the road we noticed a Land-Rover which the police came in. We set it on fire then crossed into the bush paralleling the road. After running about five miles we came to another sisal plantation, the Koyole Estate. Thinking we'd lost our pursuers, Mwangi decided we should stop and rest. Guards were posted and we shared a bottle of Nubian gin one of the men brought from Tuskers. Mwangi and I then dropped off to sleep. Unfortunately, so did several of the guards.

The security forces who had followed our tracks were surrounding our position. About half an hour later, as we lay sleeping, an enemy force of around 200 men opened fire. Not knowing exactly where we were, they had formed a wide circle around us and when the shooting started, shaking us into a sudden awareness of our precarious situation, we dispersed in small groups, returning the Government fire as we went. Mwangi Toto was hit and killed before he even had time to figure out what was happening. He struggled forward a few yards and died in my arms.

The area offered us little cover, so with a few others I headed toward a nearby dam, hoping to hide in the rushes surrounding it in the swampy water. Enemy forces were only 20 or 30 yards away. I ran a zigzag pattern down the sloping hill and miraculously escaped the bullets I could hear zinging past me.

I neared the dam and entered the waist-high grasses. I noticed one comrade lying in the murky waters. Thinking I might yet escape and not wanting to ruin my record books, I set them down on a small dry area then plunged forward into the swamp for cover.

The main battle was still being fought in the fields and I could hear bursts of Stens and rifles as I crawled on my stomach through the rushes. Holding my pistol above the water, I entered to a point where only the upper part of my head was visible. "There is still a chance", I thought.

The shooting let up and I could hear European officers shouting out commands to their men who were surrounding the dam and moving in for the kill. Amidst sporadic bursts of gunfire I lay death-like in the swampy water. I knew there was little hope now. One comrade hidden a few feet away signaled, asking if he should use his rifle. "No," I whispered, "don't shoot! You'll only expose our position and they'll throw in grenades." Sinking my pistol deep in the mud beneath me, I realized my only chance was the slim possibility of escaping detection.

The splash of boots in the water seemed only a few feet away and as I lowered my head into the water I could hear heavy breathing directly above me. The *askari* didn't move for a moment or two then, starting off in a different direction, he stepped right on

my leg.

Shocked, he jumped back. I lunged forward trying to grab his rifle. Perhaps I could get a few of them before they finished me. As I grappled with the black man (who should have been my brother) a European moved up from behind and wrestled me down. The constable, still dazed and standing only a few yards away, raised his rifle and fired. The bullet grazed my forehead just above the left eye and I dropped unconscious into the water.

I was dragged out of the swamp by the European who ordered the *askari* not to shoot again. My head was bleeding badly as they half carried, half dragged me to a Land-Rover. When first pulled out of the water I had been searched and they discovered the 22 bullets tied in my handkerchief. For some reason they put the bullets back in my jacket pocket and as I stumbled to the car I managed to drop most of them one by one onto the ground. I still had three left when they pushed me into the car and I slid these behind the seat.

It was 12 October 1954 and I had fought my last battle. Some of the men, I learned later, had managed to escape. But six of my comrades had been killed and three of us captured. Karanja's appeal to the ancestors hadn't helped. To this day I don't regret having fought with my people in what was a just struggle. We made many mistakes. I was aware of some at the time and others I only discovered later. I hope we can all learn from these mistakes and that the bravery and honor with which so many of my people faced death and suffering is not slighted because of them.

Chapter 3 IN THE DETENTION CAMPS

At Special Branch Headquarters in Nairobi I was led into a room used for court exhibits and confronted by three Special Branch officers. It was 9 p.m. when the interrogation started. My hands were bound and a five-foot piece of heavy chain joined my handcuffs with a long iron rail on the floor. Escape was virtually impossible.

When asked who I was, I said: "My name is Mwangi Kamau. I was trapped in your battle with that Mau Mau gang while on my way to visit my brother." Driving into Nairobi I considered how I would respond to their initial questions. If I admitted being a member of Mwangi Toto's gang there was a good chance they'd just shoot me, saying I'd been killed in the battle or while trying to escape. If I showed my informer's card they might call Seedon and be told that I'd taken the card on false pretenses and had never done anything to help Special Branch. They could also just tear up the card and remove the one chance I would have if taken to court. I thought it best to keep quiet about my card and connection with Seedon and play for time. Their opportunity to silently get rid of me would diminish as more people came to know of my capture. Many a fighter had been "killed while trying to escape;" this was justified as a means of saving Government the expense of a trial and hanging. Our comrade, Dick Mwangi, met this end at Kiambu police station.

Angered by my refusal to cooperate, the three Europeans began a process of forceful persuasion. One used a *kiboko* or rhinohide whip, another a short piece of chain and the third a club. Each time I refused to alter my story or answer their questions a flurry of blows rained down on me.

After about two hours an African Home Guard entered and identified me as David Mathu. He had seen me before at Shauri Moyo in the chief's camp. They couldn't find my picture in their photograph file and after another hour they put me in a small room where I was again chained to a long rail. In addition to my bullet wound I now had a cut head and lacerations on my back and shoulders from the whip and chain. One of the officers pulled out a mirror and asked me to see what an ugly mess I was. He said they might have to kill me if I didn't give them what they wanted.

At 8 a.m. the DO from Embakasi Mau Mau Screening Center came into the room. He had an *askari* bring me a cup of tea and two

stale rolls then took me over to the dispensary. The medical aids gave me rough treatment, stitching up my forehead without cleaning the wound, giving me no anaesthetic and ignoring my lacerations.

Back at Special Branch Headquarters they finally found my file and photograph and then brought in an old friend of mine from City Council to confirm my identity. Next I was taken to the morgue and asked to identify the bodies of my dead comrades. "What is the point in withholding their names now," I thought. "They died for their people and should have their names recorded on the list of fallen heroes."

After spending three days in the cage at Embakasi I was taken to Nairobi for more interrogation. The three bullets I dropped in the car were carefully wrapped in an envelope with my name on it. They had also found and translated my record books and discovered a photograph in which some of our fighters portrayed Home Guards being attacked and shot down. It was about 8 p.m. when I was taken into an office by two Europeans; the door was locked and guarded by an *askari*.

I was confronted with my documents and asked by the Europeans to confirm what I'd written. Most of the entries were in my own hand and signed. It would be absurd, I thought, to deny having knowledge of it. Thus began a long and grueling interrogation which lasted till morning. My intention from the start was to admit what I myself had written and participated in and refuse comment on entries made either by me or others covering activities carried out in my absence. Again, I made sure not to go beyond the information contained in the books, being thankful that I'd omitted the incident about the Kipsigis night watchman.

During the next week or ten days, as I was shuffled back and forth between Special Branch Headquarters, Kileleshwa police station and Embakasi, the questioning continued and I was taken around to point out some of the places indicated in my records where our fighters had made camp. On one occasion I was asked to assist screeners in a sweep of Makongeni location. I agreed to do this but failed to identify anyone, saying that none of the people were known to me.

But Government was not convinced of my willingness to cooperate. They got nothing they didn't already know from my documents and were sure I was withholding important information. At Kileleshwa I was told I would have to stand trial and that my chances of escaping the death sentence were slight. I refused to add anything to my confession. A few days later I was taken once more to Special Branch Headquarters. Here, to my surprise, I was met by Seedon and another officer named Hein. They took me into an office for questioning and, after going through my records in some detail,

rose to leave. Though I expected the subject to be brought up, Seeton never mentioned our earlier contact or the informer card he had given me.

As Hein walked out Seeton called me to one side and said he'd do what he could to see that my case wasn't brought to court. I said "O.K." and watched as he left the building.

Back at Kileleshwa, where I was to remain for three months, I heard nothing more about Government's case against me. Apparently Seeton had gotten them to drop it. I spent many a day trying to figure out why he had done this for me. Finally I decided that Seeton was acting solely out of self-interest. It wasn't that he thought I was acting as his agent in the bush. He just feared the embarrassment he might have to suffer if I were brought to court. The way I figured it, Seeton assumed I would plead innocent claiming that I had been serving Special Branch as an informer. He would be called as a witness and if I produced the card bearing his name, he would have to admit that he'd hired a "Mau Mau gangster" as an informer - thus appearing naive or stupid - or defend me as his informer, which might expose him to the accusation of being "soft on Mau Mau."

From Kileleshwa I was sent back to Special Branch Headquarters and then to Eastleigh police station for further questioning. Finally I was taken to Embakasi and again put in a cage within the large barrack-like structure. This building held about 200 prisoners kept in groups of 10 to 30 persons inside the wire cages. This was a good name for them since at Embakasi the detainees were treated just like animals.

It was here that I finally learned the truth about Kagema. I saw him come in one day with a group of "tieties" and begin screening some new prisoners. Most likely, Kagema had been working with Special Branch all along. Being clever, he made sure not to draw suspicion upon himself by giving information which would lead to the arrest of his "comrades" in the LFA. Instead he helped Special Branch in capturing other Mau Mau members he didn't know well and who would not suspect him as the informer. Later I learned from Helena that it was Kagema who directed the police to where she was hiding and identified her as my wife. At Embakasi it seemed he was acting openly as a Government employee. He was never detained and probably was never a loyal member of the Movement.

The food we were given wasn't fit for pigs. The maize meal was bug-ridden and the gruel watery and tasteless. All of it was poorly cooked and barely edible. After about three weeks of sending complaints to the DO in charge, I decided that some action had to be taken. Through the use of notes secretly passed from prisoner to prisoner with the help of women detainees who collected our

eating utensils, I was able to successfully organize a three-day boycott of all camp food. Meals continued to be served but we all left it to be removed untouched.

On the fourth day someone told the camp officials that I had organized the boycott. They moved me to the Wakamba area of the camp where they felt I could do little damage. I was put in a solitary cell and kept under the constant guard of two *askari*. I remained in solitary until 4 April 1955 when I was taken to Nairobi to be photographed. On the following day, after my Governor's Detention Order had been signed, I was driven to the Athi River detention camp.

It was about noon when we arrived at the camp and were taken to the offices of the Camp Commandant, Colonel Knight, where our beards and heads were shaved and our clothes sprinkled with a delicing powder. The camp had nine barbed-wire enclosures and I was put into Compound 9, which was for detainees who had given satisfactory confessions and were actively cooperating with Government. By putting new detainees in this compound it was hoped that they might learn the advantages of confession and cooperation.

There were about 30 detainees in the compound and we were housed in two barracks, one for proven collaborators and the other for newcomers. The early screenings involved only friendly types of persuasion and were combined with good treatment, easy work and attempts to convert us to Christianity. Elders and chiefs came regularly to preach about the merits of the Christian faith and cooperation with Government.

I resisted these conversion attempts and refused to add anything to the confession I'd already given in Nairobi and at Embakasi. Christianity was only being used to break down our resistance and, by turning us against the "evils of Mau Mauism," make us willing and docile supporters of Government. Colonel Knight was himself a follower of Moral Rearmament and he tried to rehabilitate us through this faith. Knowing the crimes which Christian loyalists had committed against our people in the reserves, I did my best to convince the others that Christianity was a white man's religion, not suited to African needs, and was being used as a tool to turn us against our own Movement.

Learning from their spies that I was undermining the rehabilitation effort, the screeners began to take a different attitude. Their methods of persuasion became more violent. The "softcores," or rehabilitated detainees in the compound, also began to treat me coldly and with suspicion. These men were given privileges and easy jobs around the camp such as collecting firewood from the carpentry workshop, getting food from the store and cleaning up the compound.

One day a "softcore" ordered me in a very sharp tone to go collect a bag of *posho* from the store. "I'd be glad to help you," I said, "if you could ask me nicely. I'm not your servant." He said I was getting too proud and arrogant and tried to kick me. A moment later we were wrestling on the ground and had to be separated by some of the elders.

Next morning the incident was reported to David Waruhiu - son of the assassinated Senior Chief Waruhiu and a member of the rehabilitation team. He called all of us into the center of the compound and asked me to step forward. "This David Mathu thinks he's a smart fellow and very tough. Well, let's see how tough he really is. He started a fight with Kamau yesterday and now we'll let him finish it."

I didn't fear Kamau and when he stepped forward we immediately began to fight. Before I knew what was happening, however, all the others jumped in and started hitting and kicking me. They were just having a little "fun" and trying to teach me a lesson. I struggled with this mob for a few minutes and finally, when they had beaten me to their satisfaction, an *askari* was called in and ordered to take me to the small cell.

It was one of many 5' by 8' rooms off the center aisle of a large barracks. There was nothing in the cell - no blankets or bedding and no sanitary facilities. Without even a single window, the room was always dark and cold. I was given no food or water. When the need arose I was led to a sanitary bucket located at either end of the long hallway.

In the morning I was taken into the office of Colonel Knight. He wanted to question Waruhiu and myself on the fight in Compound 9. Each of us gave our version of the incident. Knight listened carefully then said the affair was not as serious as Waruhiu had indicated. However, as I had refused to cooperate with the screeners and rehabilitation team, he would put me into a "hardcore" compound.

Compounds 1-4 were for uncooperative detainees and I was led to number 2. Inside one of the three barracks I was shown where to put my thin mat and blankets. Most of the 100 or so men were working outside the camp but those remaining treated me like a hero. They had heard about my fight and resistance and gathered around to congratulate me and talk. I was given some gruel and *kiraiko*, a local tobacco the men grew right in the compound, and we sat in the sun chatting until the main body of detainees returned about 3:30 p.m.

After taking a shower I met some old friends and we went into the mess hall for a meal of *posho*, boiled beans and a small serv-

ing of vegetables. After eating we returned to the barracks. Some of the detainees were gathered in a corner having a meeting of some sort and I was asked to attend. Guards were posted at either end of the barracks to warn of approaching *askari*. I sat and listened as the men discussed different aspects of camp life. The talk drifted to the question of our attitude toward loyalists and fence-sitters after we were released. Some felt that they should pay for their crimes and expect nothing but harsh treatment from the people. Others thought the past was best forgotten, that when the Emergency was over we would just live and let live. No conclusions were reached. The split between loyalists and revolutionaries among the Kikuyu people still runs very deep and the conflict simmers on.

Awakened the following morning at 5 a.m. we washed, dressed, lined up for a roll call and had the usual cup of thin gruel. At six we were ready for work. Hardcores got the most difficult work. We were taken about a mile from the camp where a small dam was being constructed. Divided into work groups, we were handed picks, shovels and large metal containers used for carting dirt from the excavation site to the wall being built around the dam.

I spend the first part of the day hauling dirt. It was hard, tiring work and a friend told me to put rags on my head to ease the burden. I was about to collapse when they put me on the easier job of shoveling. At 3 p.m. we were marched back to the camp for lunch. I learned that we were on half-rations, getting only a cup of gruel made from the last night's leftover *posho*.

In the weeks to follow I learned that the hard and dirty jobs were rotated between the four hardcore compounds. One day we might work around the camp cleaning up the compounds, collecting the refuse and emptying the sanitary buckets; the next we would clean the drains or wash down the offices of the camp staff, and so on. It was only about one day in four that we were forced to work on the dam.

Softcores were given light work and spent a lot of time in rehabilitation classes or sports activities. I preferred the hard manual labour rather than to cooperate with Government. It wasn't just a matter of giving an accurate statement about one's own activities. Government already had us; they were now interested in getting information about other fighters and members of the Organization. One of our best Nyeri fighters, General Kareba, was captured and killed on the basis of information given by an Athi River detainee. Again, to prove one's willingness to cooperate often meant beating and torturing other detainees to extract confessions. Most of us in the hardcore compounds strongly condemned this "softcore" activity and refused to do anything to increase the suffering of our people.

Within each compound a leader was elected to represent the detainees in dealings with the camp commander. In the hardcore compounds men were chosen because of their loyalty to the Movement and ability to speak English.

Apart from this elected leader we had a secret organization within the four hardcore compounds. It was organized by grouping the men within each compound according to their location, division and district. In each compound there were committees representing the three Kikuyu districts plus Embu and Meru. At the top was a central committee of members from each compound and district. A system was set up in which notes, written on scraps of paper, were passed between leaders of the compounds. Where a decision had to be reached by the central committee notes were wrapped around a stone and thrown from compound to compound. Each member would indicate his agreement with what had already been written or add his own ideas. This continued until a unanimous decision was reached.

The main job of this organization was to keep unity among the hardcores and prevent conflicts from arising among the men and groups. A number of rules existed: no one was to spit in the compound, dirty the sanitary buckets or leave refuse lying about; there was to be no stealing, fighting or abusive language; elders and disabled men had to be respected and given easy jobs; no one was to try to get all the easy jobs and avoid heavy ones; no one was to take more than his share of food; and the rehabilitation schemes, religious services and other unnecessary kinds of cooperation were to be avoided and any mistreatment fought with silence and passive resistance.

The official compound leader was also the leader of our organization in each compound and we pressed Colonel Knight to allow these leaders to remain in the compound to supervise the work. He agreed and it thus became possible for each compound leader to see that our rules were obeyed. He made sure the old men got the right kind of work and that the food was properly prepared and distributed, and he was always there in case of disputes.

The central committee dealt only with major issues and cases involving dangerous violations of the rules. Most cases and minor decisions were handled within the compound. When a man violated some rule the case was taken up by a committee on our return from work in the late afternoon. If a dispute arose between two men from the same division, it would be handled by that division's committee. If, on the other hand, a fight or argument broke out between a Nyeri and Kiambu man, the matter would be dealt with by a committee from both Nyeri and Kiambu.

Punishment for violating a rule was most often a sentence of so many "months imprisonment." This meant a certain number of laps



"To this day I don't regret having fought with my people in what was a just struggle."

across the cemented barracks floor on the knees. A one-year sentence of six laps up and down the center aisle of the building usually resulted in bruised and bleeding knees. The guilty party also suffered a certain amount of humiliation and embarrassment in addition to the pain.

The aims, however, were to maintain unity and harmony among the men and keep up the spirits and loyalty of the hardcore detainees. Punishments were rarely harsh and a committee hearing an average case did its best to educate the guilty party or bring understanding and agreement when a conflict arose.



"The compound leader made sure the old men got the right kind of work and that the food was properly prepared and distributed, and he was always there in case of disputes."

This organization was disrupted in July 1955 when Government transferred most of the 600 hardcores to Lodwar and Manyani. Some of us who remained were shifted into Compound 5 and kept apart from those still awaiting transfer.

During this same month a Moral Rearmament team which was making a world tour to gain adherents arrived in Kenya and visited the Athi River camp. There were about 15 of them representing several countries including Ghana, Nigeria and the Union of South Africa. Their major effort was directed toward the hardcores.

The men in Compound 5 elected me to represent them and find out what the Moral Rearmament thing was all about. None of us had ever heard of it and we were very suspicious and skeptical. Particularly since Colonel Knight was a member.

When the team came to our compound, remaining outside the fence for safety, I was asked to translate into Kikuyu what they said as well as certain passages from the pamphlets they handed out. I had long been opposed to Christianity, but on hearing and reading what these people had to say I began to wonder if Moral Rearmament might not be a good thing. What I doubted was that these people actually practiced what they were preaching.

The following day all detainees were called into a large open area to hear speeches by members of the Moral Rearmament team. Most spoke of their faults and sins before joining the movement and how belief in the new faith made them better people. A Japanese woman told of her great bitterness and hatred toward the United States when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. "As a believer in Moral Rearmament," she said, "these bad feelings have been transformed into love and understanding. This same thing could happen to you in relation to the Europeans if you follow the four principles of Love, Purity, Honesty and Unselfishness. Brotherhood would then drive out hatred and bitterness."

I listened and was impressed, though suspicious, and wondered about the 500s. collected from cooperative detainees and given to the leaders of the team. How could they take money from such poor people?

Most of the team left Athi River the next day, leaving behind Mr. Anderson and an American to continue the work. Anderson, knowing I had an influence on the others, was very pleasant and spent a good deal of time talking to me about Moral Rearmament. He tried to answer all my questions and remove the doubts I had about the organization.

A few days later I was called to Colonel Knight's office. Anderson was there and they made me an offer. If I accepted Moral Rearmament I could remain at Athi River and help teach and spread the faith; if I refused, I would be sent with the others to Lodwar.

I thought about it and finally decided to stay at Athi River. I wasn't really convinced about Moral Rearmament but thought I should stay and learn more about it.

When I told the other hardcores my decision they were angry and disappointed. Hadn't I preached to them against Christianity? And argued against active cooperation with Government? Now I was, in their eyes, abandoning them for Christianity and Government. I was a traitor.

I felt bad about the general reaction of my friends and tried hard to explain the stand I had taken. Within a few days, however, all the remaining hardcores were transferred to Lodwar. Only my-

self and three others stayed behind with the softcores.

For the next few months I read a lot of Moral Rearmament literature and tried to persuade other detainees to join. Under the direction of Anderson and the American we gave lectures and worked on a play written to show how Moral Rearmament could bring about understanding between the races and a better way of life. I was cast as a Mau Mau fighter. The other three converted hardcores played a European settler, an Asian trader and a Jewish businessman. The first part of the story showed the African and European fighting one another while the Asian and Jew selfishly pursued their business interests. As it went on the play revealed how unity and brotherhood was achieved when these people joined the Moral Rearmament Movement and started to live according to the cardinal principles of Honesty, Purity, Love and Unselfishness. The problems in Kenya and throughout the world could easily be solved if the people would only start reforming themselves through Moral Rearmament. This was the message of the play. I'm not sure if our audiences saw it that way. We put on performances for the detainees, visiting groups of chiefs, headmen and other loyalists, and women detainees from Kamiti prison.

It wasn't long, however, before Government lost interest in Moral Rearmament as a rehabilitation device. In May 1956 Colonel Knight was replaced by a new commandant and Major Breckanridge, well-known for his brutality at the Embu Rehabilitation Center, took over as head rehabilitation officer. Before taking up their new appointments they visited the camp and saw a performance of our Moral Rearmament play. With Breckanridge was David Waruhiu and I could tell by the look on his face that he'd not forgotten our earlier encounter. He would do his best to get even with me through Breckanridge.

I could see the dangers that lay ahead. Breckanridge had no sympathy for Moral Rearmament, as it claimed to treat men of different races as equals. He undoubtedly would use the old techniques of beatings, torture, short rations and isolation to "win" cooperation.

When they arrived we were told to forget all about Moral Rearmament. The important thing was to demonstrate our loyalty to Government by giving useful confessions. I was moved to Compound 10 with the other dozen followers of Moral Rearmament. Soon, *askari* came to search our quarters and belongings. They seized all our literature and put us into small cells.

Every morning Breckanridge came and asked if we were ready to drop Moral Rearmament and give him the kind of confession he wanted. One by one the others gave in and after about a month I was alone in the small-cell barracks.

Each time Breckanridge came to see me I refused to be intimidated into rejecting Moral Rearmament. My thoughts were not clear, however, as I had slowly been losing faith in the movement. It began during the showing of our play. I still wore the tattered clothes I had when captured except that the shirtsleeves and pant-legs had been cut up for patches. Dressed in these rags I played my role beside two well-dressed Europeans who professed to believe in brotherhood and unselfishness. Though they had plenty of clothing, never did they offer to give me even an old shirt. Was this the "unselfishness" they spoke of? Or was it, as I suspected earlier, all words and no deeds?

Again, how could Colonel Knight believe in "brotherhood and love" and still order his *askari* to beat and torture detainees who failed to please him? By the time Breckanridge came I was just acting the part of a Moral Rearmament convert. I had lost any real faith in it.

Nevertheless, I resisted the idea of being forced to give up a belief and knew that Breckanridge wanted much more than a simple rejection of Moral Rearmament. He would insist on a confession which implicated other people and contained useful information for the fight against Mau Mau.

My brother-in-law was a cooperative detainee and an assistant on the rehabilitation team. He came to see me one day in the small cell and tried to convince me to cooperate and confess. "You can do more good for yourself and our people alive and free," he said, "than locked up in a detention camp cell. Government already knows everything you could tell them anyway, so what's the use of hiding it?" I told him I would think about it and make up my own mind.

Next day a friendly Mkamba guard told me he had overheard Breckanridge and the others talking about me. What they said wasn't good. "If you want to leave Athi River alive you'd better tell Breckanridge you're through with Moral Rearmament and give him a good confession - even if you have to invent it."

I decided to accept his advice. The following afternoon I told Breckanridge I was ready to cooperate. He immediately transferred me to Compound 6 and the next morning I was interrogated for several hours, particularly about the Lukenya Prison raid. I told him a few details that went beyond what was in my documents but he was still unsatisfied. Several times, probably on the advice of Waruhiu, he accused me of trying to subvert Government's rehabilitation efforts. When they were finished I was taken to the open area and asked to confess publicly everything I had told them. About 1,500 detainees and the entire camp staff were there to hear me and when I was through they asked a number of questions. This was part of the rehabilitation or brainwashing program

and all detainees had to go through it.

Breckanridge was still not convinced of my good intentions. He had me put back into a small cell. A week later I was taken with my few belongings to the Athi River railway station. This was on 27 July 1956. With some detainees from Manda Island, I was put on a train for Nairobi. Here we were joined by other prisoners and started a long journey to Lake Victoria.

The train pulled into Kisumu at night on the 29th and we were taken to a nearby prison. The following morning I went with five others to the lake shore where a launch was waiting to take us to Sayusi. Before getting on board I was questioned by a rehabilitation officer named Robertson. He said he'd looked through my file and couldn't figure out why I was being sent to Sayusi. Walking toward the launch he asked if I was willing to work on the island. Not knowing that most of the detainees had refused, I said I was willing to do the required work.

With me on the launch were two men from my division in Nyeri, Kihara Gatandi and Kahinga Wachanga. The latter was an ex-Mau Mau general and a man from my own sub-location. Both had been at Sayusi for two months already and we talked as the boat pulled out and headed for the island. This was my first time on the water and I enjoyed it immensely.

After landing we were led toward the cooperative detainees' camp on the shore of the island a short distance from the small harbor. A hardcore camp, they said, was located on the other side of the island.

I was directed into the office of a senior Special Branch officer named Parkinson. He and his assistant, Kellaway, asked me some questions and then wanted to know if I'd be willing to go to Mageta, another island detention camp in Lake Victoria, to help uncover some troublemakers who were turning the men against their rehabilitation program. Parkinson said that since my friends, Kahinga and Kihara, were assisting them he thought I might like to join them.

I knew they were asking me to act as an informer but thought it best not to anger them with an outright refusal. "I'll think about it," I said, "and let you know later." They accepted this and luckily the question never came up again. It was one thing to cooperate, but I would never agree to acting as an informer.

Parkinson soon left for Mageta with Kahinga and Kihara. Kellaway called me in and asked if I wanted to work in the tool store. I accepted this offer and for the next several weeks my job consisted of issuing construction tools to detainees in the morn-

ing and checking them back in in the afternoon when they returned from work. Some living quarters were being constructed in the open softcore camp and it wasn't long before Kellaway offered me the job of supervising the work. He learned from my file that I had been employed by Nairobi City Council and was familiar with building plans and layouts. There was only one large barracks in the camp to house the 30 detainees and our job was to build three smaller structures designed to house four to six persons each. There were about 600 hardcores in the barbed wire enclosed camp on the other side of the island and our number was expected to increase as some of these men decided to work and cooperate with the rehabilitation team.

Except for the oppressive heat and mosquitoes, and the fact that we were locked inside the barracks each night (two men had earlier attempted to escape at night on a log), life on the island for those in the open camp was quite good. Food was plentiful and we drew fresh water for drinking from the lake. Sometimes cattle were brought from the mainland but our diet consisted mainly of fish - which were easily caught on the lakeshore - and crops such as tomatoes, papaya, sugar cane and green vegetables which we grew on the fertile soil of the island. Though the heat was terrible, we were surrounded by water and allowed to cool off pretty often with a swim in the lake.

When the new buildings were completed I was transferred into Kellaway's office as a clerk. I had to keep all the detainee files in order, checking in new arrivals, entering reports and doing the general office work. I had access to all the information about the detainees on the island. Kahinga and Kihara spent most of their time in the open camp but continued to operate as informers on Mageta and in the hardcore camp. I tried to maintain friendly relations with them even though rumors circulated about their beating and generally mistreating suspect hardcores. I had the feeling they resented my good relations with the camp staff and other detainees and knew that I disapproved of their spying activities.

Soon after I'd started work for Kellaway the Presbyterian rehabilitation officer asked my help in translating sermons and religious literature from Kikuyu into Swahili for the benefit of the non-Kikuyu detainees. Before long I found myself giving Sunday services as a lay preacher. Strangely enough, I didn't consider myself a strong believer in Christianity. My main concern was with the peace and unity of the camp and this was the theme of all my sermons. The rehab officer told me to try to impart the *real* meaning of the Bible to the detainees and I exercised a great deal of freedom in my interpretations.

In January 1957 I came down with a serious case of malaria. I was given quinine and eventually sent to Kisumu prison dispensary

for treatment. Here I was put in a large ward with patients having all sorts of diseases. I received no treatment but my condition improved a little and after 18 days I asked to be sent back to Sayusi.

Back on the island neither the quinine nor traditional Kikuyu herbs seemed to do much good. I stayed in the barracks for almost a month, too weak to do any work. Kahinga and Kihara seized this opportunity to take some revenge. They didn't visit me themselves and tried to keep other friends away by telling them I had a contagious disease. They also told Kellaway I had been trying to undermine the rehabilitation program and the spirit of cooperation in the camp. Kellaway called us into his office and told Kahinga and Kihara not to bother him with their petty jealousies and that any further lies would be dealt with harshly.

I finally recovered my health and was given the job of running the camp canteen and keeping accounts. In addition to the camp staff and *askari*, cooperative detainees could come to the canteen and purchase anything but beer. I liked the work and was in a good position to get a little extra money. By over-pricing some items I sold to *askari* I was able to buy an occasional bottle of beer, cigarettes, sugar and cooking fat for myself.

Like the other working detainees I earned one shilling per day. With the extra money I even managed to save a little. Helena, arrested shortly after my capture and taken to Embakasi, was now at Kamiti Women's Prison and I wanted to send her some money. My opportunity came when a priest named Father Joseph visited the camp. I learned he would be going to Kamiti and he agreed to take 10s. and a photograph taken of me at Athi River to my wife. It was my activities that had caused Helena's detention and I felt good finally being able to help her a little.

This was the time when a man we called "Njoroge the DO" started causing a lot of trouble and dissension in the camp. Njoroge earned his nickname by fooling the Government for over two years while posing as a district officer in Kiambu. He was extremely clever and unscrupulous, helping both Government and Mau Mau in any way he could to make money. Though likeable, this love of money made him a dangerous man not to be trusted.

Njoroge was capable of playing many games at one time. None of us was sure he hadn't been placed in the camp as an informer. Though he talked against the Government and rehabilitation program, and gained a few followers, he wasn't a man one had confidence in. His presence in the camp was slowly generating an atmosphere of conflict and dissension.

Learning the address of a detainee's parents, he wrote asking

them for money and signing the man's name. He was a clerk in the office and pocketed the money when it arrived, destroying the letter. When this was discovered, we held a meeting to see if there was any way of dealing with Njoroge. There was a lot of talk but no good ideas. A short time later, and by accident, an opportunity came to get rid of him. One evening while at work in the canteen I watched Njoroge chatting with an *askari*. He always tried to befriend the right people and when he came to buy a tin of *posho* for the *askari* an idea hit me. There was a camp rule that no detainee could give gifts of money to an *askari* or staff member. Njoroge was violating that rule and it gave us a chance to get him off the island.

Next morning I went with a fellow worker in the canteen to see Kellaway. We told him what Njoroge had done and subtly indicated that we thought he might be trying to bribe the *askari*. Kellaway listened, then called in Njoroge. I don't know what went on between them but soon Njoroge was sent back to Lodwar. Kellaway said he was causing too much trouble, but we suspected that Njoroge had merely outlived his usefulness as an informer.

Failing to win any sympathy in a faked attempt to hang himself, Njoroge was taken to Kisumu prison and then on to Lodwar. We were to meet again several months later at Hola.

One day in early April fifteen of us were called in and told we were being transferred to camps in our home areas. We were to enter the "pipeline" which would result in our eventual release. We had all been screened every two or three months since coming to Sayusi and were now to undergo a final interrogation. We were allowed to write our statements and as I entered the office Parkinson was reading my confession. Kellaway and Father Joseph were there and the latter, after glancing through my file, exclaimed that I had been a very active terrorist and shouldn't be allowed to go home. Parkinson came to my defence saying I had been very cooperative in the camp and that he believed me fully rehabilitated. Father Joseph nodded but still argued that I wasn't fit to be set free.

After the questioning I was advised by Parkinson and Kellaway on how to act when released from detention. They stressed that I should never discuss my life or experiences in the detention camps or criticize the Government. This would be viewed as anti-Government activity and might result in my return to the camps. As I listened I couldn't help feeling this was an admission that Government wasn't very proud of its detention camp record. The rest of our discussion was the usual propaganda about the high motives of Government and the evils of Mau Mau.

Two days later we took the launch for Kisumu where we spent

the night in the prison. The following morning we began our journey to Prison Headquarters, Nairobi. Here, opposite the Pepsi-Cola factory, we were put into a compound previously used for women. It was an open area surrounded by barbed wire and containing a few small barracks. We were supposed to leave in a few days but the rainy season had begun and it wasn't until June, a month and a half later, that I was taken by train to Karatina and then to the Nyeri Showgrounds Works Camp.

There were four others from the North Tetu division, including Kahinga and Kihara. As we got off the lorry we were met by a group of *askari* and rehab men who started beating us wildly as if they'd gone mad. Our few possessions - including my books, photographs and magazines - were torn to pieces and scattered over the ground and I was ordered at gun point to pull out my mustache one hair at a time. I actually tried to do this while an *askari* was beating me with his night stick. Before I managed to pull out more than a few hairs, we were ordered to pick up our belongings and run around the parking area singing in Kikuyu "May God help me if I have to spend a night at Showgrounds Works Camp."

After 20 minutes of this we were led into the camp, still being beaten with rifle butts and batons. Reaching a small dark building we were pushed inside and the door was bolted. An hour later an *askari* brought us a little food, the first we'd had in over 12 hours.

Next morning after a meal of thin gruel we were led to a field a short distance from the camp. Kahinga and another man were ordered to carry two filthy sanitary buckets for carting dirt. The *askari* stood over us like hawks and abused us continuously. We were allowed no rest and if a man slowed down a bit while digging, shoveling or hauling away soil he got a rain of blows from the *askari*. At 3 p.m. we returned to the camp. I was exhausted and fell asleep right after the evening meal.

In the field the next morning a lorry drove up and three of us were ordered to get in. We were taken to Mukurwe-ini Works Camp, situated in my location. The beatings were fewer but we were allowed almost no freedom. Smoking *kiraiko* was forbidden and we couldn't talk while at work.

Under the close supervision of *askari* we did various types of work: digging roads, building bridges, helping construct a nearby hospital, cleaning up the divisional camp and assisting *askari* dig bench terraces on their *shambas*. No matter how bad the weather, and it was usually pouring rain, we were taken out to work from morning till late afternoon, returning to poor meals and unlit earth-floor barracks where we slept on thin mats under dirty blankets.

One day the camp commandant saw a group of us talking in the compound. We dispersed knowing we should have been working. Most escaped punishment but two of us were caught and put in the small cell. The European commandant was given the nickname "Famine" because he always punished detainees by withholding food and water for long periods of time. In this case we remained in the small cell without food, water or bedding for almost two days. During the night I thought I would freeze to death. The temperature dropped very low in the early hours of the morning and I slept on the bare earth wrapped only in my torn and scanty clothing. "Famine" gave us a strong warning before we were taken back to the barracks.

Despite these bad conditions I was glad to be in Nyeri near my home and people. Standing by the fence I could watch villagers walking along the road a short distance from the camp. The climate I'd been raised in, cold and brisk at an altitude of 6,000 feet, seemed to restore my health and for the first time in many months I wasn't troubled by malaria.

Each day a few men were screened and some of them taken back to their homes by the chief. When I was called in the chief said I was not ready to live in his location as a free man. He seemed to have a grudge against my parents, bad-mouthing them to the Special Branch man. He took his revenge against them through me.

Soon after this screening, when I'd been at Mukurwe-ini for a month and a half, I was transferred to another camp in my location named Mweru. We were greeted by a camp commandant called Powell and searched. Powell was one of the more vicious European settlers. He always kept a huge dog by his side. When *kiraiko* was found on a detainee Powell would set this animal upon the man. This was one of his favorite games.

Despite the harsh treatment we received at Mweru, we were allowed visitors on Sundays and I was also lucky to get work in the carpentry shop. On the first Sunday I was visited by Helena. She had recently been released from Kamiti Prison and was living with her parents in a nearby village. When we met I hardly recognized her. It had been over three years and I couldn't help thinking that her movements, once so familiar, seemed strange. These feelings passed after a few minutes, however, and I realized how happy I was to see her safe and in good health.

During the following weeks I looked forward with great pleasure to these Sunday visits. Many relatives came to see me and we would share the food they brought with them. Two of my brothers had been killed in the revolution and they were all happy just to see me alive and healthy. These visits brought me once more into contact with life outside the detention camps and made me aware of



"Many relatives came to see me and we would share the food they brought with them. Two of my brothers had been killed in the revolution and they were all happy just to see me alive and healthy."

my isolation.

Screenings continued at Mweru and I was again asked to detail my Mau Mau activities. The chief made weekly visits to the camp and each time a few men were released under restriction orders. When Kahinga and I were finally called for an interview the chief said we weren't ready to be released and told the Special Branch officer he wouldn't accept us in his location. At this time detainees were being released only with their chief's approval. It seemed I had reached the end of the "pipeline" only to be rejected and returned to a feeder camp in one of the remote areas. This time it would be Hola.

Helena came to see me two days later and I told her the bad news. She was very upset and disappointed, expecting me to be released any day. She found it difficult to believe I was being sent away and feared I might never return. Her tears did no good.

We were taken from Mweru in a lorry to begin our long *safari* to the coast. The journey was in stages. The first night was spent at Othaya Works Camp and from there I was moved for three months to Prison Headquarters, Nairobi. Finally, after a long lorry ride I arrived at Hola on 14 January 1958.

It was about 8 p.m. when we arrived and even at this hour the heat was oppressive. As I glanced around I could see the flat barren countryside and the low, corrugated iron barracks of the camp. We passed a number of unenclosed barracks, officially known as the Open Camp, and drove on to the Closed Camp surrounded by watch towers and a high barbed wire fence. Stopping in front of the gate we were met by the DO and his *askari*. His real name was Krapf but he'd acquired the nickname "Goat-eater" because he had seized a large number of goats from South Tetu (Nyeri) peasants. He was short and always wore a blue scarf to hide a deep red scar on his throat.

After greeting us in Swahili Krapf ordered an *askari* to take us to the Open Camp. We spent the night in a single barracks. Once the door was bolted I noticed that the building had beds instead of the usual mats. "Probably because of the bugs and insects," I thought, as I lay back to consider what life might be like at Hola with the infamous Goat-eater as DO.

Next morning Krapf arrived. He asked if we were willing to work and we all said yes. Then he gave us a rundown on the rules governing detainee life in the Open Camp. Though I've probably forgotten a few, these regulations were that:

- Detainees in the Open Camp could move freely within a two mile radius of the camp, including Laza township, from the time their day's work was completed until 6 p.m.
- No one was to go beyond the two mile limit of the camp.
- No one was to be outside the barracks area after 6 p.m. without special permission.
- No one was to go outside the barracks after 9 p.m. without a light.
- All noise had to stop and lights be turned off after the 9 p.m. bugle sounded.
- No one was to mix or have anything to do with the local people of the area.
- No one was to engage in any trade or commercial dealings within the camp.
- No mail was to be sent out of the camp except through official channels.
- No letters could be sent to the press or to politicians.
- No one was to brew or drink beer of any kind.

Krapf handed each of us a copy of these rules and told us to

go clean up the camp until the other men returned from work. When the detainees came in from the fields I was surprised to discover an old friend of mine, James Njogu. We went off to talk and he offered me some beer he made from baking soda, sugar and a few other ingredients. We were in a secluded area and I accepted his offer. Though I didn't know it at the time this would be my very last drink of beer or any other alcohol.

After our drink and talk James took me for a walk to Laza. It was a small Arab trading center and I found it interesting to observe the local people and Arab traders. The township is on the Tana River and it was my first time to see from close up this wide, dirty river which empties much of Kenya's precious water into the Indian Ocean.

It was getting late and we had to hurry to get back to the camp by 6 p.m. My thoughts were taken up by the local people I'd seen. I felt a sympathy toward these extremely backward peasants who seemed to be living as people lived thousands of years ago. They would need a great deal of help, I thought, if they were to raise themselves out of their condition of extreme physical and mental poverty.

The sergeant broke this train of thought, coming over to tell me I could sleep anywhere in the camp but would have to arrange with friends for a place in one of the barracks. James had told me there was a space next to his and now he came up with an old home-made bed he bought for me. As we carried it into the barracks I noticed a couple of men playing guitars while a number of others were gathered around singing old songs.

Someone then brought in a borrowed wind-up phonograph and they began to play records. James talked to me about religion. He pulled out an old copy of the Holy Koran which, he said, was the only one in the camp and had been given him by a Muslim teacher from Lamu. He read me a few passages, trying to explain that while he had not yet become a Muslim, Islam seemed to him a much wider and richer religion than Christianity. We talked and argued for a time. My curiosity had been aroused, however, and I took the book and started reading.

From that night on I spent one or two hours reading the Koran before going to sleep. Islam seemed more rational to me than Christianity and while it was critical of other religions it didn't preach hatred toward non-believers. James and I spent many hours discussing the Koran and Islam - sometimes agreeing, sometimes arguing. We were both trying to convince ourselves of its merits and faults, strengths and weaknesses, while at the same time debating the idea of actually becoming Muslims.

After my first three days working in the fields I got a job as an accounts clerk for the Ministry of Works. The pay was good for Hola, 66s. a month, and I moved into the MOW staff quarters. My work consisted mainly of taking the morning roll of men working on MOW projects and keeping a log book on the use of Government vehicles.

I soon learned there was a strong undercurrent of conflict in the Open Camp between Kiambu detainees and the other Kikuyu, Embu and Meru. The Kiambu people were considered both clever and cowardly. They were generally more advanced in education and had contributed many important leaders to KAU and the underground movement. Nevertheless, it was believed by Fort Hall and Nyeri Kikuyu that while Kiambu people started the Movement they didn't contribute much to the fighting once the revolution began. We also resented Kiambu people thinking they were better than other Kikuyu and acting superior.

At Hola this conflict came to the surface. The Kiambu detainees managed to get almost all the good jobs. They filled most of the clerical and labour supervisory posts and were usually appointed headmen in the Open Camp compounds by the DO.

My own feeling was that these people, by acting superior to the rest of us, were destroying the unity of the Kikuyu people for which tens of thousands had died and suffered. It was senseless to brag about Kenyatta and the Koinange's being Kiambu people. Didn't these men represent and draw their support from the whole Kikuyu people?

At my work with the MOW I tried to change this situation. When men from Kiambu loafed or did poor work I reported them to the senior officer, and when posts were vacant I recommended capable Embu, Meru or non-Kiambu Kikuyus. I also tried to stress the importance of Kikuyu unity in conversations with other detainees and pointed out that none of us were any better than the rest. But the conflict continued to simmer and, for that matter, continues to this day.

The general conditions of life at Hola were made terrible by a number of factors. First, the oppressive heat - so bad that on the advice of medical officers, and after many detainees suffered heat strokes, we weren't forced to work in the afternoon. To escape the worst of it James and I often spent our afternoons in Laza. Close to the river it was a bit cooler. Second, the insects, particularly the mosquitoes and scorpions. It was impossible to escape them and we were continually bitten-up and suffering from skin diseases which itched horribly. Treatment, what little there was, seemed to do almost no good.



"Krapf!"

The third factor making life miserable at Hola was Krapf, our Goat-eater DO. He was usually drunk from liquor or *bhang*i and often mistreated us. Sometimes he would restrict a man to the camp for no reason, or forbid us to correspond with relatives. If a man didn't stand up and salute when Krapf drove by in his Land-Rover he was often beaten and kicked, the Goat-eater, in a fit of rage, not realizing that the man hadn't seen him in the car.

Nights were the worst, as Krapf was always very drunk then. One time around midnight he came and woke us by firing his pistol in the air and ordering everyone out of the barracks. He was full of *bhang*i and started abusing and beating people at random. Only when he had satisfied his mad lust did he move shakily off to his own quarters. A few days later I sent a letter through a friendly guard to Tom Mboya, telling him about the bad conditions at Hola and about Krapf's behavior. I asked that he make this information known to the press and the Governor.

By this time I had already become a Muslim. It was in late February when James and I made up our minds. We approached a Somali sergeant and asked him what we had to do to become Muslims. He told us that it was very simple. All we had to do was to shave our heads and beards, wash all our clothing and bathe in the river. After doing this the sergeant gave us each a Muslim cup and name. I was to be called Mohamed Mathu and James became Omari Njogu. He then proclaimed us Muslims and that was that.

I remain a Muslim today. It has made me a more honest and less prejudiced person and has given me a cleaner way of life free of alcohol.

At Hola, however, most of the detainees resented my becoming a Muslim. They said it was an Asian faith not suited to Africans and tended to regard me as something of a traitor. Though bothered, I felt I had made a good choice and besides, it was my choice and no one else's.

After a time I made several good friends among the Arabs and other Muslims in the area. They offered help in many ways and I used to trade the *posho* served in the camp for maize and bananas at Laza. I thought about escaping from Hola toward the end of 1958 and a Somali driver helped me devise a plan. It seemed I might have to spend the rest of my life at Hola. Arrangements were being made for detainees to bring their wives and families to live with them in the camp. But I couldn't imagine bringing Helena into the miseries of this hell-like region.

My Somali friend, who worked for the medical staff, gave me a sword and compass and arranged for my escape with a group of Somali traders who made the long trip from Somalia to Laza once a year to sell cattle. It was my plan to go to Somalia with them and then send for Helena.

Before I could carry out this plan, in September 1958, I was notified that I would soon be released. I then dropped the escape plans I had so carefully made.

Months passed, however, and it wasn't until January 1959 that

a group of chiefs were brought to Hola and I was called in for screening. My location chief wasn't present and the others from South Tetu, after asking the usual questions, decided I was properly rehabilitated and recommended that I be sent home. This meant entering the Government pipeline again and on 14 January I was driven with some other detainees to Agothi Works Camp near Kagumu College.

After working the first day on the Kagumu River bridge I was called in for another screening. One of the screeners was a man I knew at Mweru. He told the others I was a good man and completely rehabilitated. This helped. After giving a brief account of my activities they said they would recommend my release.

Ten days later the chiefs arrived from the various locations to do a final screening and take those they thought 'fit' back to their homes. I waited with the others outside the office but my name wasn't called. When the chief finished with the others he stepped outside and saw me standing there. He asked me my name and when I replied he said sharply: "I don't think you'll be going home."

One of the other screeners, however, called me into the office. Together with the DO he began asking the same old questions: How and when did I take the oath? Did I enter the forest? Etc., etc. My location chief returned and interrupted saying: "This Mathu is a very bad man. His entire family fought against the Government. His mother abuses me and his father always argues with me and never cooperates with the headman. He should not be allowed to go home! I'm sure he'll cause trouble!"

The DO rejected the old man's advice this time, asking him sarcastically if the trouble he was having with my parents had anything to do with my record in the camps or progress in rehabilitation. He then signed my file and told me to go prepare myself for leaving the camp.

The following day, on 4 February 1959, I was given my release and a Restriction Order confining me to the location and requiring that I report to the DO once a week. But I was out at last. I hurried to the village to see my parents, relatives and Helena.

It is now three years since my release. After marrying Helena in the traditional Kikuyu way I spent several months with my family in the reserve, finally getting back my old job with Nairobi City Council as a draftsman. We now have two young children, a girl and a boy, and I am attending school part-time to advance my technical skills. Life is still a struggle, nonetheless. I'm the only wage earner in my large family and I have

heavy responsibilities toward my parents, my younger brother and the wives and children of my two dead brothers. At present I am trying to save money so that I can buy them a *shamba* big enough to satisfy their subsistence needs and provide some security for the future.

Looking back on "Mau Mau" today, I still consider it to have been a just and courageous struggle for freedom. Though mistakes were made, and some people entered the revolt for narrow or selfish interests, the Kikuyu people as a whole fought and suffered bravely and I am proud of them. Our fight against British colonialism, by throwing fear into the hearts of the imperialists and settlers, quickened the pace of political development and independence in Kenya. I should like to remind those African leaders who now condemn Mau Mau and tell us to forget our past struggles and suffering, that their present positions of power in the Legislative Council and elsewhere would not have been realized except for our sacrifices. I would also warn them that we did not make these sacrifices just to have Africans step into the shoes of our former European masters.

I have closely watched the activities of our political leaders and am not happy with much of what I see. Much of the money collected overseas or from our poor peasants and workers at political rallies goes into the pockets of politicians for their personal use instead of for the development of the country and the welfare of our people. Some leaders are becoming rich Africans, driving around in fancy cars, building new houses in the city and using *our* money for women, drink and foreign travel. They rarely talk with the poor peasants and workers whose interests they say they represent.

Remembering how many of these leaders abandoned us during the revolution, I am suspicious of those who now claim to speak in our name. Are they not abandoning us again in their quest for personal power and wealth? The vast majority of Africans remain very poor. Are the masses of people simply to become the slaves of a handful of wealthy Black men?

COURT TOLD OF 20 OATHS**Land Freedom
Army documents
read**

TRANSLATIONS of Land Freedom Army documents, written in Kikuyu, which were stated to have been found in the possession of two brothers, alleged to have been members of Mau Mau, were read in a Nairobi court yesterday.

Because of their public interest, the 20 oaths named are reproduced here in full, together with a set of rules attributed to the so-called Kenya Parliament. The 20 oaths were alleged to bear the stamp of "the Land Freedom Army, general headquarters, Nairobi. Kenya Parliament" They read as follows:—

1 — I sincerely declare before God and before all the people, and before this organisation that from today I have become a servant of blackmen's race from Ngong to Karimatura and Kenya as a whole and I will be going wherever they shall be sending me by day or by night to fight for them or to press their case.

As I have taken the war-oath, if I will refuse to go, may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me, and may this meat kill me.

2 — I sincerely declare before God and before all the people, and before this organisation that if my race ever elect me to be a leader I shall never refuse.

If ever I will be given money I will never expend it in the work unknown to them but I will expend it in the work detailed by them. I will never bank it as my money and I will never trade with it.

If ever I do this with it may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me, and may this meat kill me.

Sodam apples

3 — I sincerely declare sitting on soil from where I get my food and swear with it, sleeping with

meat as I do with a woman and continually piercing seven sodam apples with seven Mugere tree twigs and nape of the neck which are used in "Thenge" vows and oath administration and I solemnly declare that I will abide with all the things I see here all the time whether by night or by day because they are the laws of the blackmen.

If ever I forget them may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me and may this meat kill me.

4 — I also solemnly declare that if I will ever be sent to the battle I will take courage and if we disagree with the General or anybody else I will not kill him due to our enmity, and if we ever raid a certain place I will never run away and leave others behind but will wait for orders from the General or the leader who will be in charge of us.

If I run away leaving them behind may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me and may this meat kill me.

Musical Society

5 — Furthermore, if I will ever be made a judge by our race, I will not judge someone



DRAWINGS by Selma Waldman
GRAPHIC DESIGN by Lori Barnett

basing the judgement on enmity or judge him friendly, but I shall decide the case according to how it is, and if ever I shall judge partially, may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me, and may this meat kill me.

6. — I too, solemnly declare before God and before all people and before this organisation that I shall never join Muthiko (Musical Society) or a bad organisation aimed at destroying our race, if I will be forced to join I will inform the leaders and the soldiers so that the organisation be done away with.

If I fail to report anything bad may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me and may this meat kill me.

7. — Furthermore, if ever I tell lies while discussing with leaders or soldiers or with people who are not members of "CENTRAL" who perform duties with me.

And if ever I cheat members of the African Government, may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me and may this meat kill me.

Sent to spy

8. — Again, if my child, mother, father, my wife, or my brother, my sister, my friend or anybody else, does something wrong I will never withhold to the members but I will not put false allegation against him except say what he has done, and if ever I will be told to kill him I will kill him because I have taken the battle-oath.

If ever I fail to kill him, may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me, and may this meat kill me.

9. — If ever I will be sent by our race to spy I shall never come back and tell lies but should tell exactly what I saw, and if I shall find something to hinder my reaching there I shall come back at once and report what made me fail to reach there and I shall not tell lies but say what I saw.

If I tell lies, may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me and may this meat kill me.

10. — If ever I mislead my race and this be detected I shall never deny because I have sworn before the God and before all the people and before this organisation and declare that not anytime shall I ever tell lies, or falsely accuse anybody.

If I deny my errors while they are there may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me, and may this meat kill me.

25s. to pay

11. — Furthermore, I will be contributing money to this party and all the donations and if I don't have it I will be reporting so, and explain why I have failed to contribute.

Again, the shillings twenty-five I am asked to pay for the battle-oath here, I have to pay, and if I do not have it now I shall have to pay when I will get it.

If I fail to pay this being for battle-oath, may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me and may this meat kill me.

12. — I also solemnly declare before God and before all the people and before this organisation that I shall never give money to a prostitute so as to sleep with her and I shall never sleep with a European or Asian woman, I will never marry a European or an Asian because that is a bad blood.

If I do one of these things, may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me and may this meat kill me.

13. — I shall never be employed by a European as a soldier, and I will never perform C.I.D. work or become a Home Guard.

If ever I do one of these jobs may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me, may this meat kill me.

14. — I shall be adhering to all laws of the blackmen and all things they might forbid, I shall never sell land to a European or an Asian or betray anybody.

If I transgress one of them, may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me and may this meat kill me.

15. — Again, I shall never divulge the secrets of the blackmen to a European or to a Government servant or to a person who has not taken the battle-oath because that is revealing secrets of the blackmen.

If I divulge, may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me and may this meat kill me.

16. — Furthermore, I solemnly declare before God and before all the people and before this

organisation that if ever I will find a gun or ammunitions I shall never leave them but I will take them to the young men of the Army, and if I have hidden it somewhere I should go for it and take it to the young men of the Army to be used in fights.

If I refuse to take it to them may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me and may this meat kill me.

Never scorn

17. — Furthermore, I solemnly declare that I shall never tell a European or a Government Servant who administered battle-oath to me, or the one who took me to the ceremony or from where I took the oath, because that is revealing secrets of the blackmen.

If ever I reveal may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me, and may this meat kill me.

18. — Again, if ever I shall lead an Army or people I shall never mislead them, and I shall never scorn those who do not belong to our area, I shall treat them equally because I will be their leader.

If I hate some may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me and may this meat kill me.

19. — I further solemnly declare before God, before all the people and before this organisation that I shall adhere to all the things I have seen here of the battle-oath all the night and day time, because they are the laws of the blackmen. If ever I refuse to adhere to them may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me and may this meat kill me.

20. — I also solemnly declare sitting on the soil from where I get my food and swear with it that before seven days elapse, I shall never sleep with a woman, and before seven days elapse I

will not change the clothes I am now wearing and if I change, they shall not be washed before seven days elapse.

Again, I shall not take bath besides face and hands and feet but the remaining part of the body will be washed after seven days elapse.

If I do any of the things before seven days elapse may this oath kill me, may this Thenge kill me and may this meat kill me.

Smear blood

After you have taken off the meat and the soil the first word is this.

Get hold of his finger and count one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, pierce the finger and smear the blood thereof on the meat, roll the meat round his head seven times, he should then bite the meat in the portion the blood was smeared and swallow it telling him, — may that blood kill him if he ever surrenders, make someone arrested or if ever he becomes the enemy of this country, betrays somebody or sell land to a European or an Asian or if he ever sees a soldier (terrorist) and fail to hide him, may the blood kill him.

Then take a stick and dip it into a calabash containing blood, after the blood sticks to it tell him to stick out his tongue and smear the blood on it, he should swallow the blood, make him swear the above vows.

Then take the stick and dip it into the calabash containing blood, when blood stick to it, smear it on his forehead, joints and the navel, making him swear the above vows. When you come to hand joints and the palm tell him that if ever he holds a pen and endorse a signature for selling this country may those fingers of yours fail to stretch out.

Crack-down to avoid second Emergency

AS the few remaining former Mau Mau detainees are being released from restriction, fresh threats of subversion have necessitated more restrictions in order to avoid a second Emergency in Kenya.

The Minister for Internal Security and Defence, Mr. Swann, announced yesterday that for the last three months operations had been in progress to curb the activities of the Kenya Land Freedom Army.



Kariuki Chotara (above) who started a Land Freedom Army in 1953-5, later admitted 18 murders. While in detention at Lokitaung he attacked Jomo Kenyatta.

Yesterday the organisation was officially proscribed under its five different aliases — the Kenya Land Freedom Army, Kenya Land Freedom Party, the Kenya Parliament, the Rift Valley Government and the Rift Valley Province Parliament.

Previously it had always been possible to prosecute members of these bodies under the name of Mau Mau but it had now been thought advisable to proscribe them all separately, Mr. Swann said. The purpose of the Land Freedom Army was to take over power in Kenya. "An Emergency would be inevitable if we had not taken any action this year."

Kanu and Kadu worried

Mr. Swann said he did not hope to stamp out the type of activity typified by Mau Mau and the Land Freedom Army. "In a certain section of the Kikuyu this will never stop. It has been going on from time immemorial. All you can hope to do is watch it, control it, harass and embarrass it. It is a recurring danger."

It was very encouraging, however, that African leaders had expressed a desire to help in the fight against these organisations. They realised it had to be brought under

control. Both Kanu and Kadu were worried about the situation.

It was hoped to secure the help of Jomo Kenyatta after his release. "We have discussed the Land Freedom Army with Kenyatta and he is certainly not in favour of it," Mr. Swann said. "I hope to enlist him as well as other Kikuyu leaders".

But the Land Freedom Army was prepared to smash anyone who stood in its way. One man

had said: "If Kenyatta gets in our way, we cut him down just the same as any Kanu or Kadu leader."

Mr. Swann explained: "The whole object of the exercise is that those who fought should have the sweets of power now." They were not terribly interested in Kenyatta's release, and had shown no great excitement. "They go their own way,"

Their idea was to choose the right moment to take over the Government. "It is an anarchist organisation — you could even

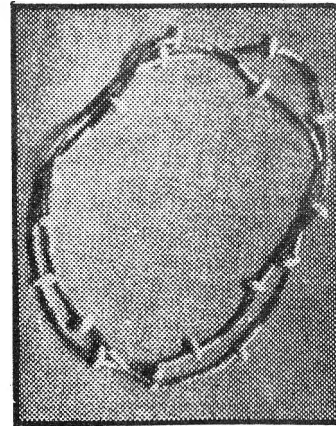
The gang consisted of a committee representing various parts of Kenya, and it tried to make itself into the supreme command of Mau Mau. Actually

its influence only covered Nairobi and Kiambu.

It revived among Mau Mau convicts in Mbagathi prison in 1957. They started work on the organisation after the amnesty calling themselves "Mutingiri." They wandered about Nairobi dressed in black shirts and trousers until the "uniform" was recognised and they started to be picked up.

"It is the same old stuff every time under a different name," Mr. Swann commented. Last year Operation "Milltown" cracked down on the organisation and 24 of the 75 arrested are still detained. None of those released had turned up again in the Land Freedom Army, as far as was known.

Of the men known to be in the organisation, nine per cent were ex-forest terrorists, 79 per cent had Mau Mau records, 52 per cent were ex-detainees and 52 per cent had previous criminal records.



The insignia of the Mutingiri secret society — a necklace of multi-coloured beads and cowrie shells. The shells and beads were sometimes woven into the underclothing.

call it a Bolshevik organisation — though there is absolutely no Communist connection that we can see."

Nairobi gang

Tracing the history of the organisation, Mr. Swann said it started with a man named Kariuki Chotara who had a gang called the Land Freedom Army in Nairobi in 1953-55. Chotara pleaded "Guilty" to 18 murders and was sentenced to death.

As there was some doubt, however, as to whether he was old enough to hang, he was detained instead during the Governor's pleasure. After the amnesty at the end of the Emergency he was restricted and is still in restriction.

At Lokitaung, Chotara attacked Jomo Kenyatta and tried to beat him up. He was pulled away by the self-styled "General" China.

'Not killed'

Many members had a dual role, sometimes working for subversion and sometimes at ordinary crime.

For the last three months another "Milltown" had been going on. "We are not keen on it in 1961, but we can't get out of it," Mr Swann said. About 40 or 50 men were in restriction as a result.

"We have not killed it," Mr. Swann went on. "As long as it goes on we shall have to pick chaps up if we are to have any conscience for the future."

The Land Freedom Army was still organising, and had launched a recruiting campaign. Its cry was not for action now but in the future. It could be planned for the end of the year, for

internal self-government or for independence. The idea was to acquire more members and more weapons now.

Mostly Kikuyu

Last year "Milltown" had disrupted the organisation for three months. This year's measures had considerably reduced oath-taking. There had been 26 successful prosecutions so far and nine more cases were pending.

Unfortunately the Land Freedom Army had realised "the heat is on". Documents were being burnt all over the country, and witnesses were being intimidated. The only answer was to go back to restriction, "or else we let it grow until we declare a State of Emergency and another £3,000,000 goes out of Kenya".

The pattern of oathing was the same — to preserve secrecy, maintain unity, never co-operate with the Government or Europeans, steal arms, ammunition and money and, in certain Nairobi and Rift Valley oaths, commit murder when ordered, and to obtain land, particularly that of Europeans or Kikuyu loyalists.

The strength of the army was between 500 and 2,000, Mr. Swann said. Large lists of names were being sifted. It was believed that ex-detainees like Fred Kubai and Paul Ngei had been approached and had administered a rebuff. Kanu and Kadu were also believed to have spurned approaches. No well-known Africans were suspected of being members.

The majority of members of the army were Kikuyu with some other tribes, as in Mau Mau. A new tribe involved was the Maragoli, of whom five or six were members.

The distribution was similar to Mau Mau — Nairobi, Rift Valley, the Dumbiri Location of Kiambu, southern locations of Fort Hall and the South Tetu location of Nyeri. The Land Freedom Army had no connection with the Imente Forest terrorists.

Organisation was still on a cell basis, with little apparent mixing between cells. It was, however, better organised than Mau Mau in 1952. There was even a cyclostyled proforma for the oaths, showing how confident the organisation was. But the "army" lacked the public support that Mau Mau had, and it lacked the weapons.

Mr. Swann pointed out that no firearms had been stolen since the third week of May. This was probably due to the "Guard your gun" publicity campaign.

To help combat the threat of subversion both Kanu and Kadu had asked for lists of any of their members who might be suspect.

The Land Freedom Army collected money under a number of guises. A favourite trick was to pose as an education society collecting money to send students overseas. Many sums of 5s. had been collected from people who thought they were subscribing to a good cause.

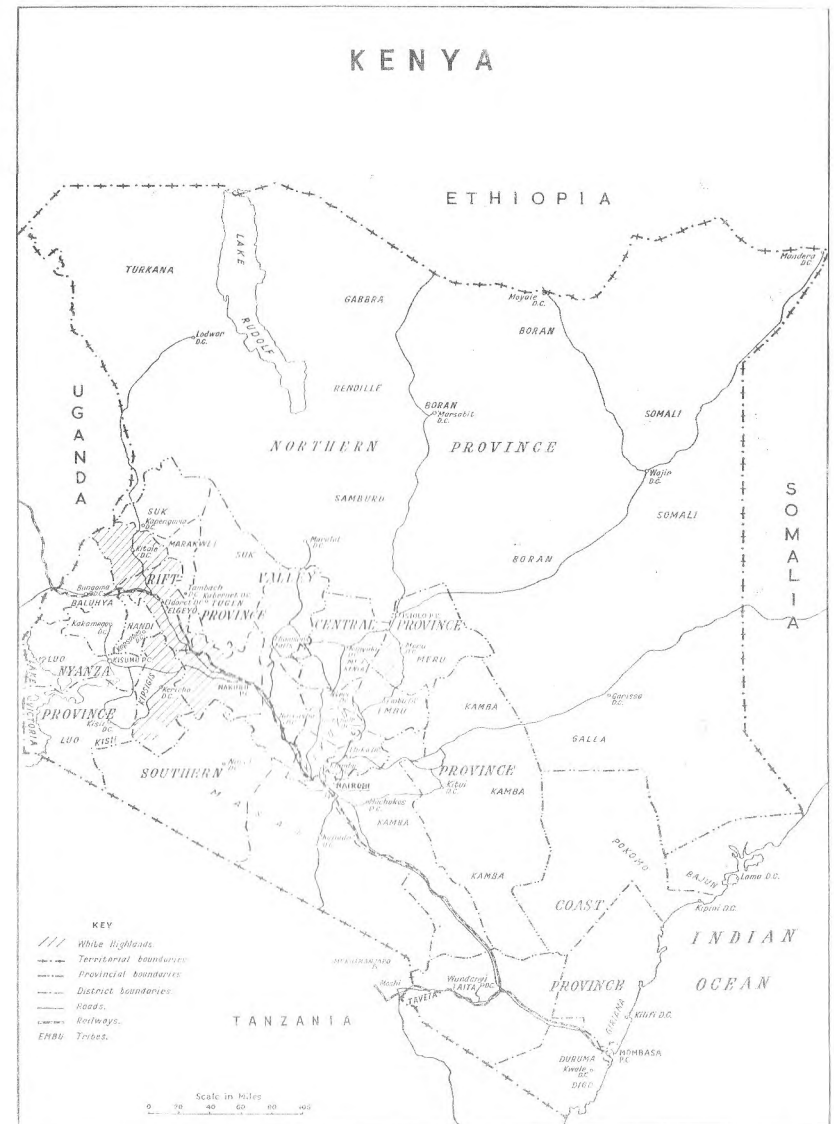
Many of the people who had attended oathing had not the faintest idea what it was all about. A campaign by the African leaders could stop the organisation spreading among people like these, though it was doubtful if the hard core would listen to anybody but themselves.

May do good

So far there was no connection between crimes of violence and the Land Freedom Army. But it was using intimidation to get extra funds. Mr. Swann did not think intimidation had had any effect on public policy as yet.

He did not think that the release of Jomo Kenyatta would have any harmful effect on the situation and it could do good.

Mr. Swann recalled that in his days at Nyeri, where he was a District Commissioner, he had met the problem of subversion as long ago as 1938, and forecast that his successors in the Ministry would continue to meet it for many years to come.



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