

**CHILDREN AND THE MAU MAU: A CASE STUDY OF KIKUYU DIVISION OF
KIAMBU DISTRICT, 1952-1960**

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DECLARATION.

THIS PROJECT ENTITLED "CHILDREN AND THE MAU MAU: A CASE STUDY OF KIKUYU DIVISION OF KIAMBU DISTRICT, 1952-1960", IS MY ORIGINAL WORK AND TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE HAS NOT BEEN PRESENTED FOR A DEGREE IN ANY OTHER UNIVERSITY

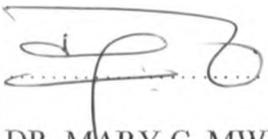


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DEDICATION.

**This work is dedicated to my loving parents, Mr. Mwaura
Njiru and Mrs. Judith Muthoni Mwaura**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

First, my thanks go to Almighty God for His grace and faithfulness, which has enabled me to complete this work. Secondly, I would like to express my gratitude to the University of Nairobi, through the Department of History and Archaeology for the award of scholarship to pursue this degree. Thanks to the British Institute in Eastern Africa for the financial support during my research. Special thanks to my two supervisors, Dr. Mary C. Mwiandi and Dr. George M. Gona for having taken time to go through this work, and for availing me time any moment I needed their guidance. Thanks also to all the lecturers in the Department of History and Archaeology for the academic nourishment and comments that went along way in enriching this study. I express my thanks to Peter Kamau Kio, my research assistant, his wife and all the informants for availing me time and assistance during the field data collection. Furthermore, I would like to thank the staff members of Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library (JKML), McMillan Memorial Library, Kenya National Archives, Kenya National Library Services (KNLS), Ministry of National Planning and Development library, St. Andrew (PCEA) church and British Institute in Eastern Africa library for tirelessly assisting me to find materials I needed for this study. My thanks also go to all my colleagues undertaking this programme for walking the walk with me; their encouragement played a vital role towards the completion of this work. On a more personal level, I most sincerely thank my parents Mr. Mwaura Njiru and Mrs. Judith Muthoni Mwaura and the entire family for their material, moral and spiritual support. You are friends in deed.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

A A D - African Affairs Department

A.R - Annual report

C B S – Central Bureau of Statistics

C.D.D – Community Development Department

C O – Colonial Office

C.P- Central Province

C.P.K- Colony and Protectorate of Kenya

D C- District Commissioner

E.A.A-East African Association

E.A. S –East African Standard

H.O.R- Handing Over Report

I B E A C – Imperial British East Africa Company

K.A.U.-Kenya African Union

KBU-Kiambu

K.C A- Kikuyu Central Association

K.I.S.A- Kikuyu Independent Schools Association

K.K.S.A – Kikuyu Karing’ a Schools Association

K.N.A-Kenya National Archives

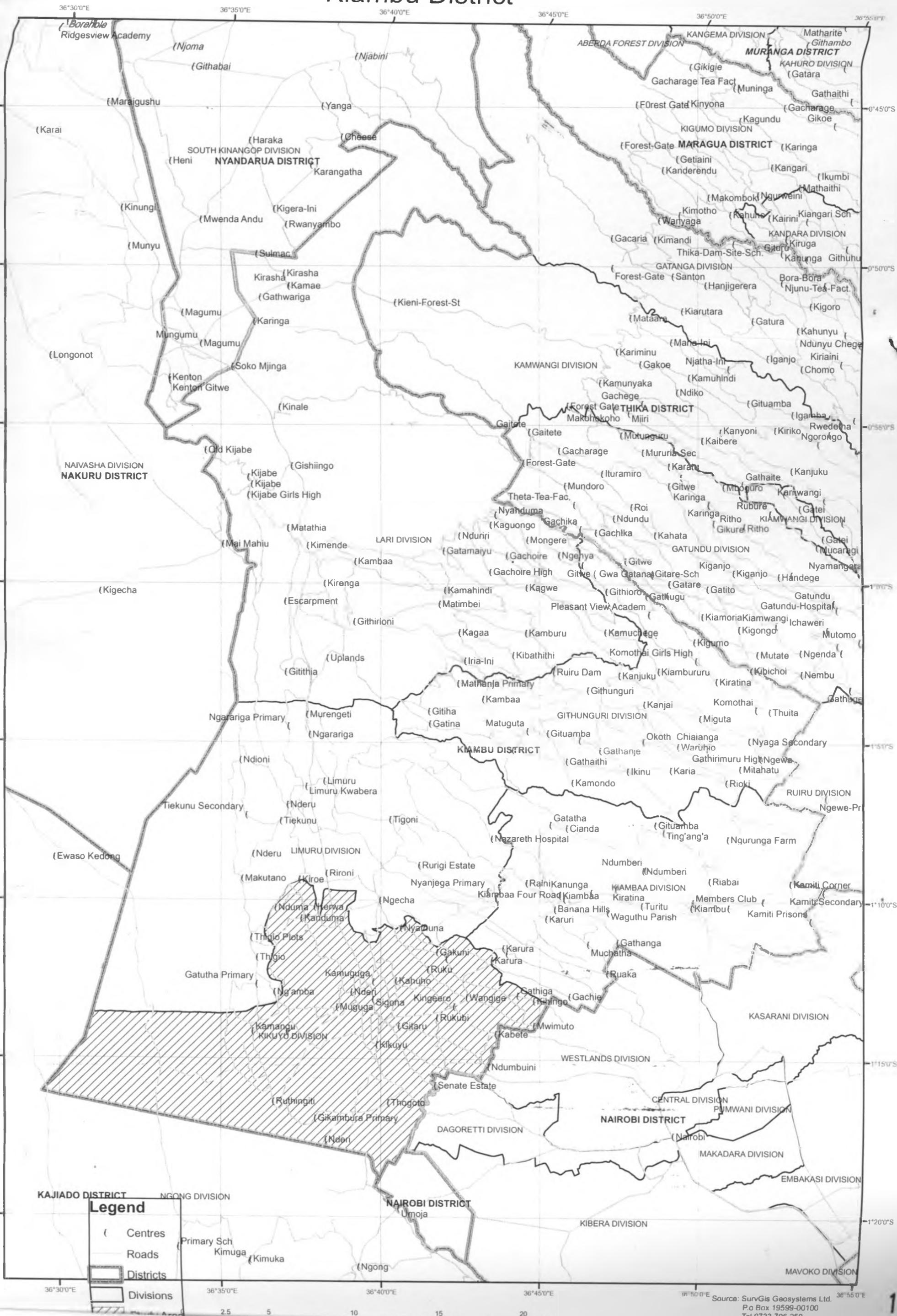
N.A.D- Native Affairs Department

NKU –Nakuru

P.C.E A- Presbyterian Church of East Africa

R.N.L.O-Resident Native Labourers Ordinance

Kiambu District



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ABSTRACT.

This study was about the role and the impact of the Mau Mau movement on children, 1952-1960. The study aimed to test three hypotheses namely, various factors influenced children participation in the Mau Mau movement; that children played role in the Mau Mau and that the Mau Mau had significant impact on children. The study utilized both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was obtained from books, articles in journals and internet sources. Secondary data was followed by the archival data collection, which was hoped to fill the gaps identified. Gaps noted from the archives were filled through oral interviews. Oral interviews were conducted using an open ended questionnaire. Data was captured by use of note taking. Data collected was analyzed and presented qualitatively through narratives and discussions.

The study found out that like men and women, children played a significant role in the Mau Mau movement. After the administration of the oath, children served as combatants, suppliers of foodstuffs, guns and ammunition, writing materials, tobacco and other necessities to designated places for the fighters. Children spied, scouted and undertook the various domestic duties both in the forests and African Reserves. Only a small number of children joined the Mau Mau forest wing; majority operated within and around African Reserves.

The study has demonstrated that children participation in the Mau Mau movement was influenced by various factors: peer and parental influence, lack of basic necessities and inability to access education opportunities, harassment by colonial security personnel and the rigidity of the missionaries on female circumcision.

The study established that as a result of their involvement in the Mau Mau, children were affected largely negatively. They lacked basic needs, education, parental care especially following the killing, detention, imprisonment or as many parents run away from harassment by the security forces. Moreover, children were severely beaten, detained and even killed. Similarly, children were forced to provide communal labour and sexual relations, which carried long term bitterness, a confirmation of the set objectives and hypothesis.

Children formed an important strand of the complex Mau Mau movement. Without their involvement, Mau Mau in my view may have militarily been defeated earlier that it did.

DEFINITION OF TERMS.

A Child- According to the Kikuyu society, any one who had not circumcised was considered a child, and children were not considered full members of the society.¹ They could not undertake responsibilities such as defending the society, or even share in its secrets.² Although the age when initiation rite took place varied from place to place among the Kikuyu, majority of the initiates underwent the rite between the ages of 14 and 17 years.³ Many children who joined Mau Mau had undergone circumcision, therefore, were considered to be adults. On the other hand, the Ordinance number xii, of 1955 titled “An Ordinance to provide for the prevention of cruelty to and neglect of children” defined a child as any person under the age of 16 years.⁴ Moreover, according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is defined as “every human being below the age of eighteen years old, unless the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”.⁵ For the purposes of this study, the term child was used to refer to anyone who was under the age of 18 years between 1952 and 1960 whether circumcised or otherwise.

Home Guards- These were the Africans who were considered loyal to the British Colonial government and who were recruited to serve the British as soldiers and police in their fight against Mau Mau.⁶ This group belonged to a semi-military organization, formed and partly armed by the colonial government to aid in the maintenance of law and

¹Phyllis N. Muraya, *The Kenya African Teachers College-Githunguri, 1939-1952*, B.A Dissertation, University of Nairobi, 1972, pp. 23-24.

²Oral Interview with Joram Kinyanjui, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, May 11, 2007.

³Ibid.

⁴Milcah Amolo Achola, “Youth, poverty and Destitution in Nairobi, 1945-1960”, Paper presented in a conference organized by B. I. E. A and I. F. R. A, June 28-30th, Nyeri, 2006, p. 1.

⁵Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, “The Convention on the Rights of the Child”

<http://www.un.org/special-rep/children-armed-conflict/keydocuments/CRC/CRCeng> accessed, 09/05/2007.

⁶Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu women, the Mau Mau Rebellion and Social Change in Kenya*, Boulder: West View Press, 1992, p. 150.

order in the various African Reserves.⁷ Their other roles were: policing their local areas and protecting the loyalists, arrest Mau Mau suspects and to obtain information on Mau Mau operations.

Kifagio- Refers to a colonial government de-stocking policy organized under the Ministry of Labour, which involved drastic reduction of the squatters' Stocks. Under the de-stocking policy, Africans' livestock was shot by the government or they were forced to sell at a disposal prices; usually to the European owned companies.⁸ By so doing, the government partly was crippling the African economic progress thus ensuring a steady supply of labour to the European settler farmers. On the other side, it was employed as a means intended to curb soil erosion purported to have been caused by overstocking and overgrazing. The policy laid the ground for the emergence of the Mau Mau since it cut the Africans from economic advancement thus intensifying poverty. These conditions partly contributed in arousing African political consciousness.

Mau Mau- Refers to a multidimensional and a highly complex movement. Scholars have viewed the Mau Mau movement either as having been a civil war, or anti-Christian and anti-European movement; others have praised the movement seeing it as a true African nationalist struggle to free themselves from the yoke of colonialism.⁹

For the purposes of this study, Mau Mau was used to refer to an African anti-colonial movement in Kenya that broke out in 1952 whose aim was the regaining of the alienated

⁷ African Reserves were created with the intent to confine the Africans thus effectively controlling their movement, for better security operations but more significantly for ease labour recruitment on government projects and in settler farms. Unlike the Africans, Europeans and Asians were not confined in Reserves.

⁸ Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau, 1905-1963*, London: James Currey, 1987, p. 46.

⁹ For details on the different interpretation of the Mau Mau movement, see pages 4-7 of chapter one.

land and independence. Mau Mau comprised the Kipsigis, Nandi, Maasai, Luhya especially the Bukusu, Kamba, Pokot, Luo, Kisii, Kikuyu, Embu and Meru people.¹⁰

However, almost the entire communities of Kikuyu, Embu and Meru supported the Mau Mau. The Mau Mau was violent, armed and highly militant.

Nationalism- Refers to a strong desire by a group of people who share the same race, culture, language and beliefs among other aspects of life, to form an independent country. It's a strong feeling of love of and pride for your country that obligates someone to sacrifice to fight and even die while defending it against the enemy.

Squatter- Refers to an African who was permitted to reside on a European farmer's land during the colonial period on condition that he/she worked for the European owner for a specified period. In return for his/her services, the African was entitled to use some of the settler's land for the purpose of cultivation and grazing.¹¹

¹⁰Frank Furedi, *Mau Mau War in Perspective*, Nairobi: Heinemann, 1990, p. 9; Bethwell A. Ogot, *History as a Destiny and History as Knowledge: Being Reflections on the Problems of Historicity and Historiography*, Kisumu: Anyonge Press Ltd, 2005, pp. 350, 404-405.

¹¹Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, p. 10.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY.

The establishment of colonial rule and of settler farming in Kenya had profound impact on the Africans. The construction of the Uganda railway (1896-1901) enhanced effective administration of the British East Africa Protectorate.¹² The railway was intended to help eradicate slave trade and slavery, enhance evangelization by the Christian missionaries and support the traditional British commercial development. However, its key object was to create a political and military situation in order to effectively and efficiently control River Nile waters.¹³ According to Frederick J.D. Lugard, Uganda was important because Egypt was important. Egypt thus needed security for Uganda and the source of the Nile in order to protect the headwaters from falling into the hands of other European powers.¹⁴ Winston Churchill, the colonial secretary described the railway in 1908 as “political” railway because it was meant to inform the world that Britain ruled the headwaters of the White Nile and that its intention was to stay.¹⁵ The Uganda railway opened up the sparsely populated country to the adventurous settlers. To promote the development of settler agriculture, the colonial government alienated large tracts of fertile land, which later came to be known as “White Highlands”.¹⁶ By the end of 1915, for example, 5, 275, 121 acres of land had been alienated.¹⁷ Through a series of excisions, a total of approximately 7.5 million acres of land was alienated from the Africans.¹⁸ In Kikuyuland, for instance, a total of 120.64 square miles of land

¹²Terje Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British: Political Ecology and the Quest for Economic Power*, London: I. B. TAURIS, 2004, p. 34; Richard Frost, *Race Against Time: Human relations and Politics in Kenya Before Independence*, Nairobi: Transafica Press, 1997, pp.7-8.

¹³Terje Tvedt, *The River Nile in the Age of the British*, 2004, p. 33.

¹⁴Ibid, p. 34.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion and Social Change in Kenya*, 1992, p.3; Richard Frost, *Race Against Time*, 1997, pp.7-8.

¹⁷M.P.K., Sorrenson, *Origins of European Settlement in Kenya*, Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968, p.145.

¹⁸Frank Furedi, *The Mau Mau war in Perspective*, 1990, p. 9.

was alienated of which 93.41 square miles were in Kiambu District.¹⁹ Although the European settler farmers were to pay three rupees per acre to the Kikuyu land owners as compensation for their loss of the rights over land use, majority did not receive any compensation;²⁰ thus, the cry of “give us” back our land begun in Kiambu.²¹ Among the three Kikuyu districts (Nyeri, Murang’a and Kiambu), Kiambu district was the first to have contact with the European explorers and agents of I.B.E.A.C. Consequently, it was the first to be conquered and effectively controlled by the British.²²

Land alienation was accompanied by the African labour requirements. To compel the Africans to provide labour to the European settlers and on government projects, it became necessary to enact the various labour policies among them the Poll and Hut tax regulations (1901, 1902), the Communal Labour Laws (1908), the Native Authority Laws (1910, 1912) and the Native Registration Ordinance (1915).²³ To compel the Africans to provide labour, the colonial headmen applied force and intimidation. For example, in Kiambu and Fort Hall (Murang’a) districts, colonial chiefs expropriated property, beat up the Africans and sexually harassed the women who resisted forced labour.²⁴ From 1915, women and children were the main source of labour to the settler farms since most of the energetic men had been conscripted into the First World War.²⁵ Children started to offer labour in coffee and pyrethrum plantations between the ages ten and

¹⁹Richard Frost, *Race Against Time*, 1997, p. 108; C. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *The Myth of Mau Mau: Nationalism in Kenya*, Nairobi: E.A.P.H., 1966, p.19.

²⁰M.P.K., Sorrenson, *The Origins of European Settlement in Kenya*, 1968, p. 179.

²¹Richard Frost, *Race Against Time*, 1997, p.106.

²²East African Standard, June 7, 1946, in Richard Frost, *Race Against Time*, 1997, p. 40.

²³Berman Bruce, “Administration and Politics in Colonial Kenya”, (PhD Thesis), Yale University, 1974, pp. 188-190.

²⁴Robert Tigner, *The Colonial Transformation of Kenya: The Kamba, Kikuyu and Maasai from 1900-1939*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, pp. 48, 167.

²⁵KNA, AR/273/KBU/19, “Annual Report-Kiambu”, 1915-1916, p.1; KNA, AR/275/KBU/10, “Dagoretti Sub-district, Annual Report”, 1916-1917, p.1; KNA, AR/KBU/16, “Annual Report-Kiambu”, 1923, p.19; KNA, AR/KBU, “Native Affairs Department”, 1925, p. 64; KNA, AR/KBU, “Native Affairs Department”, 1926, p.79; KNA, AR/KBU, “Native Affairs Department”, 1927, p.100.

twelve years,²⁶ and were paid between six and eight shillings per month. However, some children were not put on the pay roll.²⁷ On the other hand, women received between twelve and sixteen shillings per month.²⁸

Besides land alienation and forced labour, African culture was undermined especially by the Christian missionary groups through their stand against female circumcision. Moreover, Africans were discriminated against in social, economic and political affairs. African grievances had by mid 1940s reached unprecedented levels. Landlessness, intimidation, harassment, and impoverishment of the Africans led to discontentment and frustration hence the emergence of the Mau Mau movement. This study underscores the fact that Mau Mau was an African nationalist movement; a militant anti-colonial struggle, which broke out in 1952 following the “assassination of Senior Chief Waruhiu wa Kung’u on October 7, 1952 along Limuru road in western outskirts of Nairobi”.²⁹ Chief Waruhiu came from Kiambu District and was a government paramount chief for Central Province.³⁰ As a senior chief, Waruhiu presided over the Native Tribunal hearings as Governor’s representative with powers equivalent to those of a magistrate.³¹ Moreover, being a prominent Kikuyu and a landlord, Waruhiu was bitterly opposed to the claims of the Mau Mau that large land owners ought to have provided for the landless. Furthermore, like the European settlers, he had evicted some Kikuyu tenants from his farms.³² Chief Waruhiu’s views, responsibilities and position brought him into direct confrontation with the Mau Mau fighters, which caused his death.

²⁶ Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion and Social Change in Kenya*, 1992, p.76.

²⁷ Tabitha Kanogo, *The Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, p. 49.

²⁸ KNA, AR/KBU, Native Affairs Department”, 1928, p.64

²⁹ KNA, DC/KBU/11/1, “Chiefs’ Character Book”, entry for 1952, by D.C., Kennaway.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain’s Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2005, p. 55.

³² Ibid.

Historians have devoted much of their time in conducting researches, which are geared towards a better understanding of the Mau Mau movement. Some writers have interpreted Mau Mau from a Eurocentric stand, seeing it as the failure of the Kikuyu to absorb modernizing influence, which had been imposed on them rather too suddenly.³³ According to J.C. Carothers, Mau Mau broke out because of the shock of drastic change in the Kikuyu way of life brought about by such factors as missionary influence, education, commercial enterprises and European farming.³⁴ T.F.C. Bewes states that Mau Mau was an anti-Christian movement that had reverted to tribal atavism, paganism and cultural barbarism.³⁵ To many colonial administrators, Mau Mau movement was a *dini*-a religious sect, controlled by the KCA behind the facade of KAU.³⁶ Accordingly, Mau Mau movement was described as a "spiritual disease" and a "demonic" organization in which the fighters were possessed by an "evil spirit" whose only cure was the spiritual medicine of the Christian gospel.³⁷ In general, the Whites depicted Mau Mau movement as having comprised of "evil dark" savages running around with machetes preying on innocent Whites.³⁸ Yet, to other scholars, Mau Mau movement was made up of hooligans and that it was a disease which had been eradicated and never to be remembered.³⁹

Views opposed to the Eurocentric based ones view Mau Mau movement from varied perspectives. For instance, Mau Mau was an outcome of material struggles between the Kikuyu and the White

³³F. D. Corfield, *Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau*, London: H.M.S.O. 1960, Preface, iii-vi.

³⁴J.C. Carothers, *The Psychology of Mau Mau*, Nairobi: Government Printers, 1954, p. 15.

³⁵T.F.C. Bewes, *Kikuyu Conflict: Mau Mau and the Christian Witness*, London: Highway Press, 1953, pp.20,23,51-56 and 71; see also Berman Bruce and J. Lonsdale. *Unhappy Valley*, 1992, p. 445; Margaret, W. Gachihii "The Role of the Kikuyu Women in Mau Mau" (M.A. Thesis), University of Nairobi, 1986, p.3.

³⁶Berman Bruce and J. Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, 1992, p.250; see also Wunyabari, O. Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya*, p. 73.

³⁷KNA, AHC/8/173, British Government Press Release, "Christian Churches Role in Combating Mau Mau", September 24, 1953

³⁸A. S. Cleary, "The Myth of Mau Mau in its International Context", *African Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 355, April 1990, pp. 227-245.

³⁹Jomo Kenyatta, *Suffering Without Bitterness*, Nairobi: E.A.P.H., 1968, p. 189.

settlers.⁴⁰ Moreover, Mau Mau movement is viewed as a civil war between the modernists and debased traditionalists of religious fervor. Many scholars argue that Mau Mau was not only against the Europeans and the government but was also against anyone including the Kikuyu who stood between the Kikuyu politics and power.⁴¹ Mau Mau was a war between the loyalists and rebels, and between Mau Mau and all who did not share the same values with the rebels, those who rejected violence and armed struggle as a way forward and all who questioned the moral basis of the claims made by the rebels on rights over land use, ownership and access to property.⁴²

Yet, another category of scholars,⁴³ have tended to glorify Mau Mau movement seeing it as a form of African nationalism against the unjust, corrupt and oppressive colonial system.⁴⁴ To the adherents of Mau Mau movement, all those who were friends of the Europeans or acquiesced in

⁴⁰ Berman Bruce and J. Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa*, London: James Currey, 1992, p.9; see also Bethwell A. Ogot, "Mau Mau and Nationhood; the Untold Story", in John Lonsdale, E.S. Atieno Odhiambo, Derek Peterson, Cristiana Pugliese, David A. Percox, David M. Anderson, Kennell Jackson, Jr, Caroline Elkins, Joanna Lewis, Marshall S. Clough and James Ogude, *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narrative*, Oxford: James Currey, 2003, p.9; Martin Frankie, "Clash of Cultures: Mau Mau and the Problematic Interaction Between Christianity and Native Kikuyu Beliefs in British Colonial Kenya", <http://www.American.edu/honors/Activities/2004/Capstones/martin.pdf>, p. 5, accessed on February 15, 2008.

⁴¹ Richard Frost, *Race Against Time*, 1997, p. 141.

⁴² Berman Bruce and J. Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, 1992, pp. 84, 127 and 240; See also Caroline Elkins, "Detention, Rehabilitation and Detention of Kikuyu Society" in John Lonsdale et al, *Mau Mau and Nationhood*, 2003, p. 192.

⁴³ Maina wa Kinyatti, *Mau Mau: A Revolution Betrayed*, New York: Mau Mau Research Centre, 2000; Muthoni Likimani, *Pass Book Number F. 47927: Women and Mau Mau in Kenya*, Nairobi: Nani's Publicity, 1998; Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion and Social Change in Kenya*, Boulder: West View Press, 1992; Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau, 1905 - 1963*, 1987; Margaret, W, Gachihi, "The Role of Kikuyu Women in Mau Mau", 1986; Waruhiu Itote (General China), *Mau Mau in Action*, Nairobi: Transafrica Press, 1979; Kathy Santilli, "Kikuyu Women in the Mau Mau Revolt: A Closer Look", *Ufahamu*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1977; Anthony Clayton, *Counter - insurgency in Kenya 1952-1960: A Study of Military Operations Against Mau Mau*, Nairobi: Transafrica Publisher, 1976; Bildad Kaggia, *Roots of Freedom 1921 - 1963: An Autobiography*, Nairobi: E.A.P.H, 1975; Abour Ojwando C., "White Highlands No More: A Modern Political History of Kenya", Vol. 1, Nairobi: Pan African Researchers, 1970; Tom Mboya, *Freedom and After*, London: Andre Deutsch, 1963; Mary Ciambaka Mwiandi, "The Role of African Evangelists and Teachers in the Development of Western Education and Christianity in Nithi Division of Meru District of Kenya, 1907-1960", (M.A Thesis), University of Nairobi, 1993, pp. 244-245.

⁴⁴ Colonial system is used to refer to not only the British Colonial government in Kenya, but also, includes all its agents, sympathizers and collaborators.

government were traitors and any one who gave evidence against Mau Mau had to be destroyed.⁴⁵ Additionally, some scholars have viewed Mau Mau as being a rebellion resulting from a clash of cultures between the British and the Kikuyu.⁴⁶ According to Frankie, religion is itself part of culture. For example, among the Kikuyu it was difficult to separate a religious from a cultural practice.⁴⁷ Female circumcision, for example, could be classified as both a cultural and a religious custom.⁴⁸ Frankie further argues that the missionaries brought Christianity in Kenya which was also intimately intertwined with British culture.⁴⁹ Frankie concludes that determined to conserve their culture, Africans organized the Mau Mau in order to overthrow the colonial regime.⁵⁰ It was the African desire to conserve their culture that partly caused the Mau Mau struggle but also in order to regain their political and economic freedom.

While scholars hold different views of what Mau Mau was, there is yet another problem about the origin of the term Mau Mau. The term Mau Mau has different origins according to different groups of people. On one side, Mau Mau is seen as a European creation. To this group, the term arose from the inability of the Europeans to pronounce the word *muma* (oath) correctly.⁵¹ On the other side, Mau Mau in Kikuyu meant “greedy eating”; sometimes used by the mothers to rebuke children who were eating too fast or too much.⁵² In Kiambu District, the term was occasionally used when referring to certain elders who when called by the chief to hear a case were more interested in the few shillings or goats they would receive than in dispensing justice. Often these

⁴⁵ Richard Frost, *Race Against Time*, 1997, p. 141.

⁴⁶ Martin, Frankie, “Clash of Cultures”, 2008, p. 3.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Donald L. Barnett and Karari Njama, *Mau Mau from Within: Autobiography and Analysis of Kenya's Peasant Revolt*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1966, p. 55.

⁵² Ibid, p. 53.

elders magnified the seriousness of the case in order to get from the guilty person a fine of a goat or lamb, which they would then slaughter, roast and eat.⁵³ Consequently, the elders were sometimes called *Kiama Kia Mau Mau* or “the Council of Greedy Eaters”.⁵⁴ During the nationalist struggle the term was associated desire among the Africans to drive out the Europeans from Kenya. Moreover, there are views that the term was coined from the Kikuyu terms *uma uma*, literally meaning *out out*, calling on the Africans unite in a bid to fight the Europeans.⁵⁵ Additionally, Africans embraced the term Mau Mau to mean *Mzungu Arudi Uingereza, Mwamfika Apate Uhuru*, that is, let the European return to England and African obtain his freedom.⁵⁶ In this study, the term Mau Mau has been used to refer to the Africans who joined the Mau Mau movement and swore to use whatever means to fight colonialism.

Men, women and children were involved in the Mau Mau. This study sought to examine the role played by children in the Mau Mau as well as its impact of Mau Mau on them; in my view, an area yet to be unraveled.

1.2 RESEARCH SETTING.

1.2.1 Administrative.

Kiambu District is one of the seven districts that form Central Province. It borders Nairobi City and Kajiado District to the south, Nakuru District to the west, Nyandarua District to the northwest and Thika District to the east. Kiambu District lies between latitudes 0° 75’ and 1° 20’ south of the

⁵³Ibid, pp. 53-54.

⁵⁴Ibid, p. 54.

⁵⁵Ibid, p. 53.

⁵⁶Ibid.

Equator and longitudes 36° 54' and 36° 85' east.⁵⁷ The district is the smallest in Central Province with a total area of 1,323.9 km². It is divided into seven administrative divisions namely Kiambaa, Limuru, Ndeiya, Githunguri, Lari, Kiambu Municipality and Kikuyu; thirty-seven locations and one hundred and twelve sub-locations.⁵⁸ The breakdown of the area, the number of the locations and sub-locations in each administrative division is shown in the table below.

Table 1.0 Administrative units by division in Kiambu District.

Division	Area (km ²)	Locations	Sub-Locations
Kiambu Municipality	99.4	5	11
Kiambaa	91.1	5	17
Limuru	155.5	5	12
Ndeiya	125.2	1	4
Githunguri	175.2	6	20
Lari	441.1	9	22
Kikuyu	236.4	6	26
Total	1,323.9	37	112

Source: District Commissioner's Office, Kiambu District, 2001 in Ministry of Finance and Planning, "Kiambu District Development Plan, 2002-2008" p.4.

Kiambu District has five constituencies; Kiambaa, Limuru, Githunguri, Lari and Kabete. The boundaries of these constituencies do not necessarily correspond to those of the divisions. For instance, while Kiambaa Constituency embraces Kiambu Municipality and Kiambaa divisions, Limuru Constituency comprises Limuru and Ndeiya divisions; Kabete (Kikuyu) Constituency

⁵⁷ Ministry of Finance and Planning, "Kiambu District Development Plan: Effective Management for Sustainable Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction", Nairobi: Government Printer, 2002, p.4.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

covers Kikuyu Division whereas Githunguri and Lari Constituencies cover Githunguri and Lari divisions respectively.⁵⁹

1.2.2 Physiographic and Natural Conditions.

The district is divided into broader topographical regions namely Upper Highland, Upper Midland, Lower Highland and Lower Midland.⁶⁰ The Upper Highland is found mainly in Lari Division. This is an extension of the Aberdare Ranges, which are steep and form important water catchments for rivers. The Upper Highland lies at an attitude of 1,800m above sea level and is dominated by highly dissected ranges. The Upper Midland lies below 1,500m above sea level and covers parts of all divisions in the district, apart from Lari. The major features are volcanic footbridges and widespread ridges. The Lower Highland is mainly found in Limuru, parts of Kikuyu and Githunguri divisions. It is characterized by plateaus and high-level structural plains with an altitude ranging between 1,500 and 1,800m above sea level.⁶¹ The Lower Midland covers Ndeiya Division and Karai Location of Kikuyu Division, all comprising of dry plains.⁶²

Land and soils are the primary resource in Kiambu District in which approximately 90% of its total area is arable land. All divisions except Ndeiya and Karai Location of Kikuyu Division have high agricultural potential. Soils on high-level uplands areas are either under forest or horticultural crops such as cabbages, kales, carrots and potatoes. On the other hand, soils on volcanic footbridges are well drained and cover cash crops like coffee, tea and pyrethrum; while soils on plateaus are found in semi arid areas, especially in Ndeiya and Karai. Here, soils are either sandy or clay loams,

⁵⁹Ibid

⁶⁰Ibid, p.6.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

which are poorly drained. These areas are therefore potential for ranching and growth of drought resistant crops such as Soya beans and sunflower. Other natural resources in the district include water, forestry and mining. Quarries are mainly found in Githunguri Division while diatomite deposits are located in parts of Ndeiya and Karai Location of Kikuyu Division⁶³

Altitude is the major factor-influencing climate in the district. The lower areas around the eastern parts of Githunguri and Municipality divisions receive 500mm of rainfall, which increases to 1,500mm in the upper regions of the district. The rainfall is bimodal and reliable. Long rains occur between April and May while the short rains fall from October to November. The average annual rainfall is 1,239.6mm.⁶⁴ The mean temperature in the district is 26°C, with the average temperatures ranging from 20.4°C in the Upper Highlands to 34°C in the Lower Midlands of Karai Location of Kikuyu Division. July and August are the months during which the lowest temperatures are experienced, whereas January through March is the hottest months.⁶⁵

1.2.3 Demographic and Population Profile.

Compared with other districts in the Central Province, Kiambu District is the most densely populated except for the semi arid areas of Ndeiya Division and Karai Location in Kikuyu Division. These locations therefore have the highest poverty levels in the district.⁶⁶ For instance Nyeri District had a total population of 661, 156 by the year 2002 and it was projected to be 672, 321 by 2008. Thika district had 645, 713 people by the year 2002 and its population was aimed to be 656, 617 by 2008. On the other hand, Murang'a district had the lowest population, 348, 304

⁶³ Ibid, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁴ Ibid, pp. 7, 8.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 7; due to sudden weather and climatic changes, it was difficult to ascertain the current climatic conditions thus the necessity for this study to rely on the characteristics, which are more static hence the use of 2002 statistics.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

persons by 2002 and was projected to decline to stand at 327, 724 by 2008.⁶⁷ Contrary Kiambu district had a total of 475,576 people according to 1969 Census; 686,290 people by 1979,⁶⁸ while by 1989 the number had risen to 914,412 out of which 458,608 were male and 455,804 were female. According to 1989 Census, Kikuyu Division had a total of 144,138 people; 71,775 were male while 72,363 were female.⁶⁹ According to 1999 Population Census, the district had a total of 744,010 people out of which 369,101 were male while 374,909 were female; with the density of 562 persons per square kilometres.⁷⁰ By 1999, Kikuyu Division had a total of 194,521 people of whom 96,417 were male and 98,104 were female. By 2002; the population in the district had risen to 802,625; 398,180 males and 404,445 females with the average population density of 660 persons/km². Kikuyu Division had by 2002 a total population of 209,845, with the density of 888 persons/km². It was projected that by the end of the year 2008, the population would stand at 936,785.⁷¹ Due to the high population density in most parts of the district, land has been fragmented into small pieces resulting in a decline in productivity.⁷² In the less densely populated areas such as Ndeiya Division and Karai Location of Kikuyu Division the population is sparse.⁷³

⁶⁷ Kenya National Central Bureau of Statistics, 1999.

⁶⁸ Kenya National Mapping, "Kiambu District: District Population Survey, March 2004", <http://www.saferAfrica.org/progs/safetySecurity/armsmanagement/assessments/mapping/Kenya/districts/Kiambu.pdf>, pp. 6-7, accessed on June 23, 2008.

⁶⁹ Central Bureau of Statistics, "Office of the Vice-President and Ministry of Planning and National Development: Kenya Population Census, 1989", Vol. 1, March 1994, 1, 7 and 9.

⁷⁰ Central Bureau of Statistics, "Ministry of Finance and Planning, 1999 Population and Housing Census: Counting Our People for Development" Vol. 1, January 2001, Prefix, xxxiii.

⁷¹ Ministry of Finance and Planning, "Kiambu District Development Plan, 2002-2008: Effective Management for Sustainable Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction", pp. 8-9.

⁷² Due to the newly created administrative units across the country, administrative boundaries and sizes may have changed. More over, there have been changes in climate, whose characteristic has been prolonged famine and draught which might have altered the annual temperatures and rainfall across the country.

⁷³ Ibid, p. 8.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

Colonialism had a lot of effects on the African social, economic and political systems. Impoverishment, disillusionment, anger and frustration aroused their political consciousness. Up to the early 1940, Africans expressed their grievances to the colonial government through the various early political associations, independent schools and churches and later on through trade unionism. The emergence of the Mau Mau in the second half of the 1940s was part of this rising consciousness, a movement to overthrow the colonial regime.

Studies undertaken on the Mau Mau however do not adequately address the involvement of children in it. Although children have been mentioned as having taken part in the Mau Mau, their role has not been fully explored. Generally, Kenya's nationalist historiography has not given the story of children due recognition. In an effort to fully understand Mau Mau Movement, the story about children who formed part of the wider society, calls for a systematic investigation.

Kiambu District was chosen as the study area since for long scholars had stereotyped its inhabitants claiming that they played passive role in the Mau Mau nationalist struggle. Contrary, this study found out that the Kikuyu of Kiambu were active participants in the Mau Mau. Nevertheless, the district had many home guards, which made its inhabitants avoid open Mau Mau operations in order to avoid arrests and other forms of harassments. This study undertook to explore the involvement of children in the Mau Mau – the role they played and the manner in which they were impacted upon.

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.

The major aim of the research was to examine the involvement of children in Mau Mau. The specific objectives were:

- (i) To investigate the factors that influenced children participation in the Mau Mau.
- (ii) To examine what role children played in the Mau Mau.
- (iii) To assess the impact of Mau Mau on children.

1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS.

This study tested the following hypothesis:

- (i) Various factors influenced the children participation in the Mau Mau
- (ii) Children played a significant role in Mau Mau.
- (iii) Mau Mau had significant impact on children.

1.6 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY.

Historically, there has been an increasing interest in the study of child's involvement in conflict especially in Africa, but these interests have been focused on recent occurrences in countries such as "Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda, and Sudan.⁷⁴ Particular focus has been on child soldiers. However, this has given an erroneous picture that children's involvement in conflict is a recent phenomenon. This study was intended to explore the role and the impact of Mau Mau on children; a gap that had not yet been filled. Furthermore, how children were recruited, their involvement and the manner in which they coped, or were impacted on by the

⁷⁴ Carol Bellamy, *The State of the World's Children*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 13, 17-24; Save the Children, *Prospects for Africa's Children*, London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, 1990, pp. 11-17.

Mau Mau movement are good case references and learning points for conflict resolution practitioners.

Kiambu District was chosen as a good research area since it had been stereotyped as having been a loyalist stronghold than Murang'a and Nyeri districts.⁷⁵ Yet, a significant number of the Kikuyu from Kiambu played role in the Mau Mau. There was strong support of the Mau Mau in the district, which made government operations ineffective.⁷⁶ The people were well aware that if they supported the home guards they would be targets for assassination by the Mau Mau.⁷⁷ Efforts to set up the home guard posts therefore met bitter opposition.⁷⁸ The study provides a better understanding of the complex Mau Mau in which children formed one of its strands

1.7 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS.

This research examined the role and impact of Mau Mau on children. The study was based in Kikuyu Division of Kiambu District, between 1952 and 1960. Mau Mau broke out in 1952,⁷⁹ while the State of Emergency was officially lifted on January 12, 1960 by the then governor, Sir Patrick Renison.⁸⁰ Kiambu was the first of the three Kikuyu districts (Kiambu, Nyeri and Murang'a) to have contact with the European explorers and agents of I.B.E.A.C. Kiambu was thus the first to be conquered and effectively controlled by the British.⁸¹ The Kikuyu of Kiambu District were greatly

⁷⁵ Robert Buijtenhuijs, *Mau Mau-Twenty Years After: The Myth and the Survivors*, Leiden: Mouton Afrika Studiecentrum, 1973, p. 55.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 2005, p. 241.

⁷⁹ Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, p. 137.

⁸⁰ KNA, "Report of the Committee on Emergency Declaration Camps", Nairobi, 1959, pp. 3 - 4.

⁸¹ East African Standard, June 7, 1946, in Richard Frost, *Race Against Time*, 1997, p. 40.

affected by colonialism especially because of land alienation and forced labour. It was common for school children in Kiambu to supplement adult labour shortages.⁸²

Moreover, a significant number of the Mau Mau supporters were residents of Kikuyu Division who besides land alienation had been detained or were concentrated into village camps either at Dagoretti, Thogoto, Ndeiya or Kinoo. These people provided resourceful information through oral interviews on the participation and the experiences of children in the Mau Mau.

In course of this study I experience problems of lack of adequate funds necessary to conduct data collection. Moreover, some interviewees were reluctant to be interviewed.⁸³

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW.

Many scholars have written covering different aspects on Mau Mau. Most studies have extensively covered the causes of Mau Mau, the course and its organization, as well as the colonial government counter- insurgency responses.⁸⁴ However, some scholars have specialized on the role of women in Mau Mau.⁸⁵ Further, Cola Ann Presley goes on to examine the manner in which Mau

⁸²East African Standard, June 7, 1946 in Richard Frost, *Race Against Time*, 1997, p. 40

⁸³For details on limitations see the section on methodology.

⁸⁴Anthony Clayton, *Counter- insurgency in Kenya*, 1976; Bildad Kaggia, *Roots of freedom*, 1975; Maina wa Kinyatti, *Mau Mau; A revolution Betrayed*, 2000; Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots Mau Mau*, 1987; F.D. Corfield, *Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau*, 1960; J.C. Carothers, *The Psychology of Mau Mau*, 1954; T. F.C. Bewes, *Kikuyu Conflict: Mau Mau and the Christian Witness*, 1953; Jomo Kenyatta, *Suffering Without Bitterness*, 1968; Richard Frost, *Race Against Time*, 1997; Frank Furedi, "The Social Composition of the Mau Mau Movement in the White Highlands" *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 1974 and C. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *Myth of Mau Mau: Nationalism in Kenya*, 1966.

⁸⁵Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu women, the Mau Mau Rebellion and Social Change in Kenya*, 1992; Margaret Gachihi, "The Role of Kikuyu Women in Mau Mau" 1986; Muthoni Likimani, *Pass Book Number, P. 47927: Women and Mau Mau in Kenya*, 1998; H.E. Crocker, "Women and Mau Mau" *Kenya weekly News*, No. 1424, May 14, 1954 and Kathy Santilli, *Kikuyu Women in the Mau Mau Revolt*, 1977.

Mau changed the social role of the Kikuyu women while Tabitha Kanogo, only in passing mentions about the role women played during the Mau Mau.⁸⁶

According to Anthony Clayton and D.C. Savage, the attempt by the colonial government to turn the country into a white settlement area and the subsequent development of settler plantation and mixed farms had a profound effect on the local African population. It led to landlessness, poverty and created a demand for a large number of wage labourers.⁸⁷ Coercion, fines and imprisonment were punishment for failure to comply with the communal labour laws. Under these laws entire village population were forced to suspend their own work in domestic production on command of the European District Officer as relayed through the headman and his hired retainers.⁸⁸ Their studies however are silent about the effects the labour requirements had on children and how children might have responded to it.

According to Kanogo, Kikuyu girls who had undergone the clitoridectomy were expelled from the mission schools and churches.⁸⁹ Cora Ann Presley adds that, mainly Africans who had converted to Christianity left the mission churches and schools and founded the African Independent schools and churches. African Independent schools were frequently closed down by the colonial government, suffered from shortage of funds, facilities and trained teachers.⁹⁰ However, her study was limited to squatters' resistance thus does not contain the information about what impact the closure of such schools had on the Kikuyu children.

⁸⁶ Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion and Social Change in Kenya*, 1992, pp. 92-146; Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, pp. 143-149.

⁸⁷ Anthony Clayton and D.C. Savage, *Government and Labour in Kenya, 1985 – 1963*, London: Frank Cass, 1974, pp. 22-28; Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, pp. 1-2;

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, pp. 89 – 90.

⁹⁰ Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu women, the Mau Mau Rebellion and social change in Kenya*, 1992, pp. 84 – 101; Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, pp. 78 – 92.

Moreover, Tabitha Kanogo highlights the blatant subordination of labour to capital by illustrating how the education of squatter children was seen to interfere with the settlers demands for child labour and how the settlers ensured that the squatters' educational programmes were adjusted to accommodate what they considered their (settlers) prior claim to the children's time.⁹¹ She further contends that the Olenguruone scheme led to increased politicization of the residents and the transformation of the oath into a tool for mass mobilization.⁹² While among the Kikuyu, the use of an oath as a tool of allegiance was a secret institution administered only to a select – minority of core members of a group who were almost always men, in Olenguruone and later the Mau Mau, men, women and children all took the oath as a means of eliciting mass unity against colonial oppression. Children were given the oath from the age of about eight, and would gather and pass on information that was vital to the safety of freedom fighters and their supporters.⁹³ However, the question of how and why the oath was administered to children is not clear.

Margaret Gachihi posits that mothers who went to oath ceremonies with babies strapped on the backs had the oath administrators touch the lips of the very young with a finger dipped in the oath paraphernalia, a symbolic act to show that the child was expected to give support to the Mau Mau in future.⁹⁴ The oath was administered to large groups of men, women and children.⁹⁵ In deed, forcible oathing of women and children were widespread.⁹⁶ Children were forcibly enlisted in Mau

⁹¹ Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, pp. 78 – 92.

⁹² *Ibid*, p. 108.

⁹³ Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Root Causes of the Mau Mau*, 1987, pp. 116 and 147; C. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *The Myth of Mau Mau*, 1960, pp. 253 – 4; F.D. Corfield, *Historical Survey of the Origin and Growth of Mau Mau*, 1960, p. 134; Margaret Gachihi, "The Role of Kikuyu Women in Mau Mau"; 1986, p. 186; Veny's Ladislav, *A History of the Mau Mau Movement in Kenya*, Prague: Charles University, 1970, p. 12; P. Evans, *Law and Disorder: Scenes of Life in Kenya*, London: Secker and Wabug, 1956, p. 24; and Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion and Social change in Kenya*, 1992, p. 129.

⁹⁴ Margaret Gachihi, "The Role of Kikuyu Women in Mau Mau", 1986, p. 187.

⁹⁵ Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion and Social Change in Kenya*, 1992, p. 129.

⁹⁶ F. D. Corfield, *Historical Survey of the Origin and Growth of Mau Mau*, 1960, p. 134.

Mau. Most of the recruits in Mau Mau were young men; the youngest members ever caught being only eleven years old.⁹⁷ Children, in one way or another played a part or were forced into Mau Mau activities by circumstances.⁹⁸ School children in particular, like other Mau Mau members became trusted allies and were found effective in among other things running errands or spying on the movement of the colonial troops as well as the Home Guards.⁹⁹ Her study was limited to the role of the Kikuyu women in the Mau Mau and not children. Thus, it do not explore the impact of the Mau Mau struggle on children.

Independent schools seem to have been active in the Mau Mau. Describing women's role in Kenya Africa Teachers College-Githunguri,¹⁰⁰ Cora Ann Presley argues that, although the girls were not taught to be nationalist or Mau Mau fighters, there was a strong nationalist sentiment among the young girls. The sentiment was so high that some girls decided to take guns to the forest to be with men and women to become freedom fighters.¹⁰¹ Moreover, particular attention was devoted by oathing teams to ensure that all school children had taken the Mau Mau oath.¹⁰² So successful were the oathing teams that at the declaration of the Emergency practically all children attending schools of K. I. S. A. and K. K. S. A. had done so, as did some of the children in mission schools.¹⁰³ It is evident that Mau Mau followers remained faithful because of oath taking through which they

⁹⁷ Margaret Gachihi, "The Role of Kikuyu Women in Mau Mau", 1986, p. 206.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 186.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Kenya African teachers College (KATC) was established in 1939 at Githunguri and Peter Mbiyu Koinange served as the first principal after he declined to take up a teaching post at the Alliance School. KATC was a complex institution since it operated a primary school and also a college. It as hoped to train the Africans who would later take an active role in training their fellow African in the independent school movement. The institution sometimes used for political sensitization under the guise of fund raising ceremonies especially by the KAU and KCA leaders. For more details, see for example, Phyllis N. Muraya, "The Kenya African Teachers College-Githunguri, 1939-1952", B.A. dissertation, University of Nairobi, 1972, pp. Prefix iii, 3-31.

¹⁰¹ Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion and Social Change in Kenya*, 1992, p. 102.

¹⁰² KNA, *History of Loyalists*, Nairobi: Government Printing Press, 1961, p. 21.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

swore to remain loyal to the Mau Mau. It is however not clear what might have influenced these children to join the Mau Mau.

According to Micere Mugo, seventeen years old girl scouted for the Mau Mau (initially against her will) consequently losing her leg in the operations. She was required to travel several miles ahead; usually in the company of another woman or a young boy every time before the freedom fighters' unit to which she was attached made a move. She would then walk back again with a report advising whether it was safe or not for the fighters to move on. As a result Mau Mau fighters were able get to their places of destination.¹⁰⁴ It's apparent that children did a variety of errands, yet, the colonial system with better spying methods did not realize the schemes of such errand children. How did the children disguise themselves to remain shelved from colonial administration suspicions? What factors might have precipitated children participation in Mau Mau? What was the impact of the Mau Mau movement on children?

Accounting on the Mau Mau operations, E.J. Baxter states that almost every Kikuyu man, woman and child carried pangas, as a multi-purpose agricultural implement. At close quarters, it was a deadly instrument and it was with this weapon that most of the Mau Mau secret society's crimes were committed.¹⁰⁵ However, it is not clear how children were entrenched in the Mau Mau movement.

¹⁰⁴ Micere, Mugo, "The Role of Women in the Struggle for Freedom", In Achola, Pala. T. Awori and A. Krystal (Eds), *The Participation of women in Kenya society*, Nairobi: K.L.B, 1978, pp. 215 – 218.

¹⁰⁵ E.J. Baxter, *Mau Mau: The Terror that has come to Kenya and What it Means*, Nairobi: East African News Review Ltd, 1958, p. 1; see also, Robert Buijtenhuijs, *Mau Mau-Twenty years After*, 1973, pp. 105-106.

Barnett and Karari Njama's study examines Mau Mau movement as a genuine peasants' war. The study limits its aims to the structure and organization of the guerrilla forces¹⁰⁶ Their work leaves out the role and the impact of the Mau Mau on children.

The outbreak of Mau Mau in 1952 was sparked off by the assassination of a pro-government, Senior Chief Waruhiu wa Kungu. The government response was the declaration of the State of Emergency on October 20, 1952. Rounding up and detention of over eighty thousand Kikuyu men and women followed this.¹⁰⁷ Approximately, fifteen thousand men and women, mainly the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru entered into the Mount Kenya and Nyandarua forests to conduct a guerrilla war against the Europeans and the Kikuyu who were loyal to the colonial government.¹⁰⁸ Considering the role African women play in the upbringing of children how did their imprisonment and flights into the forests affect the children?

Acknowledging the role of women in Mau Mau, Kanogo states that for women who had positions of authority, the deliberations were very time consuming and under normal circumstances would put enormous strain on the domestic front. That Mau Mau caused misunderstanding in families where only one of the spouses had taken the oath. She further posits that since security risks occasionally militated against the release of pregnant women, it was not unusual to have mature women to attend to the expectant mothers in the forest.¹⁰⁹ E.S. Atieno Odhiambo and J. Lonsdale, and Caroline Elkins add that most women served Mau Mau on the supply lines without which the

¹⁰⁶ Donald L. Barnett and Karari Njama, *Mau Mau from within: Autobiography and Analysis of Kenya's Peasant Revolt*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1966, pp. 9, 16.

¹⁰⁷ Jeremy Murray-Brown, *Kenyatta*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1972, p. 273.

¹⁰⁸ Margaret Gachihii, "The Role of Kikuyu Women in Mau Mau", 1986, pp. 186 -197; C. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *Myth of Mau Mau*, 1966, p. 20.

¹⁰⁹ Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1986, p. 146.

forest war would not have lasted a week.¹¹⁰ How did lack of communication in families impact on children?

According to Wambui Waiyaki Otieno, images of brutality of warders, harsh living conditions and dehumanizing treatment, including sexual assault, were rife in the detention camps. She further states that women scouts in the Mau Mau required working tools including paraphernalia such as wigs, various uniforms and make-ups.¹¹¹ Did girl children also require the paraphernalia? How exactly were children involved in Mau Mau?

Committed to wiping out and dislocating the Mau Mau, in 1954, the colonial government introduced the villagization programme. In many cases, security considerations led to the temporary removal of outlying schools, dispensaries and shops into the new villages. Huts were tightly squeezed together thus creating fertile grounds for the breeding of rats and outbreak of diseases.¹¹² By October 1955, approximately one million Kikuyu had been relocated into 845 new villages.¹¹³ More than 80,000 Kikuyu households in Kiambu District were uprooted between 1954 and 1955. This compelled over 300,000 men, women and children to migrate and build new villages, where they lived behind barbed wire fences, under guard and under curfew.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, villagization scheme adversely affected food production such that hardly could the

¹¹⁰ John Lonsdale, "Authority, Gender and Violence: The War Within Mau Mau's Fight for Land and Freedom" in John Lonsdale et al, *Mau Mau and Nationhood*, 2003, pp. 62-63.

¹¹¹ Wambui Waiyaki Otieno, *Mau Mau's Daughter: A Life History*, 1998, pp. 77-86 in John Lonsdale, et al, *Mau Mau and Nationhood*, 2003, pp. 38-44.

¹¹² D.E.B. Hughes, "Villages in the Kikuyu country": *Journal of African Administration*, October 1955 in Margaret Gachihi, "The Role of Kikuyu Women in Mau Mau", 1986, p. 149.

¹¹³ E. Huxley, *A New Earth*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1960, p. 238.

¹¹⁴ KNA, AR, "African Development Department", 1954, p. 32; KNA, CPK/CP/AR, "Community Development Department", 1955, pp. 35, 51; C. Rosberg and Nottingham J., *Myth of Mau Mau*, 1966, p. 304. For more information on the village camps, see KNA, CPK/CP/AR, "Community Development Department", 1957, p. 33 and KNA, CPK/CP/AR, Community Development Department", 1958, p.7.

villagers sustain themselves Africans were forced out into communal labour from six o'clock in the morning to five o'clock in the evening daily without pay or food.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, in 1955, the government ordered for the destruction of crops such as bananas, sugarcane, sweet potatoes, arrowroots, cassava and maize plants that were in the shambas and some just at the point of ripening.¹¹⁶ What did villagization and overcrowding mean to children in terms of access to education, health services and food?

Mau Mau led to death of thousands of the Africans while tens of thousands others were detained.

J.M. Kariuki estimates that about 1700 loyalists were killed by the Mau Mau, over 10,000 Mau Mau supporters by the security forces and detention of approximately 90,000 others.¹¹⁷ According to David Anderson more than 1800 African civilians were killed by the Mau Mau while hundreds disappeared. A total of 12,000 Mau Mau rebels were killed in the combat.¹¹⁸ Were children among those who were killed? How did the killings impact on children?

The reviewed literature demonstrate that enough research has not been done on the involvement of children in Mau Mau, a gap that this study was aimed to fill.

1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

This study was guided by two theories: Arnold Toynbee's "challenge – response" theory and Abraham Maslow's "Human Basic Needs" theory. According to the Toynbee, the process of creation of civilization is the outcome of an encounter – interplay of challenge and response. The

¹¹⁵ Margaret Gachihi, "The Role of Kikuyu women in Mau Mau", 1986, p. 149.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 153.

¹¹⁷ J.M. Kariuki, *Mau Mau Detainee: The Account by a Kenyan of his experience in Detention Camps, 1953- 1960*, Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1975, Preface, xi.

¹¹⁸ David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 2005, p. 4.

challenge may come from climate, aggression, militarism or any other factors.¹¹⁹ According to the theory, when a civilized society finds itself threatened by another, there are two alternative ways open to it for responding to the challenge: Zealotism and herodianism. Zealotism looks to the past and takes cover in it; zealots face the enemy with the traditional art of war. Herodian faces the present, he learns the technique of the living civilization.¹²⁰ However, Khwaja Masud has criticized Toynbee since he made no attempts to understand the rise and fall of civilizations. Toynbee puts all civilizations in a strait jacket and assumes that all civilizations pass through similar stages: all flourish and decay according to the same general rules; all ultimately die though some die suddenly while others linger on.¹²¹ This theory was helpful in analyzing the involvement and the response of children to colonialism and the Emergency challenges

The Arnold Toynbee challenge-response theory was complemented by the Abraham Maslow, Basic Human Need theory. Abraham Maslow argues that, the primary goal of psychology should be the integration of the self.¹²² In his major works "Motivation and psychotherapy", each person has a hierarchy of needs that must be satisfied ranging from basic physiological requirements, safety, social, belonging and esteem.¹²³ That, human needs are based on two groupings: deficiency needs and growth needs. Within the deficiency needs, each lower need must be met before moving to the next higher level. Once each of these needs has been satisfied, if at some future time a deficiency is detected, the individual will act to remove the deficiency.¹²⁴ Maslow further argues that an individual is ready to act upon the growth needs (self-actualization), if and only when the

¹¹⁹ Khwaja Masud, *Toynbee: A critique*, [http://www. Answer. Com/ topic/Arnold – t – toynbee](http://www.Answer.Com/topic/Arnold-t-toynbee), accessed on July 5, 2007.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² The New Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 7, 15th Ed, London: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. 2003, p. 911.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ W. Huitt, *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*, <http://Chiron.voldesta.edu/whuitt/col/regsys/maslow.html>, accessed on July 5, 2007.

deficiency needs are met.¹²⁵ According to this theory, people who lack food, shelter or who cannot feed themselves or be in a safe environment are unable to express higher needs and that when the basic needs are satisfied, an individual reaches self actualization. However, if at any moment a person is frustrated in their effort to satisfy these needs; they become violent and thus may result in conflict.¹²⁶

Toynbee's and Maslow's theories were relevant in analyzing the participation of children in Mau Mau. Colonization made the Africans particularly the Kikuyu impoverished. While their civilization was challenged and their land alienated, villagization programme, detention and imprisonment cut them off from the means to satisfy their basic needs. Faced with these challenges, and as part of the wider society, children responded by joining the Mau Mau.

1.10 METHODOLOGY.

This study utilized both primary and secondary data. Secondary information was obtained from books, articles in scholarly journals and periodicals at Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library (JKML), Kenya National Library Services (KNLS), McMillan Library and the British Institute in Eastern Africa Library. Government development plans obtained from the Ministry of Planning and Development Library as well as Internet services were utilized.

Secondary data collection was followed by obtaining primary data from the archives of the Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library, The Kenya National Library, MacMillan Memorial Library, PCEA Resource Centre and KNA. The colonial Annual Reports, PC/DC Handing over Reports, Prisons'

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ George Boeree, *Abraham Maslow, 1908-1970*, <http://www.shipo.edu/~gboeree/maslow.html>, accessed on May 15, 2007.

Department Reports, The East African Standard, Daily Nation and The Kenya Times newspapers were examined

After the completion of the data collection from the archives, I obtained a research permit from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and proceeded into the field to conduct oral interviews using an open-ended questionnaire. Open-ended questionnaire gave the respondents complete freedom of response; thus providing them with an insight into their feelings, background, hidden motivation, interests and decisions.¹²⁷ Probing was used to guide respondents to stick to the research questions. I engaged a research assistant, Peter Kamau Kio to interpreter and clarify the Kikuyu terminologies thus overcoming the problem of the language barrier.

To get the respondents, purposive snow-ball method was used. In this method, initial subjects with the desired characteristics were identified using purposive sampling technique. The few identified subjects named others whom they knew had the required characteristics until the researcher got the number of cases required. My initial subjects included Esther Wangari Kung'u, Joram Kinyanjui, and Reginald Murathe wa Munyua. After oral interviews, they named and helped to contact other people with the desired characteristics. Purposive snowball technique helped to overcome the problem where everybody today would want to be associated with Mau Mau, a situation that John Lonsdale refers to as 'the Mau Maus of the Mind'.¹²⁸ The target group comprised men and women who were aged 60 years and above.

¹²⁷ Olive Mugenda and Abel Mugenda, *Research Methods*, Nairobi: Acts Press, 1999, p. 73.

¹²⁸ John Lonsdale, "Mau Maus of the Mind: Making Mau Mau and Remaking Kenya", *Journal of African History*, Vol 31, No. 3, 1990, pp. 393-421.

This study was not without some difficulties. The first problem I experienced was with regard to acquiring some data from the University of Nairobi Library (JKML), that I considered important for enriching this research. Despite the assistance from the librarians in charge of the archives, I did not manage to get the E.A.S. newspapers batch dated 1952-1953. Moreover, attempts to access these newspapers from K.N.A. proved less successful since the information stored in micro films was blurred or had some pages missing. Nonetheless, the information was accessed from Macmillan Memorial Library

Secondly, due to suspicion, some informants were reluctant to be interviewed. However, I sought the assistance of the village elders who introduced me to the local people. Moreover, my research assistant came from Kinoo village of Kikuyu Division and his work as an evangelist in the P.C.E.A in the area helped to create good rapport with the informants.

Due to the reluctance of the interviewees, it was not possible to use tape recorder to capture oral interviews. Information was stored through note taking as informants responded to the research questions. Observation method was also used to capture the non-verbal cues such as expression of bitterness from the informants that enriched this study. Data was grouped according to similarities and relationships. Qualitative methods were used to analyze the data in which arguments were presented as narrated. Tables were also used to present the data.

This study utilized both primary and secondary data complementarily in examining the involvement of children in Mau Mau. The participation of children in Mau Mau and the manner in which they were impacted on was intended for a better understanding of the Mau Mau movement.

occupy.¹³² Moreover, the Kikuyu moved into the Rift Valley Province in order to avoid military conscription during the First World War and to escape despotic rule of the colonial chiefs and their agents.¹³³ Furthermore, restriction of land available to the Kikuyu people also created pressures on the *ahoi*.¹³⁴ Many *ahoi* therefore were forced to migrate to the "White Highlands". Significant number of the Kikuyu whose land in the Kikuyu Reserves was insufficient still joined squatters and the *ahoi* in the settled areas.¹³⁵ Statistics show that of the three Kikuyu districts (Nyeri, Murang'a and Kiambu), the latter took the lead in the number of squatters who emigrated to the Rift Valley Province, especially to Naivasha District. According to the 1919 Naivasha District statistics there were approximately 1,406 squatters in the district. Of these, a total of 881 were from Kiambu District, with Dagoretti, providing 538 squatters, 38.2 per cent of the total number of the squatters in Naivasha District. Table 2.0 provides the statistics:

Table 2.0 Origin by district of Squatters in Naivasha District, 1919

District	Number of squatters	Percentage
Kiambu-including <i>Dagoretti sub-district</i>	881	62.5
Fort Hall (Murang'a)	451	32.0
Nyeri	74	5.25
Dagoretti sub-district	538	38.2

Source: Frank Furedi, *The Mau Mau War in Perspective*, p. 41

¹³² Frank Furedi, *Mau Mau War in Perspective*, 1990, p. 41.

¹³³ *Ibid*

¹³⁴ *Ibid*. *Ahoi* were tenants at will. For more information on *ahoi*, see for example, L.S.B., Leakey, *The Southern Kikuyu Before 1903*, Vol. I, London: Academic Press Ltd, 1977, p. 117 and Godfrey Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu 1500-1900*, Nairobi: Oxford University press, 1974, pp 77-81.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*.

The squatter system continued through 1930's and 1940's as many Kikuyu left Central Province.¹³⁶ By 1948, for example, approximately 1.25 million Kikuyu had been restricted to 2000 square miles (5,200 square kilometres), while 30,000 European settlers occupied 12, 000 square miles (31,000 square kilometres).¹³⁷

The squatters faced many problems in the White Highlands. For instance, the size of cultivatable land was limited to one or two acres for each squatter family and the number of livestock that one could keep was limited to seven cattle or thirty five goats. Moreover, they experienced quarantine and veterinary restrictions as well as lack of freedom to dispose of their produce. Often, squatters were forced to sell the produce below market prices usually to the European. Some were also relieved of their labour.¹³⁸ Squatters' prosperity was seen as a threat to a steady flow of cheap labour into settler farms since it essentially meant that squatter could afford to raise the money for the payment of taxes without necessarily depending on the European settlers.¹³⁹ On its part the government argued that it was justifiable to limit the number of livestock and the size of land under squatters' use since squatter farming methods were causing soil degradation. It is this argument that the government had when it introduced the Olengurione scheme.¹⁴⁰

Squatters did not easily accept the colonial policies in the "White Highlands" particularly with regard to land use. Rising waves of discontent and despondency among the squatters created a

¹³⁶ KNA, PC/RVP/6A/1/3/1, "Kikuyu", 1936-1937, p1; KNA, PC/NKU/2/17/16, "Squatters and Squatter Stock", 1942-1946.

¹³⁷ John Newsinger, *British Counter-insurgency: from Palestine to Northern Ireland*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 51.

¹³⁸ Frank Furedi, *The Mau Mau War in Perspective*, 1990, p. 43; David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 2005, pp. 25-26; KNA, PC/CP/9/26/2, "Movement of Kikuyu from Masai Mau Mara Settlement (Olengurione), Letter from Olengurione Settlers to His Excellency the Governor", 1943-1951, p. 2.

¹³⁹ Frank Furedi, *The Mau Mau War in Perspective*, 1990, pp. 42-43.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid

fertile ground for politicization. In Olenguruone, squatters were defiant to the settler's authority. For example, many resisted by leaving the farms, illegal squatting and staging strikes, which were characterized by refusal to perform tasks allotted to them. Squatters also engaged in acts of sabotage like maiming settlers' cattle and setting on fire the settlers' crops.¹⁴¹

2.2 THE OLENGURUONE SCHEME.

The Olenguruone scheme was a government resettlement programme which was established in 1941 to accommodate some 11, 000 squatters who had been evicted from the European settled areas within the Rift Valley. A high proportion of the squatters who were resettled at Olenguruone scheme were originally from southern Kiambu.¹⁴² Discussed in this section is the Olenguruone scheme, the emergence of squatter resistance and mass oath administration.

The enactment of the 1937 Resident Native Labour Ordinance (RNLO) led to eviction of many Kikuyu squatters from the European settled areas especially in the Rift Valley. The government hoped to solve the problem of evictees by settling them at Olenguruone Scheme, which it purchased in 1939.¹⁴³ The 1937 RNLO transferred responsibility for squatter labourers from the government to settler controlled district councils.¹⁴⁴ Consequently, the ordinance gave European squatters power to limit the number of acres of land under squatter cultivation, to eliminate the squatters stock and to increase the number of working days from 180-240 and to 270 days per year.¹⁴⁵ Further, the ordinance emphasized that squatters were not tenants and that their rights in

¹⁴¹ Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, p. 50

¹⁴² David Throup, *Economic and Social Origins of Mau Mau, 1945-1953*, London: James Currey, 1987, pp 121-139.

¹⁴³ Ibid, p.5, 107, Frank Furedi, *The Mau Mau War in Perspective*, 1990, p. 82; Berman Bruce, "Administration and Politics in Colonial Kenya", 1974, pp. 188 – 190.

¹⁴⁴ Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1986, p. 5.

¹⁴⁵ C. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *Myth of Mau Mau Revolt*, 1966, pp. 249-250.

the "White Highlands" lasted only as long as they worked for the settlers.¹⁴⁶ In some areas, however, squatters were prohibited from keeping livestock at all. Where livestock were allowed, it was restricted to an average of 15 sheep and cultivation to between 1 ½ and two areas of land.¹⁴⁷

Olenguruone was administered, as a government-controlled settlement scheme in which approved farmers were allowed to reside under conditions agreed by the Native Land Trust Board. It was a model schemes for the various agricultural regulations the government had tried without much success to implement in the reserves with the specific purpose of cutting out the worst of the Kikuyu social and farming customs.¹⁴⁸ In total, the scheme contained some 52,000 acres including land in different regions of Maasai land, the largest of which Olenguruone comprised 34,700 acres south of Mau plateau.¹⁴⁹

The Olenguruone crisis was caused by various factors: the finding of the Kenya Land Commission, the post-war government's agricultural improvement and soil conservation programmes and the need to protect the White Highlands.¹⁵⁰ According the Kenya Land commission, the Kikuyu needed more land. The commission thus recommended that they be allocated some land. Consequently, a total of 21,000 acres of land and a sum of \$2,000 were awarded as compensation for the losses they had suffered.¹⁵¹ The commission further stated that some *githaka* right holders had lost their land through alienation and were settled in Olenguruone.¹⁵² Contrary, the government argued that the evictees from Maasai-land were not resettled at Olenguruone by virtue

¹⁴⁶ N. Leys, *The Colour Bar in East Africa*, New York: Negro University Press, 1970, pp. 41-48; C. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *Myth of Mau Mau Revolt*, 1966, pp. 249-52.

¹⁴⁷ KNA, Lab, /13, "Resident labour", Naivasha County Council, 1941-59.

¹⁴⁸ KNA, PC/RVP/6A/1/17, "Olenguruone, Minutes of a Baraza held out at Olenguruone", October 16, 1946.

¹⁴⁹ KNA, PC/RVP/6A/1/17/1, "Olenguruone", 1946-1948, p.3.

¹⁵⁰ Tabitha Kanogo *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, p. 105.

¹⁵¹ Kenya Land Commissioners' Report, 1933, pp 71-77, 112-114, 129-133.

¹⁵² Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, p. 105-6.

of recommendation of the Kenya Land Commission; instead, they were accommodated because they were landless.¹⁵³

Land provided a sense of security and the means through which the Kikuyu satisfied their needs. Loss of land threatened their means of survival. The Kikuyu who were resettled at Olenguruone from Maasai argued that the government had removed them from “their lands” at second Miriri in Narok. They therefore wanted the government to regard their plots at Olenguruone as compensation for the lands they had left.¹⁵⁴ However, the government held the view that the land was given neither as compensation, nor as a result of any claims put forward by these Kikuyu.¹⁵⁵ The government claimed that Olenguruone scheme was a “rescue mission” for which those resettled were supposed to be grateful and co-operative.¹⁵⁶

Squatter defiance was further heightened following the introduction of more agricultural reforms. In post Second World War period, the government established “agricultural improvement” and “soil conservation” programmes for the Africans. According to these programmes, each settler at Olenguruone was allocated 8 acres of land but only two and a half acres was to be under cultivation at any one time.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, the land was never to be cultivated continuously for more than four years initially, after which one was required to plant grass for three years.¹⁵⁸ The two and a half acres of land under cultivation were supposed to be used for cash and food crops while the

¹⁵³ KNA, PC/RVP/6A/1/17/1, “Olenguruone Settlement”, 1939-1943, p. 3.

¹⁵⁴ KNA, PC/CP/9/26/2, “Movement of Kikuyu from Masai-Mara Settlement”, 1943-1951, pp. 1-3; Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, pp. 109-110; C. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *The Myth of Mau Mau*, 1966, pp. 248-244, 248-259.

¹⁵⁵ Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, p. 109

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ KNA, PC/RVP/6A/1/7, “Olenguruone, 1948 – 1950, Maher’s Report”, January 22, 1946; see also Frank Furedi, *The Mau Mau War in Perspective*, 1990, p. 82.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

remaining five and half acres, together with 4 acres of common grazing were to be used for 8 or 9 high-grade cattle or the equivalent number of sheep, which would provide meat, milk and butter fat for home consumption and a surplus for sale.¹⁵⁹ Further, all permanent grassland on both private and common land was to be divided into fenced paddocks and grazing was to be done on rotation.¹⁶⁰ Under the agricultural improvement programme wheat and vegetables, which were new crops to the Olenguruone residents were introduced and were to be grown on rotation. Maize cultivation together with the grass burning was prohibited. In order to control soil erosion, terracing, cross-contour planting and inter-cropping were encouraged.¹⁶¹ As a result, the Olenguruone settlers refused to co-operate with the government regulations. In the period 1943-44, for example, the government attempts to implement the new agricultural rules was ignored and the resistance persisted through to 1947.

The Olenguruone problem was further heightened in 1949, when the administration of Olenguruone scheme was transferred from Maasai to Nakuru District. As a result, the Olenguruone residents were put under the "white settled areas' oppression" in which their social and economic freedom was further curtailed.¹⁶² The Olenguruone settlers thus initiated widespread protests that coincided with the outburst of squatters' resistance on the neighbouring farms. Residents' common experiences on the farms and in Maasailand provided them with a strong sense of community consciousness.¹⁶³ To cement the resistance, the Olenguruone settlers initiated an oath of unity,

¹⁵⁹ Frank Furedi, *The Mau Mau War in Perspective*, 1990, p. 82.

¹⁶⁰ KNA, PC/RVP/6A/1/17/2, "Olenguruone, 1948 - 1950, J.F.D Buttery, Report on the Olenguruone Settlement", December 1948.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² KNA, PC/RVP/6A/1/17, "Lazaro K. Gaiho to Senior Chief Koinange", October 16, 1946.

¹⁶³ Frank Furedi, *The Mau Mau War in Perspective*, 1990, p.82.

which subsequently formed the basis for the Mau Mau oath among the Olenguruone residents. The oath represented a commitment to defy government orders.¹⁶⁴

The administration of oath was not a new phenomenon among the Kikuyu. There existed a great number of "quite legal" and recognized forms of Kikuyu oaths, which were taken openly. Such oaths included the "githathi" oath that was frequently used in Kikuyu courts of law, "thenge" oath that was used in times of stress, and "guthi-urura" oath, administered in various black magic practices.¹⁶⁵

The first oath to be used for political purposes among the Kikuyu was probably that introduced at the beginning of the 1920's by Harry Thuku and his associates.¹⁶⁶ This form of oath bound the person not to sell his land to the Europeans, and was taken while holding soil in one hand and the Bible in the other.¹⁶⁷ In the early 1920s, the KCA used the oath as a means of membership recruitment and it continued to be administered to 1940s. Most squatters in Olenguruone therefore had the knowledge of the oath prior to their emigration from Central Province. It was in Kiambu District where the administration of oath based on politics started and spread to Fort Hall, to Nyeri and later to the Rift Valley and the neighbouring areas.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ KNA, RVP/Lab, "Molo: PF 389, D. O., Olenguruone, Director of Intelligence and Security to Officer in charge of Maasai District, Ngong", January 6, 1945.

¹⁶⁵ For further information on Kikuyu oaths, for example, see F. D. Corfield, *Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau*, 1960, pp. 163-4 and L.S.B. Leakey, *The Southern Kikuyu Before 1903*, Vol. III, 1977, pp. 1006-1013.

¹⁶⁶ G. Delf, *Jomo Kenyatta: Truth About the right of Kenya*, London: V. Gollanez, 1961, p. 192.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ John Spencer, "The Kenya African Union, 1944-53", (PhD Dissertation), Columbia University, 1977, p. 160, see also Veny's Ladislav, *A History of the Mau Mau Movement in Kenya*, 1970, p. 15 and Richard Frost, *Race Against Time*, 1997, p. 146,

The Olenguruone crisis led to increased politicization and mass mobilization of the Olenguruone residents. Zealotism led them to resort to the traditional art of war, which included the administration of the oath. Threatened with eviction, the Olenguruone residents radically resorted to traditional art of war in which they revived the use of the oath as a means of eliciting mass unity against colonial oppression.¹⁶⁹ On a widespread and non-selective approach, thousands of, “Men, women (both young and old) and even children”,¹⁷⁰ took the oath. With the help of KCA militants, the oath spread rapidly among Kikuyu squatters throughout the settled areas. By 1946, the oath had been taken by almost the whole Kikuyu population of the Olenguruone.¹⁷¹ Oath administration particularly in the period 1947-48, was so widespread that there was an overlap of the Olenguruone “oath of unity” and the KCA “oath of loyalty”.¹⁷² The struggle lasted until 1950, when the last of the Kikuyu settlers were evicted from Olenguruone and transported to the inhospitable Yatta area. By this time their fight against the government had become a symbol of anti-colonial resistance.¹⁷³

Contrary to Furedi’s argument that the last of the Kikuyu evictees from Olenguruone were repatriated to Yatta, some of the evictees were taken to places like Ndeiya village in Kikuyu Division of Kiambu District.¹⁷⁴ Esther Wangari Wa-Kungu recalls:

¹⁶⁹ David Throup, *Economic and Social origins of Mau Mau*, 1987, p 8; see also C. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *The Myth of Mau Mau*, 1966, pp. 253-4.

¹⁷⁰ Oral Interview with Esther Wangari Wa-Kung’u Karumba, Kikuyu (Kidfamco) Village, Kikuyu, November 17, 2007; see also David Throup, *Economic and Social Origins of Mau Mau*, 1987, p. 8 and Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters, and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, p. 108. Esther Wangari Kung’u is the first-born daughter of the Late Kung’u Karumba, one of the “Kapenguria Six”.

¹⁷¹ KNA, RVP/Lab, “Molo: PF 389, D O., Olenguruone, Director of Intelligence and Security to Officer in charge of Maasai District, Ngong”, January 6, 1945.

¹⁷² John Spencer, “KAU and Mau Mau”, in Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, pp. 116, 123.

¹⁷³ Frank Furedi, *The Mau Mau War in perspective*, 1990p. 82.

¹⁷⁴ KNA, DC/KBU/145, “Kiambu District Annual Report; Ndeiya Settlement”, 1954, pp. 4-5.

My grandfather land and that of my father were at Tigoni but they were forced to go to Micarica in Olenguruone after the land was taken for European settlers farming. When they refused to sign an agreement that required them to kill or reduce their animals they went to Miriri in Narok. At Miriri, I was a young girl and that is when we were evicted and we were brought to Ndeiya. Others were taken to Yatta. Although Ndeiya was dry, we preferred it than being taken to Yatta because at Ndeiya there were no snakes. Even if we were children, we could see how Europeans were mistreating us. Europeans were bad people.¹⁷⁵

2.3 KAU, THE RADICALIZATION OF OATH ADMINISTRATION AND THE OUTBREAK OF MAU MAU.

KAU was formed in 1944 mainly by Nairobi based African elite, many of whom were employees of the government.¹⁷⁶ As a multi-ethnic party, its main aim was to support Eliud Mathu, the newly appointed, African representative to the Legislative Council.¹⁷⁷ KAU readily got membership from the political associations, which the government had proscribed.¹⁷⁸ As KAU membership increased, differences arose between the leaders. The older KCA leaders became suspicious and saw the younger and more educated members as colonial stooges.¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, from 1946, KCA leaders participated in KAU membership recruitment drive as Kenyatta sought to establish KAU branches throughout the country.¹⁸⁰ Finding the constitutional approach unworkable, the young members resorted to militarism. It is at this stage that Mau Mau emerged as a distinct militant force. No longer constrained by moderate elements, the radicals were free to experiment and use new tactics in their struggle.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁵ Oral Interview with Esther Wangari, Kikuyu Village, Kikuyu, November 17, 2007.

¹⁷⁶ Wunyabari O. Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya*, 1993, p. 51; Frank Furedi, *The Mau Mau War in Perspective*, 1990,

¹⁷⁷ Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1986, p. 126.

¹⁷⁸ Suniyu Wandiba, *Makers of Kenya's History*, 2004, p. 18.

¹⁷⁹ Frank Furedi, *The Mau Mau War in Perspective*, 1990, pp. 14, 79; Jomo Kenyatta, *Suffering Without Bitterness*, 1968, p. 35.

¹⁸⁰ Frank Furedi, *Mau Mau War in Perspective*, 1990, pp. 79, 103; Maina wa Kinyatti, *Mau Mau*, 2000, p. 15.

¹⁸¹ Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, p. 126.

¹⁸² Bilad Kaggia, *Roots of Freedom*, 1975, p. 15.

As differentiation in KAU heightened, squatters in Rift Valley settled areas intensified acts of sabotage. European cattle were maimed and there were arson attacks on the property of White settlers.¹⁸² To counter the squatters' resistance, the government repatriated many Kikuyu into Central Province thus exacerbating the problem of landlessness.¹⁸³ Landlessness was not only aggravated by alienation of land but also by the increase in population following the introduction of modern medicine and cash economy.¹⁸⁴ In particular, Kiambu District carried a large population of landless Kikuyu since it received majority of the émigrés from Rift Valley Province and other settled areas. By 1946, for example, hundreds of Kikuyu evictees wandered about the district with no land and little hope of getting any.¹⁸⁵ However upon repatriation, squatters continued with resistance. In Kiambu District in 1940s, for example, squatters held several meetings to pressurize the government to allocate them land. Squatters demanded that if the land at Olenguruone was not theirs, then they should be given back the farms they had lost at Limuru.¹⁸⁶

Repatriation of squatters was compounded by increased loss of land in 1940s especially in Kiambu District. The government need to set up agricultural experimental farms led to loss of land among the residents of Tigoni and Kabete. For instance, between 1937 and 1939, approximately 112 acres in Tigoni were taken by the department of agriculture for an experimental seed farm and seed bulking station.¹⁸⁷ In 1950, more land was taken in Lari, Limuru and Kabete for veterinary

¹⁸² David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 2005, p. 26.

¹⁸³ KNA, PC/CP/9/21/1, "Kikuyu Settlement Outside Kikuyu Reserves", 1944-1954.

¹⁸⁴ Godfrey Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu, 1500-1900*, 1974, p. 81.

¹⁸⁵ KNA, DC/KBU/1/36, "Annual Report-Kiambu District; Letter from D.C. Kiambu to P.C. Central Province", 1946.

¹⁸⁶ KNA, PC/CP/9/26/1, "Movement of Kikuyu from Masai-Mau Mara Settlement", 1943-1951, pp. 1 and 3.

¹⁸⁷ KNA, PC/CP/9/25/1, "Experimental Farm-Kiambu", 1937-1939.

department and housing the European field officers.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, in 1955, the government effort to dilute Mau Mau led to over 600 squatters losing their job in Limuru and Kabete settled areas.¹⁸⁹

To solve land problem in Kiambu District, the government resettled the squatters who had been evicted from Tigoni, Limuru, Lari and Kabete areas into Muguga Forest Reserve, which is found in Kikuyu Division. A total of 3900 acres of this forest were carved out for these squatters.¹⁹⁰

Other squatters were resettled in Ndeiya, but many declined resettlement due to harsh climate conditions.¹⁹¹

The Kikuyu returnees from Olenguruone and other settled areas gave a lot of impetus to the militant group of KAU. They became target for recruitment into KAU and subsequent Mau Mau operations. The KAU militants also got support from the urban workers and the unemployed.¹⁹²

This group used all direct means to tackle the popular grievances including murder and violence.¹⁹³

Olenguruone crisis provided a rallying point for all disgruntled Kikuyu whether squatters, former squatters or those in Central Province. All were seeking ways and means of dealing with the various aspects of colonial oppression and, ultimately, colonial rule.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ KNA, PC/CP/9/21/1, "Kikuyu Settlement outside Kikuyu Reserves"; KNA, PC/CP/9/24/8, "Land in Kiambu District", 1949-1953.
¹⁸⁹ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report", 1955, pp. 5-6.
¹⁹⁰ KNA, PC/CP/9/24/7, "Land in Kiambu District" 1949; KNA, PC/CP/9/24/8 and 9, "Squatter Eviction from Tigoni and Resettlement in Muguga Forest Reserve", 1949-1953; KNA, PC/CP/9/24/6, "Lari Squatters Accommodated in Muguga Forest Reserve", 1937.
¹⁹¹ KNA, PC/CP/9/21/1, "Kikuyu Settlement Outside Kikuyu Reserves", 1944-1954.
¹⁹² Bethwell A. Ogot, *History as a Destiny and History as Knowledge*, 2005, pp. 400-401.
¹⁹³ Frank Furedi, *The Mau Mau War in Perspective*, 1990, p. 82.
¹⁹⁴ Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, p. 106.

2.4 THE GROWTH OF MILITANT NATIONALISM, 1947-1952.

Mau Mau was organized from Nairobi, which was the headquarters of its Central Committee (C.C) and the main base of its operations. The main roles of the C.C. were to co-ordinate and mobilize membership. Moreover, it provided political education by sensitizing Kenyan, particularly the workers, petty-bourgeoisie and the peasantry in Central Kenya, the Rift Valley region and in the urban centres such as Nairobi, Nakuru, Nyahururu and Murang'a on the social, economic and political situation in the country thus calling for unity against colonialism.¹⁹⁵

As Mau Mau continued to be grounded, more Kikuyu returned into Central Province, especially to Kiambu District. Between 1946 and 1952, over 100, 000 Kikuyu Squatters were forcibly repatriated.¹⁹⁶ By 1954, Kiambu District had received over 50, 000 repatriates, swelling an existing population of 550, 000. The great bulk of the repatriates returned to Kikuyu, Limuru and Kiambaa Divisions.¹⁹⁷ In 1955, more repatriates returned to Kiambu District from Tanganyika, Uganda, Rift Valley, Maasai and Kericho. These included 1539 men, 1550 women and 2215 juveniles, thus accentuating the crowded conditions of many reserves.¹⁹⁸ Most of the repatriates were bitter landless and penniless persons.¹⁹⁹ Consequently, poverty led to increase in theft cases and criminal operations. These constituted more of young toughs who were looking for an easy living and operated indiscriminately in Kiambu and Nairobi.²⁰⁰ Owing to poverty, majority took the oath and

¹⁹⁵Maina wa Kinyatti, *Mau Mau*, 2000, pp. 20-22, 30.

¹⁹⁶David Anderson, *Histories of the Hunged*, 2005, p. 26.

¹⁹⁷KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, Annual Report-Kiambu District, "Kikuyu Repatriation", 1954, pp 4, 6 and 13.

¹⁹⁸KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Annual Report, Kiambu District", 1954, p. 12; KNA, DC, KBU, 1, 45, "Annual Report, Kiambu District", 1955, p. 7.

¹⁹⁹KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, Annual Report, Kiambu District, "Kikuyu Repatriation", 1954, p. 4.

²⁰⁰KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report, Review of the Year", 1957, pp 1-2.

joined the supportive wing of Mau Mau and it was difficult for the government to take retaliatory measures against them.²⁰¹

From the beginning, Mau Mau leadership used the anti-colonial oath as a tool for recruitment. The oath served to unite the members as well as a tool for enforcing secrecy against the enemy.²⁰²

Frank Furedi adds that the Mau Mau oath also served as a psychological weapon in erasing fear of colonialists in cadres, and in deepening their patriotic consciousness.²⁰³ The oath administrators cast their net wider to include not only men whom the KCA had vetted, but also all “trustworthy” Kikuyu, both men and women.²⁰⁴

The manner in which some of the Mau Mau oaths were administered to the initiates was contrary to the Kikuyu culture and traditions. The Kikuyu oaths were “morally” and “religiously” feared.²⁰⁵

In cases of tribal justice, for example, no one dared take them unless he/she was perfectly sure or beyond doubt that he/she was innocent or that his/her claim was genuine.²⁰⁶ According to the

Kikuyu traditions, the oath usually involved the killing a lamb or a goat. Some oaths required that the person lick a cocktail comprising the stomach parts and the blood.²⁰⁷ Additionally, the Kikuyu

were traditionally a puritanical people with regard to sexual deviancy or exhibitionism.²⁰⁸ In

African culture, it was considered a serious offence and a taboo for anyone to engage in bestiality.

The act could lead to a bad omen, ranging from illness and death among the family or clan

²⁰¹ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, Annual Report, Kiambu District, “Kikuyu Repatriation”, 1954, p.4.

²⁰² Oral Interview with Jane Wangari, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 6, 2007; Fresiah Njoki Ng’ung’u, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 15, 2007.

²⁰³ Frank Furedi, *The Mau Mau War in Perspective*, 1990, p. 23.

²⁰⁴ Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, p. 128.

²⁰⁵ Lomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mt. Kenya*, Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1939 (Reprinted 1971), p. 214.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

²⁰⁸ Donald L. Barnett and Karari Njama, *Mau Mau from Within*, 1966, p. 126.

members to bad harvest and death of livestock.²¹⁹ Moreover, copulation with a menstruating woman was considered a taboo.²¹⁰ Traditionally, sexual taboos were broken only within the framework of certain puberty rites and "important" oaths.²¹¹ For instance, a person accused of killing through witchcraft had to submit, if he maintained his innocence to the public oath in which he swore while inserting his penis in the vagina of a sheep, that he did not commit the crime in question and calling on the wrath of *Ngai* (Kikuyu name for God), to destroy him if he was telling lies.²¹² Again, if a man was accused of having impregnated a girl and he denied it, he would have to publicly swear while biting a piece of sweet potato or a tip of a bunch of bananas which had been inserted in the girl's vagina by an old woman, that if ever had intercourse with the girl the oath should kill him.²¹³

Moreover, the native law and custom among the Kikuyu provided that an oath must be taken voluntarily and with the consent of the family members of the person concerned. Further, it had to be taken in daylight and in the open and that women and children were not to participate.²¹⁴ Kenyatta states that the oath of whatever kind was never administered to women and children. This was because, the act of oath administration was sacred thus the moral and religious forces

²¹⁹F.D. Corfield, *Historical survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau*, 1960, p. 167; F. Majdalany, *State of Emergency*, 1962, pp. 184-185.

²¹⁰*Ibid.*

²¹¹Donald L. Barnett and Karari Njama, *Mau Mau from Within*, 1966, p. 126.

²¹²*Ibid.*

²¹³*Ibid.*

²¹⁴KNA, AR/333/KBU/45, Annual Report, 1954, p. 3; L. S. B., Leakey, *Mau Mau and the Kikuyu*, 1952, pp. 99-100; Fred Majdalany, *The State of Emergency*, 1962, p. 76, Lone Leigh, *In the Shadow of the Mau Mau*, 1954, p. 13; David Throup, *Economies and Social Origins of Mau Mau*, 1987, p. 8; Margaret Gachihii, *The Role of Kikuyu Women in Mau Mau*, 1986, p. 112; Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu Women, The Mau Mau Rebellion and Social Change in Kenya*, 1992, p. 129.

associated with it were considered too strong for them.²¹⁵ However, the Mau Mau altered these traditions by holding oath ceremonies at night, inside huts and on women, and children.²¹⁶

There were different grades of Mau Mau oaths. Some were simple while others were quite advanced. The former involved the initiate swearing never to reveal the secrets of the Mau Mau or co-operate with the colonial government and all its agents. This was membership oath and involved eating a slaughtered goat. However, as Mau Mau intensified, oaths became more serious.

Oaths were administered on top of others with each subsequent oath signifying a greater degree of loyalty to the Mau Mau.²¹⁷ For instance, *normal* oath was the simplest in which a member merely pledged support to Mau Mau. The second oath was the *Batumi* oath, which was administered to all fighting men and women. Under this oath, fighters were not permitted to carry firearms.²¹⁸ A third oath was called *Kindu* oath in which Mau Mau fighters were obliged to kill at least three Europeans or their supporters. This oath permitted the fighters to carry firearms.²¹⁹ On the other

hand, *Muchoro* oath involved branding of the Mau Mau initiates for forest services. This oath was bestial in nature and was confined to active Mau Mau fighters and other immediate supporters.²²⁰

Objects frequently associated with Mau Mau ceremonies include kie-apples; sharp sticks, red ochre and banana leaves and flowers.²²¹ Some of the insurgents who fought the guerrilla war in

Mt. Kenya forest had taken seven or eight oaths.²²² Edward Kariuki Kinuthia is among those who

²¹⁵ Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, 1939, pp. 109, 216.

²¹⁶ I. S. B. Leakey, *Mau Mau and the Kikuyu*, 1952, p. 100; Frank Furedi, "The Social Composition of the Mau Mau Movement in the White Highlands", 1974, pp. 486-505; F. D. Corfield, *Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau*, 1960, p. 134; Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mt. Kenya*, 1939, p. 216.

²¹⁷ KNA, AHC/9/136, "Confidential Report on Mau Mau Oath Ceremonies", 1952.

²¹⁸ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report", 1954, p. 3.

²¹⁹ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report", 1955, p. 3.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ Standard Staff Reporter, "Mau Mau Ceremony in Nairobi Garden Alleged", E.A.S, Friday, October 17, 1952, p. 1.

²²² *Ibid.*

witnessed and participated in the oath ceremonies that may be termed “culturally abominable”. He recalls:

During the B (*batuni*) oath administration, goat meat was taken and put into the vaginas of young girls during their monthly period as they lied down on their back. After that it was rubbed around my penis seven times and then I was told to bite it. After that we were to engage in sex with these girls. We could not refuse. I was about 11 years and we did it both the young and the old men. I was scared because I had not seen this before. Even if your father, mother or aunt was there you had to do it. We put our respect aside.²²³

The involvement of girls in the oath ceremonies during their menses was a great sacrifice. By engaging in sex with multiple partners, girls risked contracting sexually transmitted diseases. Mau Mau supporters pledged to keep secrets about Mau Mau operations. However, this was never always the case particularly following the introduction of the screening and confessions, which made some people to reveal the Mau Mau secrets. Consequently, some suffered ridicule by being branded prostitutes especially by those who had not pledged their loyalty to Mau Mau within the family, clan and the community.²²⁴ Furthermore, even after the girls engaged in multiple sexual intercourse, this was never regarded as being culturally abominable. In stead, this meant that just as the girls were committed to the Mau Mau, the initiates were expected to be devoted into the operations of the movement.²²⁵ In the same manner that bestiality could cause death to a member of the family or clan, whoever took the oath of this manner during the Mau Mau committed him/herself to die incase of betrayal. Consequently, this fostered loyalty and commitment among the Mau Mau supporters. This therefore demonstrates that the more repulsive the oath the more binding it was.

²²³ Oral Interview with Edward Kariuki Kinuthia, Gaitumbi Village, Kikuyu, November 9, 2007; see also F.D. Corfield, *Historical survey of the Origins and the Growth of Mau Mau*, 1960, pp. 167-168; F. Majdalany, *State of Emergency*, 1962, pp. 184-187; W.W Baldwin, *Mau Mau Manhunt: The Adventures of the American who has Fought the Terrorist in Kenya*, New York: Dutton, 1957, pp. 94-95.

²²⁴ Oral Interview with Esther Wangari Kung'u, Kikuyu (Kidfamco) Village, Kikuyu, November 17, 2007.

²²⁵ Oral Interview with Edward Kariuki Kinuthia, Gaitumbi Village, Kikuyu, November 9, 2007.

In some instances, oaths were administered without the consent of the initiates especially the women and children.²²⁶ Many were forced by circumstances to have the oath administered to them, especially due to fear and threats from the oath administrators. Jane Wangari recalls:

I was a member of Mau Mau. I took the first oath as a young girl in 1948. I was about 10 years old I took three, the last one in 1951 at Ndeiya. We were taken to Kovucu's home to take it by some women. When we were being taken, I never knew where we were being taken but when we arrived we were given the oath. We could not refuse although at first we did not want it. Those who were resisting were beaten. My father had not taken it but my mother encouraged me to take it. The oath was made up of blood of a goat and from then I knew what I was expected to do. We were swearing that, If you see a foreigner, do not reveal the secrets of Mau Mau. My mother was very happy after I returned home having taken the oath.²²⁷

Normally, Mau Mau oath was not administered to children. Only those who were "mature" had the oath administered. Maturity was defined by circumcision but the age when children were circumcised differed. Majority underwent the rite at the age of 14-17 years among the boys and between 12-16 years among the girls.²²⁸ However, some underwent circumcision while 8 or 9 years old and had the oath administered.²²⁹ During circumcision, initiates were thoroughly taught on their culture, responsibility and secrets of the community. Those who took the oath were expected to conceal Mau Mau secrets and support the movement.²³⁰

Why then were women and children given the Mau Mau oath contrary to the Kikuyu customs? In his explanation Louis Leakey states that it was because the Kikuyu firmly held the belief that once an oath was given to one member of the family, then, the whole family became affected. If the oath

²²⁶ For this study, the term children is used to refer to everyone who was under 18 years between 1952 and 1960 irrespective of whether they had been circumcised or not.

²²⁷ Oral Interview with Jane Wangari, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 6, 2007.

²²⁸ Oral Interview with George Muhia Kamau, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 9, 2007.

²²⁹ Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, pp. 145-146.

²³⁰ Ibid.

was broken, a calamity would befall the whole family.²³¹ However, it seems logical from Leakey's argument that it would have been satisfactory for the Mau oath administrators to only administer it to a single person in a family and other members would automatically become supporters of Mau Mau. Contrary, the Mau Mau recruiters targeted men, women and children independently.

It was not a guarantee that where one family member had taken the oath, other members were automatically drawn into the Mau Mau. Tabitha Kanogo clearly puts it that "Mau Mau caused misunderstanding and soured relations in families where only one member had the oath administered."²³² She further propounds that if a husband was the first to take the oath, he did not proceed to discuss the happening with his wife (wives). The wife (wives) had to wait for her/their turn to take the oath and vice versa.²³³

In a situation where the wife was the only one who had taken Mau Mau oath, she continued to carry out Mau Mau tasks such as contributing money, food and running errands, without informing or consulting her husband.²³⁴ Mau Mau oath committed the member (s) to kill anyone who was against the Mau Mau operations even if it were their mother, father, brother, sister, wife, husband or even child.²³⁵ In my view, if Leakey's arguments were wholly true mothers who had taken the oath would not have gone ahead to encourage their children to have the oath administered. Contrary, oath administration to Kikuyu men, women and children was to instill a sense of loyalty, unity and commitment to all. Everybody including children was needed and had a role to play in the Mau Mau. Those who refused to take Mau Mau oath were labelled enemies of the fighters.

²³¹ L. S. B. Leakey, *Mau Mau and the Kikuyu*, 1954, p. 99.

²³² Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, pp. 145-146.

²³³ *Ibid*, p. 146.

²³⁴ *Ibid*.

²³⁵ L. S. B. Leakey, *Defeating Mau Mau*, 1952, pp. 81-82.

“Enmity” is a fluid concept. An enemy, actual or conceived is created. This enmity tends to be grounded on mistrust, suspicion and a deep sense of loyalty by one group against the other. The concept tends to shift the meaning depending with the aims, objectives and prevailing circumstances. Those who differ with the interests of one party are exclusively labeled, “others” and therefore enemies. During the Mau Mau, children who had taken the oath could not freely relate with those who had not. A un oathed person was an enemy of the Mau Mau, actual or prospective and therefore a possible target for elimination.²³⁶ Simon Gakaria recalls:

I want to tell you that there existed great enmity between those who had taken the Mau Mau oath and those who did not. Children who had not taken the oath were enemies to those who had been oathed. Those who had not been oathed were called fleas or safari ants. We could not play together. Even in the family children who had taken the oath were strictly warned not to share Mau Mau secrets with those un oathed. But sometimes, children who had not taken the oath were sent to take food to some designated place for the fighters. This was particularly so when it was impossible for mothers and other women to deliver food because of security or when they were busy with other Mau Mau activities.²³⁷

As Mau Mau oath administration was intensified, ‘attention was given to oathing children in the Independent schools’.²³⁸ For instance, by 1950, many children in Waithaka independent school had been oathed.²³⁹ In the early 1950s, the school was closed on the pretext that its leaders were increasingly involved in the Mau Mau.²⁴⁰ The drive to recruit school children into Mau Mau and the determination by the government to contain the growth of the movement led to the closure of many other Independent and Karing’wa schools. For example, on November 19, 1953, 31 schools

²³⁶ Oral Interview with Simon Gakaria, Uthini Village, Kikuyu, November 5, 2007.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Greet Karshaw, *Mau Mau From Below*, 1997, p. 227.

²³⁹ Oral Interview with Reginald Murathe wa Muniya, Muthiga Village, Kikuyu, November 5, 2007.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

including Ruthimitu and Gituamba in Kikuyu Division were closed,²⁴¹ while over 300 others were burnt down. Consequently, many children were drawn into the Mau Mau.²⁴² The difference between independent and Karing'a schools was that the former were more moderate and co-operated with the government. Independent schools received government funding a process which involved frequent inspection by the department of education.²⁴³ On the other hand, Karing'a schools were more radical in outlook. These schools neither sought nor wanted government funding and control. Karing'a schools had close ties with KCA and had a lot of support in Kiambu District.²⁴⁴

Mau Mau used every means to recruit new members. By the end of 1950, the Mau Mau leaders were promising their followers a free grant of land as soon as the Kenya achieved self-government.²⁴⁵ Consequently, many more Kikuyu joined the Mau Mau. Moreover, Mau Mau used violence and intimidation against their enemies. By 1950, Mau Mau militants had resorted to killing the European cattle as well as the African who sided with the government. By September, for example, 9 African in Kiambu District had brutally been murdered and mutilated after giving evidence against the Mau Mau.²⁴⁶ By October, the number of persons said to have been murdered by the Mau Mau had reached 59.²⁴⁷

²⁴¹ KNA, AR/KBU, "Police Situation Report", October 25, 1952; History of Loyalists, 1961, p. 21; Waruhiu Itote, *Mau Mau in Action*, 1979, p. 58.

²⁴² KNA, DC, KBU, 10, 3. "Secret Memo from officer in charge of Native Intelligence for Director of Civil Intelligence to District Commissioner, Kiambu", October 10, 1940; Maina wa Kinyatti, *Mau Mau*, 2000, p. 87.

²⁴³ Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion and Social Change in Kenya*, 1992, p. 95; C. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *Myth of Mau Mau*, 1966, pp. 125-126.

²⁴⁴ C. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *Myth of Mau Mau*, 1966, p. 131; Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion and social Change in Kenya*, 1992, p. 95.

²⁴⁵ Veny's Ladislav, *A History of the Mau Mau Movement in Kenya*, 1970, p. 11; L.S.B. Leakey, *Mau Mau and the Kikuyu*, 1952, pp. 98-102.

²⁴⁶ Veny's Ladislav, *A History of the Mau Mau Movement in Kenya*, 1970, p. 32.

²⁴⁷ F. D. Corfield, *Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau*, 1960, p. 315.

Among the government officials, the knowledge about the existence of Mau Mau first came to light in 1950. Before then, the government dismissed Mau Mau as being a “semi-religious cult”, and therefore less of a threat.²⁴⁸ According to 1950 colonial report, the discovery of the mass oath-taking campaign was a major shock to the government officials and settlers. For the first time the awareness that Mau Mau represented a threat that exceeded that posed by the KCA.²⁴⁹ Consequently, in August 1950 Mau Mau movement was officially declared illegal.²⁵⁰ By the end of 1950, Mau Mau had become a frequent topic of conversation among the European settlers,²⁵¹ and attacks on European owned property had become frequent. Roadblocks and stones were placed on isolated roads at night thus inhibiting movement of government security personnel to the affected areas. In October, 1950, for example, telephone wires were cut down in Marishoni forest near Elburgon and several European farmers had their machines and equipments sabotaged.²⁵²

Alarmed by the activities of the Mau Mau, the government mounted a systematic repression. On May 12, 1952, for example, 39 Africans were arrested in connection with oath ceremony in Naivasha.²⁵³ As repression was accelerated, many innocent Kenyans were arrested and jailed; others were grisly tortured and killed.²⁵⁴ Besides arrests, curfews were imposed, collective fines were used as punishment while additional policeman were dispatched to the most affected areas in the Rift Valley Province and Central Kenya.²⁵⁵ For instance, besides frequent attacks by the

²⁴⁸ D. H. Rawcliffe, *The Struggle for Kenya*, London: V. Gollancz, 1954, p. 32; L.S.B. Leakey, *Defeating Mau Mau*, 1952, pp. 40-41.

²⁴⁹ KNA, DC/NKU/2/286, “Monthly Labour Reports”, April-December 1950.

²⁵⁰ M. Slater, *The Trial of Jomo Kenyatta*, London: Secker and Warburg, 1955, pp. 34 and 220; see also F. D. Corfield, *Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau*, 1960, p. 101.

²⁵¹ KNA, NKU, “Nakuru District, Annual Report”, 1950, p. 31.

²⁵² KNA, DC/NKU/2/386, “Monthly Labour Reports”, October-November, 1950.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, May, 1952, see also, F.D. Corfield, *Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau*, 1960, p. 157.

²⁵⁴ Maina wa Kinyatti, *Mau Mau*, 2000, p. 25.

²⁵⁵ Veny’s Lodislav, *A History of the Mau Mau Movement in Kenya*, 1970, p. 33; Standard Staff Reporter, “Report of Mau Mau activities grossly misrepresented, say Police: Factual appraisal on the situation”, E.A.S, Tuesday, September

government, Kiambu and Thika were in September 1952 placed under 7 PM. Curfew.²⁵⁶ By the end of 1954, 170 Akamba in Machakos District had been arrested for complicity in Mau Mau.²⁵⁷

Government repression however, did not deter people from joining and participating in the Mau Mau. By 1952, women and children were increasingly becoming keen Mau Mau supporters.²⁵⁸ In May, for example, the D.Cs. of Nyeri, and Kiambu acknowledged the increased forcible oath administration to women and children.²⁵⁹ By this time, Mau Mau had grown more militant and violent. More property was set ablaze. Most of the property that was destroyed belonged to chiefs and headmen, or to anyone else who betrayed the Mau Mau.²⁶⁰

Mau Mau violence was not confined to the Rift Valley and Central Province. Violence had spread to Nairobi and its environs by the middle of 1952. This took the form of sporadic acts of terrorism and assassinations against those who opposed the Mau Mau.²⁶¹ In June 1952, the Mau Mau Central Committee ordered General Mathenge and his forces constituting about 300 fighters, to enter Nyandarua forest from where they conducted guerrilla attacks. Enoch Mwangi was made the chief commander of the Kenya Land Freedom Army (KLFA) forces in Nairobi, while Waruhiu Itote was appointed the Commander in-Chief of Kirinyaga KLFA front.²⁶²

9, 1952, p. 4.

²⁵⁶ E. A. S. Correspondent, Nyeri, "Kiambu and Thika placed under 7 PM Curfew: New Curfew Order", E.A.S., Wednesday, September 17, 1952, p. 7.

²⁵⁷ Bethwell A. Ogot, *History as a Destiny and History as Knowledge*, 2005, p. 404.

²⁵⁸ F.D. Corfield, *Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau*, 1960, pp. 126-127, 141.

²⁵⁹ P. Evans, *Law and Disorder*, 1956, p. 24.

²⁶⁰ Vény's Ladislav, *A History of the Mau Mau Movement in Kenya*, 1970, p. 27.

²⁶¹ C. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, *The Myth of Mau Mau*, 1966, p. 6; F.D. Corfield, *Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau*, 1960, p. 6.

²⁶² Maina wa Kinyatti, *Mau Mau*, 2000, p. 25.

The state of Emergency was declared on 20th, October 1952 following the assassination of Chief Waruhiu wa Kung'u. Consequently, the Mau Mau entered its armed phase thus marking the climax of the struggle, which lasted for the next seven years. By this time children were involved and had become an important strand of the Mau Mau.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to trace the background to the emergence of the Mau Mau movement. The chapter has demonstrated that KAU was crucial in the emergence and development of radical nationalism starting from the mid 1940s. KAU activities provided a basis on which the militant group was able to administer the oath as a tool for membership recruitment in to the Mau Mau. The party got impetus following the government order to confine the squatters in the Rift Valley settled areas at the Olenguruone scheme thus their resistance. To enhance unity and political consciousness, the Olenguruone residents took the oath, which heightened deviance. Alarmed by the resistance, the government resorted to repatriate the squatters into Central Province of which majority returned to Kiambu District. Consequently, repatriation worsened the levels of poverty and landlessness thus many became ready candidates for recruitment in the Mau Mau. Largely, the oath was administered to men, women and children. Once oathed, children played crucial role in the Mau Mau movement, which we turn to in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 CHILDREN IN MAU MAU: FOREST FIGHTERS OR SUPPORTERS? (1952-1960).

3.1 INTRODUCTION.

Every society has the avenues through which its members are socialized. Effective socialization process instills societal norms and moral values to the young thus making them useful members of the society. Among the agents of socialization, the family, peer groups and western education play an important role in this process. As part of the society, children, during colonial rule were affected by the worsening socio-economic and political situation in the country. The family particularly those that supported Mau Mau, peer groups and independent schools and churches, significantly, instilled anti-colonial and anti-European sentiments to children. Consequently, majority of such children were influenced to join Mau Mau. However, some voluntarily joined and became useful members in Mau Mau. This chapter discusses the role of children in Mau Mau. The chapter demonstrates that children provided invaluable services, which enhanced the survival of Mau Mau fighters.

3.2: THE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN IN MAU MAU.

Following the declaration of Emergency in October 1952 and the "Operation Jock Scott" accompanying this, mass rounding up, detention and the imprisonment of the Mau Mau supporters ensued.²⁶³ To evade arrest, police harassment and the determination to fight colonialism, many Mau Mau fighters responded by entered into Mount Kenya and Aberdares forests from where they conducted guerrilla attacks against the government and its supporters. Challenges meted on the Africans made the Mau Mau respond by attacking home guards' posts, police posts and stations,

²⁶³ Frank Furedi, *Mau Mau War in Perspective*, 1990, p. 118; C.J.M. Alport, "Kenya Answer to the Mau Mau Challenge", *African Affairs*, Vol. 53, 1954, p. 957; Fred Majdalany, *State of Emergency*, 1962, p. 179; Margaret Gachihi, "The Role of Kikuyu Women in Mau Mau", 1986 p. 13; G. Delf, *Jomo Kenyatta*, 1961, p. 180.

prisons, power stations, farms, missions, schools, villages and other objects.²⁶⁴ Attacks were also launched on African loyalists, Europeans and Asian civilians and their property and anyone else who opposed Mau Mau.²⁶⁵

Reasons to kill women and children among Mau Mau were varied. Some freedom fighters were against the idea while others supported it. For instance, in one of the meetings in Mt. Kenya that was attended by several freedom fighters, a Maasai delegate, Mr. Ole Kisio was against killing of women and children.²⁶⁶ According to Ole Kisio, when the Maasai fought the Kikuyu in tribal warfare, women and children were captured; they were never killed.²⁶⁷ However, a radical Kahiua Itina suggested that:

Everybody associated with traitors should be slain-not only the betrayer himself but his entire family. If you kill only the husband, the wife will tell his children what happened and in time they will grow up with a wish to avenge their father. Therefore, if you kill the father, you should also kill the wife. And, if you kill the parents, children will be left to suffer, to turn to robbery and other misdeeds in order to keep themselves alive. Such children will grow up as rebels against the society and recalling the death of their parents will work against the future African government. So, they too should be killed.²⁶⁸

There was more to the killing of children than just to save them from suffering, avenging the murder of their parents or from turning to criminal acts. Importantly, the killings were aimed at inflicting fear and to inhibit the Kikuyu from giving support to the government and its agents.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁴ J.M. Kariuki, *Mau Mau Detainee*, 1963, pp. 125-126; Waruhiu Itote, *Mau Mau Generals*, Nairobi: E.A.P.H., 1967, pp. 82-83.

²⁶⁵ F. D. Corfield, *Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau*, 1960, p. 168; Fred Majdalany, *The State of Emergency*, 1962, pp. 140-160; D.H. Rawcliffe, *The Struggle for Kenya*, 1954, pp. 53-54, 63-65; E. Huxley, *A New Earth*, 1960, p. 180; Lonc Leigh, *In the Shadow of Mau Mau*, 1954, p. 87; W. W Baldwin, *Mau Mau Manhunt*, 1957, p. 14.

²⁶⁶ Waruhiu Itote, *Mau Mau Generals*, 1967, p. 133.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid*.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 133-134.

²⁶⁹ Oral Interview with Simon Gakaria, Uthiru Village, Kikuyu, November 5, 2007.

As Mau Mau struggle intensified, women and children became the target of Mau Mau fighters. For example, during the Lari Massacre of March 1953, a woman watched one of the Mau Mau chop off her child's head.²⁷⁰ Another woman, held fast by two men saw two other Mau Mau fighters cut the throat of her young son after which they drunk the blood. Finally, the Mau Mau slashed the woman with pangas but left her alive to describe later her experiences.²⁷¹

Moreover, Mau Mau split open the stomach of pregnant women. Attackers sliced off the head of another woman's baby and in turn lifted the little baby to their lips to quaff its blood.²⁷² In Fort Hall Reserve, a Mau Mau gang killed three men, five children and a woman in a night raid in Muriani.²⁷³ Children died painfully in the hands of the Mau Mau. Emphasizing on the atrocities that were caused by the Mau Mau against the loyalists, Geoffrey Ngugi Kiruri recalls:

Mau Mau were tough. We feared them even if we were supporters. Luka wa Kahangare who was a colonial chief was attacked by Mau Mau because he used to abuse them. His house was burnt and all his children were all murdered.²⁷⁴

According to Kikuyu culture and traditions, women and children were never killed during warfare.²⁷⁵ It was even a taboo for warriors to seduce or rape women during raids.²⁷⁶ Yet, Mau

²⁷⁰Fred Majdalany, *State of Emergency*, 1962, p. 140; Cherry lauder, *My Kenya Acres: A woman farms in Mau Mau Country*, London: George G. Harras and Co. Ltd, 1957, pp. 97-98; Standard Staff Reporter, "Loyal Kikuyus Massacred: Slain as they fled from Brazing huts", E.A.S, Saturday, March 28, 1953, p. 1; Standard Staff Reporter, "Uplands: Mothers see Children die", E.A.S, Saturday, March 28, 1953, p. 1; Standard Staff Reporter, "Massacre Bid Fails: Police race to Scene-22 of gang killed", E.A.S, Tuesday, April 7, 1953, p. 1; Standard Staff Reporter, "Lari Massacre: 69 More Kikuyus sent for Trial", EAS, Tuesday, April 7, 1953, p. 5.

²⁷¹Ibid.

²⁷²Fred Majdalany, *State of Emergency*, 1962, p. 141; Lone Leigh, *In the Shadow of the Mau Mau*, 1954, pp. 87-90; D. H. Rawcliffe, *The Struggle for Kenya*, 1954, pp. 63-64.

²⁷³F. D. Corfield, *Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau*, 1960, p. 157; Fred Majdalany, *State of Emergency*, 1962, pp. 137-147.

²⁷⁴Oral Interview with Geoffrey Ngugi Kiruri, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 9, 2007.

²⁷⁵Godfrey Muriuki, "A History of the Kikuyu to 1904", (PhD Thesis), University of London, 1969, p. 160; Waruhiu Itote, *Mau Mau Generals*, 1967, p. 133.

²⁷⁶Ibid.

Mau went for women and children rather than armed men.²⁷⁷ The Mau Mau attacks on women and children was meant to teach a lesson to the loyalists, while at the same time to discourage other Africans from supporting the government.²⁷⁸

Atrocity was not limited to the Mau Mau. The government security forces were very ruthless. Under the direction of General Sir Erskine, the Commander of the armed forces,²⁷⁹ the security forces attacked the affected districts, location by location, pushing Mau Mau further into the forests. This move was aimed at dislocating the Mau Mau links with their supporters in the African reserves.²⁸⁰ The government counter-insurgency operations did not only claim lives of many freedom fighters, men and women but also children were mercilessly beaten up, tortured and killed.²⁸¹ Eunice Watiri recalls:

Police and the home guards shot dead many children. My brother Kamau who was a young boy and another one were killed on one of the evenings as we were eating. They were shot by the home guards. They had been seen giving food to the Mau Mau. We did not know where they were taken but they were thrown into their lorry. Anyone who was suspected of having links with the Mau Mau was in great problems.²⁸²

After killing, the colonial security personnel would inform those who were affected to go and see their children who had "independence" in the farm, referring to a corpse that needed to be

²⁷⁷ W. W. Baldwin, *Mau Mau Manhunt*, 1957, p. 14.

²⁷⁸ Oral Interview with Simon Gakaria, Uthiru Village, Kikuyu, November 5, 2007; David Njuguna Mugunu, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 11, 2007; Geoffrey Nguni Kinuri, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 9, 2007.

²⁷⁹ Berman Bruce, "Administration and Politics in Colonial Kenya", 1974, p. 422.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid, p. 418; M. Slater, *The trial of Kenyatta*, 1955, p. 45; Veny's Ladislav, *A History of the Mau Mau Movement in Kenya*, 1970, pp. 80, 118; P. Evans, *Law and Disorder*, 1956, p. 200; KNA, DC/FH/3/16/39, "Letter from Muaunu Muturi, Fort Hall to the District Commissioner, Fort Hall", May 29, 1953; KNA, DC/MUR/310/18, "Letter from J.N. Kinango, Thika, to the District Commissioner, Fort Hall", January 9, 1954; Standard Staff Reporter, "All Kikuyu Reserves now Special Areas", E.A.S, Friday, February 6, 1953, p. 9; Standard Correspondent, "Success for Home Guards", E. A. S, Monday, January 18, 1954, p.5.

²⁸² Oral Interview with Eunice Watiri, Kikuyu Village (Kidfamaco), Kikuyu, November 17, 2007.

identified.²⁸³ In particular, the home guards passed on such information with the intention to ridicule Mau Mau supporters, which hopefully would have discouraged the general population from supporting the fighters. No one could identify or confess any knowledge of the victim since it would lead to immediate arrest or shooting.²⁸⁴

Difficulty arising from atrocities committed by Mau Mau and the government security forces pushed children into Mau Mau. School children were engrained in the Mau Mau. According to Abour Ojwando, apart from groups of women, the first people in the countryside to sharply react against colonialism and stringent emergency regulations after October 20th, 1952 were school children.²⁸⁵ On October 25, 1952, for example, three schools in Central Province, two belonging to KISA and one to KKSA closed in protest against the arrest of Kenyatta. One school was at Kiambu and the other two at Uplands.²⁸⁶ In Rift Valley Province, a European supervisor of schools reported having found children in one of the schools singing songs of praise for Kenyatta, which bore resemblance to religious songs.²⁸⁷ Having witnessed some of their family members and friends murdered by the colonial government forces, many children took Mau Mau oath in which they swore to fight colonialism.²⁸⁸

By and large, men and women knew that they were fighting for land and independence. However, majority of the children had varied reasons for taking the oath and joining Mau Mau. Some joined because of the beating and harassments by the home guards, lack of education or influence by the

²⁸³ Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, p. 147; See also P. Evans, *Land and Disorder*, 1956, p. 260; D.H. Rawcliffe, *The Struggle for Kenya*, 1954, pp. 69-70; Waruhiu Itote, *Mau Mau in Action*, 1979, pp. 32-54, 62 and 66.

²⁸⁴ Tabitha Kanogo, *The Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*, 1987, p. 148.

²⁸⁵ C. Abour Ojwando, "White Highlands No More", 1970, p. 103.

²⁸⁶ KNA, "Police Situation Report", October 26, 1952, pp 7-8.

²⁸⁷ C. Abour Ojwando, "White Highlands No More", 1970, p. 103.

²⁸⁸ Oral Interview with Simon Gakaria, Uthiru Village, Kikuyu, November 5, 2007.

parents and friends.²⁸⁹ Others enlisted due to lack of basic needs after the arrest, detention or imprisonment of their parents. Philip Wambaa Karanja states:

At first, children were not allowed into the forest. Even women were initially not allowed. However, from the age 12, children could fight, guard, scout and even shoot. Children only went to the forest because of circumstances. Schools were not available and all Independent and Karing'a schools had been closed by the government. Others escaped detention while some joined because their parents had been killed or imprisoned.²⁹⁰

Geoffrey Ngugi Kiruri joined the Mau Mau after circumcision when he was 14 years old. He had various reasons that made him participate in the struggle. He recalls:

I joined the Mau Mau because a white man near our home at Kinoo used to buy a very big load of maize stalks very cheaply. He was exploiting us. I also envied his child because he was fat and wore shoes and good clothes while I wore clothes that were tattered. Again, children in mission schools were very big for eating our sweat. At Gituamba Independent school, we were taught Mau Mau songs which emphasized the need for love, unity and solidarity in supporting Mau Mau against the colonial government.²⁹¹

3.2.1 CHILDREN IN THE COMBAT.

During armed conflict, modes of operation by the armed groups do not necessarily remain static. The modes change depending with the unfolding challenges and circumstances as conflicts enter different phases. In the initial stages of Mau Mau, there was no need yet for women and children to serve as forest fighters. However, from mid-1953 the need for children became vital and these modes were relaxed. This was because emergency regulations increasingly made it difficult for women to provide support to the fighters. George Muhia Kamau recalls:

Mau Mau war was fought by all of us. Even women and children went to the forest although they were earlier on not allowed. It was believed that their presence in the forest could impair the operations of Mau Mau by causing an omen. With the coming of Erskine to command the army, emergency regulations intensified making it difficult for the Mau Mau fighters to operate. This made women and children be allowed into

²⁸⁹ Oral Interview with David Njuguna Mugunu, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 9, 2007.

²⁹⁰ Oral Interview with Philip Karanja Wambaa, Thogoto Village, Kikuyu, November 5, 2007.

²⁹¹ Oral Interview with Geoffrey Ngugi Kiruri, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 9, 2007.

the forest. Children took up the guns and fought alongside men and women.²⁹²

Children formed the Mau Mau forest wing which operated within and around the Aberdares and Mount Kenya forests. These were the major places from where the Mau Mau organized the guerrilla attacks. Children fought the colonialists and their allies.²⁹³ For instance, as a forest fighter under Mbutia, 16 year old Mungai Thiga was among the fighters who planned and attacked Naivasha Police station on March 22, 1953. Mau Mau attackers made away with firearms and ammunition besides fleeing all the prisoners.²⁹⁴ As forest fighters, young girls cooked, collected firewood, fetched water and cleaned the Mau Mau camps.²⁹⁵ Boys helped to demolish the camps before the relocation of Mau Mau to a new camp and to guard the camps from wild animals. Moreover, some children assisted medicine men to carry their assortment as they moved around locating and collecting the herbs. In the company of adult freedom fighters, children helped to collect wild fruits, roots and honey to replenish their food.²⁹⁶

The domestic duties, which were undertaken by children in my view, were not less important than the combat ones. The supportive duties ensured that fighters were committed to their work.

Without children some fighters might have been prompted to leave their responsibilities in order to execute duties which children undertook. Furthermore, the presence of children in the forest motivated the Mau Mau fighters by encouraging them not to give up the struggle.²⁹⁷

²⁹² Oral Interview with George Muhia Kamau, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 9, 2007.

²⁹³ Waruhiu Itote, *Mau Mau in Action*, 1979, pp. 61-62; Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion and Social Change in Kenya*, 1992, pp. 135-136; Margaret Gachibi, "The Role of Kikuyu Women in Mau Mau", 1986, p.206.

²⁹⁴ Waruhiu Itote, *Mau Mau Generals*, 1967, pp. 82-83; Standard Staff Reporter, "Naivasha Police Station Raided: Gang gets away with rifles," E.A.S, Saturday, March 28, 1953, p. 1.

²⁹⁵ Oral Interview with Simon Gakaria, Uthiru Village, Kikuyu, November 5, 2007.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

Majority of the children in Kikuyu Division did not enter into Mount Kenya and the Aberdares forests. By 1955, significant size of Kiambu District in general and Kikuyu Division in particular was under thick forest cover. According to Kiambu District annual reports of 1954 and 1955, the DC states:

Not only do the forests of the Aberdares border this district, but there are other isolated patches of forests and the settled areas which are closely interlocked with the Native lands. In addition to these aspects, Nairobi, so long the hub of Mau Mau is in the close vicinity and the open sparsely populated Maasailand borders it on the south west. "Forests" of Nairobi Province continue to provide contact between Kiambu and headquarters of Mau Mau. There have been increased terrorist activities in the district, especially in Kikuyu and Limuru Divisions. Approximately, 600 terrorists have been concentrating in Ndeiya in Kikuyu and the forests of Limuru settled areas. These comprise men, women and juveniles²⁹⁸

In Limuru and Kikuyu divisions, Mau Mau fighters got a lot of reinforcement from residents including children.²⁹⁹ Majority of these comprised repatriates from Rift Valley and other settled areas.³⁰⁰ Most children in Kikuyu Division therefore operated in and around Dagoretti, Thogoto, Kabete, Gachie, Wangige and Ndeiya, which were under thick cover. These forests served as the hiding ground for the fighters from Nairobi and the Aberdares mountains as they went for the supplies from the African Reserves within the area.³⁰¹

3.2.2 CHILDREN IN MAU MAU SUPPORTIVE WING.

Majority of the children served Mau Mau from the African Reserves. Confinements and the intensification of the emergency regulations greatly limited African movement. To deny support and any assistance to Mau Mau fighters, the security forces escorted women to farms. This greatly

²⁹⁸ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report", 1954, p.1; KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report", 1955, p.1.

²⁹⁹ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report", 1954, p.3.

³⁰⁰ Ibid, p.4.

³⁰¹ Oral Interview with Joram Kinyanjui, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, December 5, 2007.

limited women from effectively supporting Mau Mau. Significantly, children became the alternative means through which supplies continued to be sent to fighters.

After the oath was administered, children were useful during the delivery of food, guns and ammunitions to designated places. David Njuguna Mugunu recalls:

Children were very helpful in Mau Mau. When people were put into villages, it became difficult for women to help Mau Mau. Young boys and girls were used to carry the guns and other weapons, clothes, food, and even tobacco to specified places for Mau Mau. When I was 14 years old I did this. However, not every child was used to deliver these requirements. Only those boys and girls who were trustworthy, clever and secretive were used.³⁰²

Children served as scouts, spies or guards. Unsuspecting, children followed and monitored the activities of the troops and, or the home guards and after learning their destination, would report it to the adults at home who endeavored to pass on the information to the Mau Mau contacts in villages. If children saw an "enemy" they alerted the fighters through the use of coded language. This enabled them to hide thus avoiding being caught by the government personnel.³⁰³

Children covered fighters who had been wounded with branches thus concealing their presence from the security forces. After covering the fighters, children kept monitoring the presence and movement of security forces and, accordingly communicated to the fighters for them to move on safely.³⁰⁴ To effectively perform this duty, children disguised themselves by engaging in plays. At times, it demanded that fighters hide for long hours until security had improved or necessary arrangements were made to have them collected for treatment. To save such fighters from hunger,

³⁰² Oral Interview with David Njuguna Mugunu, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 9, 2007.

³⁰³ *Ibid.* An enemy referred to anyone who was opposed to Mau Mau while some coded languages included whistling, shouting loudly names such as *wairire*, which referred to an African colonial police.

³⁰⁴ Oral Interview with Joram Kinyanjui, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, December 5, 2007.

children gave their food and did without eating.³⁰⁵ Moreover, some children gave their exercise books and other writing materials, which Mau Mau used for record keeping. This was kept secret to themselves.³⁰⁶

To feed and get other necessities, which were needed by the forest fighters, Mau Mau depended on their supporters in the various African Reserves. Under good co-ordination, such supplies were collected, packed and transported to designated places where the Mau Mau would collect them.³⁰⁷

Boys were sent to buy or deliver tobacco for the fighters. At home, girls cooked for the fighters. Although some knew that they were cooking for the Mau Mau, others did not. Mothers told the latter group that the food was meant for a social ceremony intended to take place in the village.³⁰⁸

When the fighters visited homes on various Mau Mau missions, children were instructed to sweep around the compound, in order to clear the footprints thus concealing the presence of Mau Mau to strangers and security personnel.³⁰⁹ Moreover, children accompanied their mothers in the farms

during cultivation from which Mau Mau fighters were fed.³¹⁰ Children maintained secrecy on Mau Mau operations. Children were strictly warned against divulging any information to government officers or to strangers. Any child knew that the best answer to any question from a stranger was,

"I don't know".³¹¹

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Oral Interview with Consolata Mary Wangari, Mugumo-ini Village, Kikuyu, November 14, 2007.

³⁰⁸ Ibid. Women feared that the latter group could reveal their operations in Mau Mau to the Security guards or loyalists.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Oral Interview with Consolata Mary Wangari, Mugumo-ini Village, Kikuyu, November 14, 2007; Jane Wangari, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 6, 2007.

³¹¹ Oral Interview with Mary Wanjiku Kanithi, Nguriunditu Village, Kikuyu, November 15, 2007.

To execute their duties, children disguised themselves from the colonial forces and their agents. For example, in school uniform, children transported guns and ammunition to designated places where Mau Mau would collect them.³¹² Others herd the cattle or rode *mubara*³¹³ along the road but were primarily monitoring the presence and the movement of the home guards.³¹⁴ Eunice Watiri recalls:

Things like guns, ammunition and food were transported by children. The home guards could not suspect young children to have had any links with the Mau Mau. Mostly, children were sent to take guns and ammunition to designated places where Mau Mau would collect them or to a certain home early in the morning. Guns were hidden in the long coat that children wore because of cold weather in the morning and pretended to be going to school. Ammunitions were transported in school bags. Food was put in the gourds and pretending to be going to the river, children were able to take it to particular places for the Mau Mau.³¹⁵

Strapping young babies on their backs, women managed to deliver firearms and information about government plans against Mau Mau or attend Mau Mau oath ceremonies without arousing suspicion from the home guards. Esther Wangui Ngige states:

I tell you, we women would not have gone far without children. We used children in order to be able to take the oath because of the emergency rules. In turns, one child could be used by many women in order to deliver information about the plans of the government thus saving the fighters by strapping them on our backs. If we were asked by the home guards, we could tell them that we were taking them to the hospital there at Thogoto. Even guns and bullets were transported this way. After packing them well, we put them between our backs and the child who was strapped on our backs and took them to some selected homes or place where Mau Mau would collect them. This way the fighters could get them.³¹⁶

Weapons that were not put into immediate use were safely hidden for use when the need arose.

Children were involved in this exercise. For instance, at the age of 16 years, Eunice Watiri used to

³¹²Ibid.

³¹³Mubara is a metallic wheel onto which the bicycle tyre is fixed. Children rode the bicycle metallic wheel or the tyre.

³¹⁴Others used improvised ones from wood carving.

³¹⁵Oral Interview with Loise Wanjru Githinji, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 9, 2007; Simon Gakaria, Uthiru Village, Kikuyu, November 5, 2007; Ayubu Kanithi, Nguriunditu Village, Kikuyu, November 16, 2007.

³¹⁶Oral Interview with Eunice Watiri, Kikuyu Village, Kikuyu, November 17, 2007.

³¹⁷Oral Interview with Esther Wangui Ngige, Mugumo-ini Village, Kikuyu, November 14, 2007.

hide shotguns in her father's banana plantation. She dug holes and after proper covering the guns with sacks, covered the holes with the soil. She then marked the places where she had hidden the guns such that nobody else could easily identify the locations. At one point Watiri had hidden 16 guns at Ndeiya village that belonged to her brother who was later killed by the police. Finally, Watiri gave the guns to her father.³¹⁷

Loyalty to Mau Mau was not only limited to those who had taken the oath; some loyalists also supported the fighters. Some of the loyalists had full knowledge about their wife (s), husband or children's involvement in Mau Mau but did not betray them to the government. Philip Wambaa Karanja recalls:

No, I had not taken the oath but my mother used to send me to deliver food into Thogoto forest. I knew that there was Mau Mau. It is my father who told me My father was a loyalist. My mother was a Mau Mau and my father knew it. Even my father was unhappy because their land (my grandfather's) had been taken. It was located where Kikuyu campus library stands today.³¹⁸

By maintaining loyalty to Mau Mau on one side and on the other to the government, loyalists avoided betraying the Mau Mau. They feared that betrayal would lead to the arrest or killing of their wives and children by the government forces or because, such moves would have made them possible candidates for elimination by the Mau Mau.³¹⁹

To identify their supporters, Mau Mau devised coded language. This was particularly so in circumstances where the fighters had to move to new places in which they did not quite understand who among the local population was a loyalist or Mau Mau supporter. For example, when the

³¹⁷ Oral Interview with Eunice Watiri, Kikuyu Village, Kikuyu, November 17, 2007.

³¹⁸ Oral Interview with Philip Wambaa Karanja, Thogoto Village, Kikuyu, November 5, 2007.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

fighters met, their greetings were “ai” and the expected response was “hiru” or “wimugikuyu?” where the response was “hii, ndimugikuyu”. At other times the greetings would take the form “ng’o” and the answer would have been “itimu”.³²⁰ This language was taught to children who were in Mau Mau. However, as Mau Mau intensified and the government tightened emergency regulations, Mau Mau secret language became known to many loyalists. Consequently, mastery of the coded language enabled them to obtain much information about the Mau Mau operations. This greatly helped the government in its effort to fight Mau Mau.³²¹ If Mau Mau supporters saw a stranger (s) or loyalists while discussing matters related to Mau Mau, they would scratch themselves while saying that the area had been infested with jiggers, fleas, butterflies or lice. Immediately all discussions were suspended until unfamiliar people had left.³²²

CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated that children were part of the Mau Mau movement. The chapter has found out that children were pushed into the Mau Mau by a variety of factors. Key among them was the closure of the independent schools and churches, parental and peer influence, hardships caused by colonialism, harassment by the colonial security personnel and the missionaries’ stand on the African culture especially female circumcision.

The chapter has demonstrated that children served in both combat and African Reserve based wing of the Mau Mau. Children performed various domestic duties, as suppliers, spying and guarding.

³²⁰ Oral Interview with David Mwithiga, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 11, 2007: “ai” stood for, how are you? and “hiru”, meant, I am fine; “wimugikuyu?” stood for, are you a Kikuyu? and “hii, ndimugikuyu”, meant, Yes, I am a Kikuyu; “ng’o” stood for the shield while “itimu” referred to the spear.

³²¹ Oral Interview with George Muhia Kamau, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 9, 2007; Jane Wangari, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 6, 2007 and Elizabeth Wanjiku, Mugumo-ini Village, Kikuyu, November 14, 2007.

³²² Oral Interview with George Muhia Kamau, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 9, 2007; Jane Wangari, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 6, 2007 and Elizabeth Wanjiku, Mugumo-ini Village, Kikuyu, November 14, 2007.

While only a limited number of children entered into the forests as fighters, majority were based in the supportive wing in the rural areas. However, the Mau Mau struggle was not without impacts on the children. This is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 CHILDREN AND THE COSTS OF MAU MAU.

4.1 INTRODUCTION.

Conflict is damaging. During armed conflicts, especially those that are protracted in nature, the most vulnerable groups—women and children, are the most affected. According to Carol Bellamy, in particular, children experience horrors as casualties and are separated from their families. Moreover, they also suffer from malnutrition and starvation, diseases, torture, rape and imprisonment.³²³ During the Mau Mau struggle, the society was torn up and divided between the Mau Mau and loyalists, the Christians and non-Christians and between the landed and landless. Like many other armed conflicts in Africa, Mau Mau had profound impact on the Africans in Kenya in general and on Kikuyu in particular; children were not excluded. This chapter discusses the impact of Mau Mau on children.

4.2 EDUCATION.

The Mau Mau and the general State of Emergency adversely affected children's education. Associating the Independent and Karing'a schools with the Mau Mau subversive activities, the colonial government closed many such schools while others were burnt down. For instance, in the first few months of the Emergency about 135 independent schools in Kikuyu areas were closed down thus depriving some 35,000 African children of education.³²⁴ In September 1953, three schools in Embu were burnt down,³²⁵ while between 1953 and 1954, many independent schools

³²³ Carol Bellamy, *The State of the World's Children*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 13-23; UNICEF, "Overview of recent UNICEF Activities: Emerging Fund-raising Kit", Update No. 4, October 1994, p3; See also UNICEF, *Children on the frontline: The Impact of Apartheid Destabilization and Warfare on Children in Southern and South Africa*, New York: UNICEF, 1998, p. 25; Save the Children, *Prospects for Africa's Children*, London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, 1990, pp. 16-17.

³²⁴ Veny's Ladislav, *A History of the Mau Mau Movement in Kenya*, 1970, p. 49.

³²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 112.

were burnt down in Nithi Division of Meru District.³²⁶ This deprived thousands of the African children the right to education. Inability of many children to access education opportunities caused frustration and disaffection, which influenced them into the Mau Mau. According to David Njuguna Mugunu:

Many children did not get education because of the problems that were there. There were no teachers in our schools; only the mission schools had teachers. Most of Independent and Karing'a schools were closed down in 1953 and others were burnt. I was 13 years old. We could not go to school because we lacked everything even food.³²⁷

In a number of cases, the missions were allowed to take over the schools that had been shut down and rewrite their curriculums from the British Christian perspective. By 1953, for example, 97 Independent schools had been reopened under the direct control of the European missionaries.³²⁸ However, missionaries were reluctant to admit children whose parents supported the Mau Mau or those who practiced "anti-Christian" values. By and large, most of the independent schools that were reopened under the management of the missions benefited the loyalists.³²⁹

Children access to education was impaired following the introduction of the village concentration camps. Under the relocation scheme, in many cases, schools were overcrowding, lack of teaching facilities, enough toilets and teachers. Due to overcrowding playground and other social facilities, which were vital for the children psychomotor development were inadequate.³³⁰

³²⁶ Mary Ciambaka Mwiandi, "The Role of African Evangelists and Teachers in the Development of Western Education and Christianity in Nithi Division of Meru District of Kenya", 1993, pp. 186, 246. Among the schools which were burnt in Nithi Division include Nkuthika on September 17, 1953; Kambandi on April 24, 1954; Ikuu Intermediate school, Kiereni, Ndagani, Rubati, Kathigiriri and Kibubwa, all razed in 1954.

³²⁷ Oral Interview with David Njuguna Mugunu, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 9, 2007.

³²⁸ KNA, K967.62, *History of the Loyalists*, Nairobi: Government Printing Office, 1960, p. 20.

³²⁹ Oral Interview with Edward Kariuki Kinuthia, Gaitumbi Village, Kikuyu, November 9, 2007.

³³⁰ Oral Interview with David Njuguna Mugunu, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 9, 2007.

Following the closure of independent schools, some children transferred into mission schools. Such children experienced a lot of difficulty. They were hated, beaten and occasionally would be rounded up by the home guards to go and clear the bush in areas that were suspected to be Mau Mau hideouts. Josephine Wanjiru Kung'u recalls:

Trouble was everywhere. Even those who joined the mission schools after our schools were closed, there was no peace. Teachers beat us for no reason. They told us that we were Mau Mau spies and therefore a source of shame to the school. We were hated. The Home Guards would come for us at anytime to go and clear the bush where the fighters were hiding. I stayed in fear.³³¹

Some mission schools imposed strict requirements for children who transferred from the independent schools. Before admission, they were required to renounce the Mau Mau. Moreover, many were compelled to repeat classes. As a result, many dropped from school altogether and joined the Mau Mau. This was because they were unwilling to abide by the new regulations. Edward Kariuki Kinuthia recalls:

I am one of those children who faced problems. I was 11 years old when Waithaka Independent school was closed down. I was in standard four and when I went to Rungiri, which was a mission school, I was taken back to standard one because I had come from an independent school. Many children refused to follow the new conditions in these schools and instead joined the Mau Mau. I tell you, even getting five shillings for school fees was a real problem for me. My parents were in detention and nobody could help me. That is why many of us did not get good education. I then went to Gaitumbi Mission School. In this school, children of the Mau Mau were greatly hated. Mr. Ng'ethe seriously beat me because my parents were Mau Mau. I have never forgiven him up to today. It was really hard for us.³³²

Stringent emergency regulations, lack of food and other basic necessities hindered many children from getting quality education due to absenteeism. Hunger compelled some to drop from school, others were left in charge of homes or as care takers of their still young siblings while their parent

³³¹ Oral Interview with Josephine Wanjiru Kung'u Rungiri Village, Kikuyu, November 7, 2007.

³³² Oral Interview with Edward Kariuki Kinuthia, Gaitumbi Village, Kikuyu, November 9, 2007.

were busy digging the trenches, clearing the bush or fetching water for the home guards. Jane

Wangari recalls:

Children had a lot of problems. When our parents were arrested or detained, many of us were unable to go to school. We had no food and clothes. Whenever my mother left to go and dig the trenches or to clear the bush at Wangige and Gachie, I was left guarding our home. I was 15 years but could not go to school. Children seriously lacked food.³³³

Mau Mau affected smooth running of many mission schools. In November 1953, the government reported that attending mission schools took a lot of courage, for it signified open defiance of the dictates of the “terrorist” leaders in the forest hideouts.³³⁴ Missionaries were frequently attacked by the Mau Mau. Teachers and their relatives were also killed and a number of mission schools were burnt down. For instance, by the end of 1953, in Nyeri, Fort Hall, Embu and Meru districts, 55 mission schools had been destroyed and 30 others looted, 27 teachers had been killed, 37 others attacked and 10 relatives of teachers killed.³³⁵ In one night in March 1954, 33 schools were burnt down in the Ndia Division of Embu District.³³⁶

As the Mau Mau intensified, children in the mission schools in Kikuyu Division became target of elimination by the Mau Mau, which caused a lot of fear in them, their parents, and teachers.³³⁷

Consequently, some teachers, parents and pupils took Mau Mau oath, but maintained loyalty to the Church. According to Simon Gakaria:

Many mission schools that were destroyed by Mau Mau were in Nyeri, Muran’ga and other places. Here in Kikuyu, mission schools were not burnt down because there were many home guards and security was high. What we (Mau Mau) did was

³³³ Oral Interview with Jane Wangari, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 6, 2007.

³³⁴ KNA, AHC/8/173, “Schools turned in to Fortresses”, Press Release by Norman Larby, Deputy Director of Education, Colonial Government, November, 1953.

³³⁵ KNA, K967.62, *History of the Loyalists*, p. 20; KNA, VQ/1/31, “Memo from District Commissioner, Fort Hall to Provincial Commissioner, Nyeri. Naivasha District Emergency Committee”, 1952.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Oral Interview with Simon Gakaria, Uthiru Village, Kikuyu, November 5, 2007.

to attack children, teachers and parents who identified with mission schools in order to discourage people from supporting the government. This made some pupils, teachers and parents in mission schools to take Mau Mau oath and pledged never to betray Mau Mau, but still remained loyal to the church.³³⁸

4.3 SOCIAL RELATIONS.

The Mau Mau led to soured social relations between loyalists and the Mau Mau supporters. Hatred developed between children of the loyalists and those from families which supported the Mau Mau. According to Reginald Murathe wa Munyua, the former had access to education in mission schools while the latter did not. Those who swore to remain conservative by taking the Mau Mau oath held the view that missionary teachings alienated the Africans and robbed them of their civilization, traditions and culture.³³⁹ The Mau Mau supporters despised those who were attached to mission schools and churches. The Mau Mau claimed that Africans who welcomed the missionary practices, values and education had “gone to drink water using human skulls”.³⁴⁰ Missionaries were encouraging their members to embrace modernization by using such items as cups, mugs and cups. The Mau Mau argued that such people were not “true” Africans. The Mau Mau advocated the use of traditional items like gourds and calabashes.

These sentiments were an expression of strong cultural pride and desire by the Mau Mau to defend African civilization. There was need to defend the African culture at whatever cost since no culture is more superior to another. However, the Mau Mau stand seems to have ignored the aspect of fluidity of culture. Human societies make culture and as human beings evolve, so does human culture. Therefore, no culture is static. In my view, it was necessary for the Africans to take up from missionaries and accommodate the values and practices which were admirable, desirable and

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Oral Interview with Reginald Murathe wa Munyua, Muthiga Village, Kikuyu, November 5, 2007.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

good for their survival. The Mau Mau valued western education but were against missionary and European influence.³⁴¹ Nonetheless, the propaganda by the Mau Mau against missionary education attained a degree of success in that it discouraged many Africans from siding with the European at time.

Clitoridectomy was also a divisive factor. The Mau Mau supporters glorified the rite while majority of the Africans who remained loyal to the government and mission churches objected the practice, seeing it as a barbaric act and ungodly.³⁴² To the Mau Mau, the developing opposition to clitoridectomy by the missions was a direct threat on the reproduction of society and their survival as a people.³⁴³ Without being circumcised, a Kikuyu could not attain adulthood adult.³⁴⁴ Anyone who did not undergo the rite was termed a non-Kikuyu.³⁴⁵ Through the institution of circumcision, new age-set bonds were established, which served as glue that held together the entire society.³⁴⁶

Kenyatta, a strong defender of the Kikuyu culture and traditions stated:

The real argument lies not in the defense of the surgical operation of its details, but in the understanding of a very important fact in the tribal psychology of the Kikuyu namely, that this operation is still regarded as a very essence of an institution which have enormous educational, social, moral and religious implications, quite apart from the operation itself. For the present, it is impossible for a member of the tribe to imagine an initiation without clitoridectomy. Therefore, the abolition of the surgical element in this custom means to the Kikuyu the abolition of the whole institution.³⁴⁷

Circumcision was a central institution among the Kikuyu. The rite helped in recording of history since events were remembered in relation to the *Marika* age groups.³⁴⁸ However, circumcision was

³⁴¹ Mary Ciambaka Mwiandi, "The Role of the African Evangelists and Teachers in the Development of Western Education and Christianity in Nithi Division of Meru District of Kenya", 1993, pp. 167-177.

³⁴² Oral Interview with Consolata Mary Wangari, Mugumo-ini Village, Kikuyu, November 14, 2007.

³⁴³ David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 2005, p. 19.

³⁴⁴ Martin Frankie, "Clashes of Culture", 2008, p. 26.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mt. Kenya*, 1939, p. 227.

³⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 129.

effectively employed as a tool in addressing other grievances among the Africans. Kenyatta and other African leaders were able to unite and mobilize followers in quest for economic and political freedom.

Rifts between those who supported the idea on female circumcision and those who did not resulted to enmity. Neighbours hatred each other and the bond, which united them was broken. Children became enemies. Those who underwent the rite could not greet or freely share with those who did not.³⁴⁹ In the mission schools, those who managed the admission from the independent and Karing'a schools found it hard since the social life was unbearable. Uncircumcised pupils abused them.³⁵⁰ Teachers, who were expected to counsel and impart knowledge in order to promote cooperation, love and enhance reconciliation among children, instead fuelled enmity. Some teachers argued that such children could infect the others with bad manners, satanic ideas and evil practices, which they learnt from the Mau Mau.³⁵¹ Suspicion remained high in some schools throughout the emergency period.³⁵²

Enmity emanating from circumcision extended into marriage institution. Those who supported female circumcision could not intermarry with those who were condemning it. During Mau Mau, circumcision and marriage became a greater point of division. Mau Mau supporters refused to intermarry with those who declined to circumcise their girls. Accordingly, the Mau Mau perceived them as supporters and allies of the colonial government. Mau Mau ridiculed uncircumcised girls

³⁴⁸Phyllis N. Muraya, "The Kenya African Teachers College-Githunguri, 1939-1952", 1972, pp. 23-26.

³⁴⁹Oral Interview with Consolata Mary Wangari, Mugumo-ini Village, Kikuyu, November 14, 2007.

³⁵⁰Ibid.

³⁵¹Oral Interview with Eunice Watiri, Kikuyu Village, Kikuyu, November 17, 2007.

³⁵²Ibid.

and their families. According to Mau Mau supporters, loyalists had betrayed them, therefore, could not intermarry. Milkah Wanjiru recalls:

Problems were many. Those who were loyal could not intermarry with the Mau Mau. The loyalists had betrayed the Mau Mau by supporting the missionaries or the government. Their girls were called *irigu* (uncircumcised young girls), by the Mau Mau. According to the Mau Mau, marrying such girls could cause misfortune and punishment from the ancestors. It was difficult to organize the Kikuyu traditional marriages. The two groups could not sit together to negotiate for *Ruracio*, the bride wealth. As a result, many girls delayed before they got married. They were laughed at. This caused a lot of psychological suffering to them.³⁵³

Some Christians maintained divided loyalty. They pledged loyalty to the missionary teachings in order to have their children secure admission in the mission schools, but secretly had their daughters circumcised. This they did with full knowledge that if caught, the consequence would be outright expulsion from mission churches and schools. Reginald Murathe wa Munyua recalls:

Circumcision of girls was very important. We, Christians were against the practice but most of the young men were supporters of the Mau Mau. Since they refused to marry uncircumcised girls, many Christians had no choice apart from circumcising them secretly. So, many young girls aged about 12 to 16 years were circumcised but secretly. If you were caught, you could be expelled from the church or your children were expelled from school. Some girls enrolled in the mission schools but also went for circumcision. Even if you were educated and you lacked a man to marry you, people laughed at you. Marriage was highly valued.³⁵⁴

4.4 PUNISHMENT.

As the Mau Mau intensified, increasingly, women and children were engrailed in it. Determined to dilute the Mau Mau, the government employed collective punishments on the Mau Mau supporters.³⁵⁵ Often, the home guards misused their powers. They beat up innocent children and destroyed their houses. Elizabeth Wanjiku stated:

That time, young men came to our home to get food and after they had gone, the

³⁵³ Oral Interview with Milkah Wanjiru, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 12, 2007.

³⁵⁴ Oral Interview with Reginald Murathe wa Munyua, Muthiga Village, Kikuyu, November 5, 2007.

³⁵⁵ KNA, DC/FH/3/16/39, "Letter from Muaunu Muturi, Fort Hall", May 29, 1953.

home guard came with his people and we were severely beaten up because of the footsteps. They were asking us whose footsteps they were. We did not say. We chose to be beaten. Our house was destroyed and the home guard forced us to carry all the materials to his place. We slept outside.³⁵⁶

Children were forcefully recruited into communal labour. They were rounded up and made to dig trenches or clear the bush and food crops. Edward Kariuki Kinuthia recalls:

As children of the Mau Mau, we were rounded up and forced to dig trenches whose aim was to stop the Mau Mau from getting any assistance from the African in the reserves. We used to be taken to Riruta and Kawangware where we were forced to clear land under maize, sorghum, millet or cassava crops. We were beaten up a lot. We could not refuse. We suffered a lot.³⁵⁷

The security forces sexually assaulted women and girl children. As punishment for supporting the Mau Mau, the home guards forcefully inserted bottles, fingers or sticks into their private parts.³⁵⁸

This caused profuse bleeding while some had injuries on their reproductive systems.³⁵⁹ Moreover, young girl children were raped. Consolata Mary Wangari recalls:

When Mau Mau came, young girls who were beautiful were in great problems. They were called *tucui*, literally meaning chicks. When they went to take water to the home guard posts, they were locked in and raped by them and askaris. Even some were forced into sexual intercourse in the presence of their mothers. Some were only 12 years old. Some of them became pregnant. Others were infected with gonorrhoea. They could not complain to anyone. We were under the law. This was meant to punish us because our parents were supporting Mau Mau. I tell you there were many problems.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁶ Oral Interview with Elizabeth Wanjiku, Mugumo-ini Village, Kikuyu, November 14, 2007.

³⁵⁷ Oral Interview with Edward Kariuki Kinuthia, Gaitumbi Village, Kikuyu, November 9, 2007; see also Standard Staff Reporter, "General Hinde sets the course for the fight to end Mau Mau", E.A.S, Friday, April 17, 1953, p. 7.

³⁵⁸ Oral Interview with Mary Wanjiru Kanithi, Nguriunditu Village, Kikuyu, November 15, 2007; Esther Wangari wa Kung'u, Kikuyu Village, Kikuyu, November 17, 2007; Josephine Wanjiru Kung'u, Rungiri Village, Kikuyu, November 7, 2007.

³⁵⁹ Oral Interview with Josephine Wanjiru Kung'u, Rungiri Village, Kikuyu, November 7, 2007.

³⁶⁰ Oral Interview with Consolata Mary Wangari, Mugumo-ini Village, Kikuyu, November 14, 2007.

4.5 LACK OF BASIC NECESSITIES.

Emergency regulations affected the ability of children to get basic needs. Round ups, detention, communal labour and villagization programme caused food insecurity in many African reserves. In Kiambu District in 1955, for example, the government ordered the removal of all crops and vegetation from the railway reserves between Limuru and Mathathia station in accordance to crops, food and dwelling regulations of 1953.³⁶¹ In Kikuyu Division, the government orderd for the destruction of food crops at Kawangware, Kinoo, Kabete and Kangemi areas, which caused severe food shortage. Consequently, many children suffered from Kwashiorkor and marasmus. Joan Wambui recalls:

Emergency brought many problems. The greatest was lack of food. I tell you, when the government learnt that people were assisting the Mau Mau, all bananas and maize crops at Kangemi, Kawangware, Kabete and Kinoo were mowed down to punish us. Many children became weak due to lack of enough food. We only ate one meal in a day. Many children were attacked by kwashiorkor and marasmus. Even children were taken to go and destroy food crops. Only God helped us.³⁶²

The determination by the government to completely dislocate and wipe out the Mau Mau was greatly achieved following the introduction of the village concentration programme in 1954.³⁶³ The urgency that characterized the relocation caused untold suffering and hardships, especially on women and children. The evacuees were only capable of gathering and carrying a few possessions while majority were lost or destroyed in the confusion.³⁶⁴

³⁶¹ KNA, VQ/11/8, "Emergency Regulations", 1954-1958, p. 4.

³⁶² Oral Interview with Joan Wambui, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 11, 2007.

³⁶³ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report", 1955, p. 4.

³⁶⁴ Oral Interview with Esther Wangni Ngige, Mugumo-ini Village, Kikuyu, November 14, 2007; Jane Wangari, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 6, 2007.

In Kiambu District, villagization programme begun in Limuru Division. This was continued at the beginning of 1955 in south Githunguri and Kikuyu divisions.³⁶⁵ In June 1955, the government decided to complete villagization of the whole district. North Githunguri and Gatundu divisions started work accordingly. Most villages comprised not more than 250 huts each. Each family was allocated a plot of 100ft by 50ft on which a maximum of 3 huts could be built, ostensibly, giving some privacy, space and orderliness.³⁶⁶ By the end of 1955, the entire population of Kiambu District was living in the emergency village camps.³⁶⁷

In Dagoretti location of Kikuyu Division, a different form of strip villages was used. The huts were built on either side of specially build roads instead of being concentrated in one place.³⁶⁸ This form of villagization was adopted in order to overcome the complicated land tenure problems caused by dense population in the area. However, the system was not so satisfactory from either the security or social services logistical aspects.³⁶⁹

Life in the village concentration camps was difficult for the Africans in general and children in particular. Poverty was mainstay characteristic. Villages lacked water and adequate latrines. Overcrowding led to poor garbage disposal. Consequently, high poverty levels coupled with the return of many people from the city of Nairobi and sub-urban areas caused poliomyelitis, typhoid, fever, kwashiorkor and marasmus to many children³⁷⁰ Other children were attacked by jiggers, fleas and lice. Esther Wangui Ngige recalls:

³⁶⁵ KNA, VQ/11/8, "Emergency Regulations", 1954-1958, p. 4.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 5.

³⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 5.

³⁶⁹ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report", 1955, p. 5.

³⁷⁰ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report", 1954, p. 16.

When people were taken into villages in 1954, I was 10 years old. Children suffered a lot. Many suffered from diseases like cholera and typhoid. Many children died. We were attacked by jiggers, fleas and lice. I could not walk properly or even grasp anything because of jiggers. There was no water and latrines were very few in our camp. Even when your hut was near the latrine, you could not go there at night because of the night curfews. We helped ourselves in a container inside our house. We were at Ndeiya camp and there was no water. Children and other women used to go for water at Ondiri River, which is near Kikuyu town. It took us almost whole day. The water was very dirty because too many people fetched water from Ondiri. Even cows were taken there for watering.³⁷¹

Lack of food caused physical weakness and death to children. Miss Eileen Fletcher, a Quaker from Britain, worked at Kamiti Prison for one year. According to her, under relocation scheme, a whole village in Kikuyu land was moved to a place without food.³⁷² The situation was so serious that when she requested to see the children, two hundred had to be carried since they were too weak to walk while forty others could not stand.³⁷³ For 48 hours, children had been left without food or care as the adults had been taken for interrogation.³⁷⁴ According to Red Cross, 45 children in the camp died of starvation between August and November 1955.³⁷⁵

Africans experienced difficulty in accessing medical services. The advent of villagization programme increased pressure on the already overcrowded hospitals in Kiambu District. This is because; a large number of villages were situated on the main lines of communication. Moreover, spread of diseases in the villages combined to send more patients to the hospitals.³⁷⁶ For example, in 1955, Kiambu hospital frequently had twice as many in-patients as beds.³⁷⁷ Besides high number of in-patients, Kiambu hospital was overstretched since it only had one medical officer

³⁷¹ Oral Interview with Esther Wangui Ngige, Mugumo-ini Village, Kikuyu, November 14, 2007.

³⁷² C., Abour Ojwando, *White Highlands No More*, 1970, p. 269.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report", 1955, p.25.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

who also used to attend patients in other hospitals, health centres and dispensaries within the district.³⁷⁸ However, Thogoto mission hospital continued to take much of the pressure away from Kiambu hospital, particularly because the use of Nairobi hospitals was reduced owing to control of African movement.³⁷⁹

In Kikuyu Division, the entire area covering Ndeiya, Muguga, Kinoo, Thogoto, Dagoretti, Waithaka, Uthiru and Kangemi village camps depended on Thogoto mission hospital. Due to poor means of transport and stringent emergency regulations, diseases that otherwise could be treated claimed lives of many children.³⁸⁰ In Kiambu District in general and Kikuyu Division in particular, isolated huts intended to arrest the spread of tuberculosis and leprosy were built in many villages.³⁸¹

4.6 FAMILY SEPARATION.

The government employed arrest, detention and imprisonment as tools to punish the Mau Mau sympathizers. By 1955, approximately 280,000 Africans had been arrested.³⁸² Of over 80,000 Kikuyu who had been detained by the end of 1956, a third came from Kiambu District.³⁸³ Women constituted a significant percentage of the detainees. For instance, by 1958, a total of 34,147

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ Oral Interview with Esther Wangui Ngige, Mugumo-ini Village, Kikuyu, November 14, 2007.

³⁸¹ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report", 1955, p.26.

³⁸² Veny's Ladislav, *A History of the Mau Mau Movement in Kenya*, 1970, p. 118; F. D. Corfield, *Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau*, 1960, p. 157.

³⁸³ KNA, KBU/50/HOR, "Handing Over Report Kiambu", 1955, p. 2.

women had been imprisoned for violating emergency regulations.³⁸⁴ This is shown in table 4.0 below:

TABLE 4.0: WOMEN ADMITTED TO PRISONS 1952-1958

Year	Number Arrested	No. Sentenced	Recidivists	First offenders
1952	347	N/A	N/A	N/A
1953	4,415	3,132	55	3,077
1954	9,609	8,494	290	8,204
1955	13,265	11,467	1,506	9,961
1956	8,900	7,906	1,927	6,279
1957	8,854	7,472	2,068	5,404
1959	7,295	5,976	1,873	4,103

Source: KNA, CPK, Kenya Prisons, AR, "Women Imprisonment", 1953, p. 8; KNA/CPK, Kenya Prisons, AR, "Women Imprisonment", 1956, p. 9; KNA, CPK, Kenya Prisons, AR, "Women Imprisonment", 1958, p. 10.

Detention and imprisonment greatly affected the family unit. While spouses were separated from one another, children were left without parental care, which caused them a lot of suffering. Children assumed parental responsibility. They took care of their younger siblings. To some, these duties were too difficult. Edward Kariuki Kinuthia recalls:

Life was hard for me. My parents were arrested and detained when I was 11 years old. I became a mother and a father. I looked for food and firewood, cooked, fetched water and washed clothes for my two younger brothers and two sisters. I also washed them. The work was extremely difficult for me. I did not know how to

³⁸⁴ KNA, Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, Kenya Prisons, Annual Report, "Women Imprisonment", 1953, p. 8; KNA, CPK, Kenya Prisons, AR, "Women Imprisonment", 1956, pp. 8-9; KNA, CPK, Kenya Prisons, AR, "Women Imprisonment", 1958, p. 10.

prepare some food. When some of them started to cry asking me to take them to our mother, I also cried. Many children were orphaned.³⁸⁵

Through detention, imprisonment and killing of tens of thousands of Mau Mau supporters, many children were left without parents, which made them encounter a lot of problems. In the concentration camps, women volunteered to care for such children by providing them with food, clothing, shelter and other basic necessities. Moreover, the Red Cross society helped a great deal in taking care of these children who had been left without parents or guardian.³⁸⁶ In April 1955, the first Red Cross worker, Miss Mitchell was posted to Kikuyu Division where she worked in 34 villages.³⁸⁷ Subsequently, more workers were sent to other divisions in Kiambu District. For instance, Miss Brooke-smith was sent to work in 25 villages in Limuru Division and Gatamaiyu Location of Githunguri Division while Miss Malloy and Miss Gough worked in Gatundu Division.³⁸⁸ In Kikuyu Division, Miss Mitchell organized and coordinated the distribution of milk to needy children leading to a marked improvement on the children's health.³⁸⁹ Besides the distribution of milk, the Red Cross Society organized children play groups in the villages.³⁹⁰

The Red Cross Society experienced difficulty in its work. Owing to shortage of personnel, the society resorted to using the home guards. However, the home guards gave out food to their own children or those from loyal families rather than to the needy and deserving ones. Consequently,

³⁸⁵ Oral Interview with Edward Karinki Kinuthia, Gaitumbi Village, Kikuyu, November 9, 2007.

³⁸⁶ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report", 1956, p. 6.

³⁸⁷ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report; Red Cross Society", 1955, p. 4; KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report", 1956, p. 9; KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report", 1957, p. 11.

³⁸⁸ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report; Red Cross Society", 1956, p. 9; KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report; Red Cross Society", 1957, p. 11.

³⁸⁹ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report; Red Cross Society", 1955, p. 27; KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report", 1956, p. 9; Standard Staff Reporter, "Red Cross Duty to Mau Mau Suspects: Major

Replies to Mau Mau Critics", E.A.S, Friday, February 20, 1953, p. 9.

³⁹⁰ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report; Red Cross Society", 1955, p. 4.

many children died of malnutrition.³⁹¹ The government criticized the Red Cross officials for extending its services to Mau Mau dependents. In reply, the Red Cross argued that it was its duty to attend to all “friends” or “foes” without discrimination, especially the Mau Mau dependants.³⁹²

The Christian Council of Kenya and African District Council also participated in caring for the needy children. In Kikuyu Division, these organizations provided funds and staff to Dagoretti Children Centre. The centre was not an orphanage, but a transit centre in which children could be physically rehabilitated and then returned to their relatives or foster-parents.³⁹³ The object of Dagoretti Children Centre was to take in and care for the worst cases of mal-nutrition when there were no close relatives to look after the children.³⁹⁴ By the end of 1955, the centre had 90 children and the number had risen to 400 at the end of 1956.³⁹⁵

The Mau Mau affected the relations between parents and their children. Parents had very little time with their children. Sometimes, mothers ordered their children to go to bed immediately after supper. This afforded such women ample time to prepare and deliver food to the Mau Mau at designated places. Consequently, parent-children bond was diluted thus affecting children’s self-esteem, sense of belonging and identify.³⁹⁶ Family separation and lack of communication due to these circumstances caused social instability both in the towns and the reserves.³⁹⁷

³⁹¹ Standard Staff Reporter, “Red Cross Duty to Mau Mau Suspects: Major Replies to Mau Mau Critics”, E. A. S. Friday, February 20, 1953, p.9.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, “Kiambu District Annual Report”, 1955, p. 27.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, “Kiambu District Annual Report”, 1956, p. 9.

³⁹⁶ Oral Interview with Elizabeth Wanjiku, Mugumo-ini Village, Kikuyu, November 14, 2007.

³⁹⁷ M. P. K., Sorrenson, *Land Reform in the Kikuyu Country*, 1968, p. 85.

Frustration in the African reserves made many men, women and children to migrate into Nairobi. In particular, the fact that Kikuyu Division is so near Nairobi enabled many children to migrate there hoping to get some form of employment.³⁹⁸ However, life in Nairobi was difficult particularly for children.³⁹⁹ For example, in Kariokor, one of the oldest African locations where members of the African carrier corps were housed, an entire family lived in tiny ramshackle rooms measuring ten by six feet.⁴⁰⁰ Children slept on the floor or under the parents' beds.⁴⁰¹ No matter how dim the lighting was, schoolwork had to be done.⁴⁰² Moreover, following the Mau Mau attack on a group of home guards on Donholms road-near the African stadium, the authorities made a house-to-house search. In Shauri Moyo, for instance, people were ordered to get out of their houses. Since there was no time to dress up, shivering children stood outside naked while men were in their underwear.⁴⁰³ Everywhere and everybody was searched, including babies in order to find the pistols, simis and the guns. The chiefs ordered the askaris and sub-chiefs not to leave the young children unmolested. As a result, the napkins were taken off as the authority officers searched for arms.⁴⁰⁴

Unable to meet their basic needs, many children who had migrated to Nairobi turned to criminal activities. R.C. Cathing, the Commissioner of Police, reported in 1955 that "Juvenile" crime was a major problem.⁴⁰⁵ According to this report, gangs comprising of children who had been separated

³⁹⁸ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report: Juveniles' Immigration into Nairobi", 1957, p.2.

³⁹⁹ Lone Leigh, *In the Shadow of the Mau Mau*, 1954, p. 83.

⁴⁰⁰ Muthoni Likimani, Pass Book No. F. 47927, 1998, pp. 38-39.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid*, pp. 39-40.

⁴⁰² *Ibid*, p. 43.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid*, p. 21.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 21, 29

⁴⁰⁵ KNA, AR, "Commissioner of Police Report", 1955, pp. 30-47; KNA, AR, "African Affairs Department", 1956, in Milcah Achola Amolo, *Youth, Poverty and Destitution in Nairobi*, 2006, p. 8.

from their parents as a result of the emergency roamed Nairobi and were responsible for theft of property.⁴⁰⁶

Alarmed by increased “juvenile crime” and inline with enhancing Operation Anvil, the government, in 1955, passed “the Ordinance for the Prevention of cruelty to and neglect of children”.⁴⁰⁷ Under this ordinance, camps were opened to accommodate child criminals and other homeless unclaimed children⁴⁰⁸ Consequently, 2662 Kikuyu Juveniles were handled, 1188 through a specially established Juvenile court, and 1474 through repatriation orders, were returned to relatives residing in the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru African Reserves.⁴⁰⁹ Despite the government effort to eliminate them, homeless unsupervised children without means of support continued to flood into Nairobi as late as 1957.⁴¹⁰ However, from 1959, Geoffrey William Griffin, the founder of the Starehe Boys Centre and School, rescued many street children in Nairobi.

Geoffrey William Griffin dedicated himself to the rehabilitation of the orphaned Mau Mau children. As a Community Development Officer under the Ministry of Culture and Social Services, he was responsible for overseeing the rehabilitation of the youths in the detention camps.⁴¹¹ In 1957, as he traveled around the country setting up rehabilitation centres for the destitute youth, Griffin came across a huge number of orphaned children idling in the streets of Nairobi and took them to the rehabilitation camps.⁴¹² In 1959, with the help of Geoffrey Galame Geturo and Joseph

⁴⁰⁶KNA, AR, “African Affairs Department”, 1956, in Milcah Amolo Achola, “Youth, Poverty and Destitution in Nairobi”, 2006, p. 8.

⁴⁰⁷Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹Ibid.

⁴¹⁰Milcah Amolo Achola, “Youth, Poverty and Destitution in Nairobi”, 2006, p. 9.

⁴¹¹Dorothy Otieno, “A Journey through the life of a Grand Warrior”, E.A.S, Thursday, June 30, 2005, p. 3.

⁴¹²Ibid.

Kibiru Gikubu, Griffin founded the Starehe Boys Centre and School.⁴¹³ The first 17 boys were admitted in the school in Kariokor Rescue Centre for a few months before the school was moved to its current site at Starehe, Nairobi.⁴¹⁴

4.7 DETENTION.

Children were arrested and detained or imprisoned for supporting the Mau Mau. According to Miss Fletcher, African children were being sentenced to life imprisonment for consorting with the Mau Mau, taking of illegal oath and for possessing ammunition unlawfully. Some were as young as 11 and 12 years old.⁴¹⁵ See table 4.1 below.

TABLE 4.1: RECORD OF SOME OF THE CHILD PRISONERS, 1955.

Number	Year	Date of admission	Charge	Sentence
1322/J	11	21-9-1954	Illegal oaths	Two years and five years consecutively with hard labour
77966/J	12	21-6-1954	Consorting with armed persons	Governor's pleasure; maximum security
12795/J	12	20-8-1954	Consorting with armed persons	Governor's pleasure ² maximum security

Source: C. Abour Ojwando, *White Highlands No More*, 1970, p. 271.

⁴¹³KwamcheTsi Makokha, "How Mau Mau Inspired the Starehe Philosophy", E.A.S, Thursday, June 30, 2005, p. 4.

⁴¹⁴Charles Kimahti, "He waged a courageous battle against cancer", Daily Nation, Thursday, June 30, 2005, p. 4; Edwin Mutai, Wambui Mwangi and Nzau Musau, "Nation mourns Griffin: Kibaki leads Kenyans in grieving over an icon", The Kenya Times, Thursday, June 30, 2005, pp. 1,28; KwamcheTsi Makokha, "Starehe Founder Griffin dies at 72", E.A.S, Wednesday, June 29, 2005, pp. 1,2.

⁴¹⁵Tribune, May 25, 1956, in Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu Women, The Mau Mau Rebellion and Social Change in Kenya* p 145.

Life in the prisons and detention camps was difficult for the children. Girl prisoners had only one prison dress and one set of under clothes. When they washed these, they wore a blanket while the clothes dry. Washing had to be done during the weekend.⁴¹⁶ The girls were so terrified of being forgotten that they often told Miss Fletcher to tell their relatives as she went about their village that they were in the prison and hoped one day to go back.⁴¹⁷ Moreover, children prisoners were confined in tiny corrugated iron rooms with a glimmer of light.⁴¹⁸ Of the 75 male juveniles whom Fletcher found in Kamiti working in a quarry, was an 8 years old child.⁴¹⁹ In one instance, Fletcher found two children aged four and seven years who had been left alone in the cell and it took her an hour to persuade the D.C. to have them taken to the Red Cross, place of safety⁴²⁰ Describing the pathetic conditions under which children were held at the prisons, Miss Eileen Fletcher stated:

Girls' prisoners who sang Mau Mau hymns were sentenced to 16 days solitary confinement. I saw girls come out and I can tell you that even now it sometimes keeps me awake at night when I remember the look of "stark terror", on their faces. Young girls' prisoners had to work at stone breaking as part of their ordinary prison labour, beyond their strength.⁴²¹

Children lacked adequate food, clothing, medical, parental care and other basic necessities. As a result, many died of diseases and beating. Lucy Waithera was arrested in 1953 and taken to Kamiti prison where she stayed until 1957. She recalls:

Some women were arrested and imprisoned with their children. But some young girls were imprisoned for supporting the Mau Mau. There were many girls from Kikuyu, Embu and Meru. Some girls and women were raped by the askaris and

⁴¹⁶C., Abour Ojwando, "White Highlands No More", 1970, p. 265.

⁴¹⁷Ibid.

⁴¹⁸Ibid.

⁴¹⁹Ibid, p. 267.

⁴²⁰Ibid, p. 269.

⁴²¹Daily Chronicle, May 31, 1956, in Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu Women, The Mau Mau Rebellion and Social Change in Kenya*, 1992, pp. 144-145; see also C., Abour Ojwando, "White Highlands No. More", 1970, pp. 265-270.

gave birth in the jail and had nothing to protect the children with. We used to assist them when they gave birth. Some miscarried. We dug the graves for children who died. There were many diseases to children because of lack of care and food. We took ugali with beans, which had a lot of weevils. It is God who helped us. Children took ugali like us. Children stayed with us in the cells and they were not provided with blankets. Those who had young babies dug holes and made their children sit on them as we did communal work. Some strapped them on their backs. The sun was very strong but children remained there the whole day. They even ate nothing since we could not stop working to breast feed them. Many died because of poor health.⁴²²

4.8 REHABILITATION.

Determined to dislocate the Mau Mau, the government in 1953 initiated a rehabilitation programme. The government recognized the urgency with which women and children needed to be rehabilitated 'if the next generation was to be saved'.⁴²³ According to H.E. Crocker, a government officer, fighting Mau Mau movement went beyond fighting the Mau Mau forest fighters. H.E. Crocker states:

Greater danger lay in the support group, children in particular and that the problem of the Kikuyu children will require a solution in the near future for it is only to be expected that they will imbibe Mau Mau teaching with their mothers' milk and that they will grow up to take the place of their parents.⁴²⁴

The programme was primarily aimed at "cleansing" the Mau Mau victims through screening and confessions.⁴²⁵ Cleansing ceremonies begun with the home guards in order to neutralize any spiritual damage the Mau Mau oath might have caused them.⁴²⁶ By the fall of 1954, Governor Baring had formally invited the churches in the camps to "cleanse" the Mau Mau into upstanding

⁴²² Oral Interview with Lucy Waithera, Kinoo Village, Kikuyu, November 12, 2007.

⁴²³ Santilli Kathy, "Kikuyu Women in the Mau Mau Revolt", 1977, p. 338.

⁴²⁴ H. E. Crocker, "Women and Mau Mau", Kenya, 1954, p. 17.

⁴²⁵ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, Kiambu Annual Report, "African Affairs Department", 1955, p. 37.

⁴²⁶ KNA, VQ/1/30, "Chief Native Commissioner to Central Province", November 24, 1952.

Christians.⁴²⁷ In September 1954, church officials held a meeting at Kamiti prison in which they discussed the screening tactics. According to the discussion:

There comes a time in their cross-examination when they are asked a direct question as to whether they have taken the oath or not. If they say no, they are told that they can go back to the hardcore compound as the screeners are not satisfied with them, and they better think again and in a few days time, they will be brought forward for re-screening. If however they confess to the oath, the general experience is that other things begin to come out bit by bit thereafter. Even so, Mr. Waruhiu, the son of the murdered Chief Waruhiu and an effective screener, is pretty shrewd in deciding whether these confessions are really a sign of a genuine change of heart or not, and if he is not satisfied, they are sent back to the hardcore compound possibly being told to think again of what they need to confess before being called up a little later.⁴²⁸

During the screening process, the prisoners were classified as, *black*, *grey* or *white*. If a detainee was questioned and found not to be highly indoctrinated with what the British considered as being Mau Mau psychological illness, they were classified, *white*, and was sent to a lighter security camp elsewhere in Kenya.⁴²⁹ On the other hand, detainees were designated *grey* if they were not extremely indoctrinated; and *black* or *hardcore* if they were extremely indoctrinated and thus the most barbaric. The *black* detainees were sent to the toughest maximum-security camps such as Manyani and Hola detention camps.⁴³⁰

After confession, children were sent into Boys Scout and Girl Guide movements. For instance, by 1956, there were 290 boy scouts and 800 girl guides in Kiambu District.⁴³¹ However, as membership increased, more Boy Scout and Girl Guide troops were opened. By the end of 1957,

⁴²⁷KNA, AHC/8/173, "Circular by His Excellency the Governor of Kenya to Provincial Commissioner's, The Churches and Rehabilitation", September 14, 1954; Martin Frankie, "Clash of Cultures", 2008, p. 72.

⁴²⁸KNA, MSS/129/9, "Record of Interview at Athi River with Mr. Peter Anderson, the Revered Howard, Church and Mr. Gerald Anderson", September 22, 1954.

⁴²⁹Martin Frankie, "Clash of Cultures", 2008, p. 78.

⁴³⁰Ibid.

⁴³¹KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report; Boy Scout and Girl Guide Troops", 1956, p. 10.

there were 62 Boy Scout and 46 Girl Guide movements accommodating thousands of boys and girls.⁴³²

Under the rehabilitation programme, detainees passed through the *pipeline*, a process that ensured that the detainees were gradually reforming until they were eventually considered right to return back into the villages. However, the government often asked the missionaries to help those who were being allowed to return to their homes by the screening teams in order that they might not lose their new faith in themselves and be forced to return to the side of Mau Mau.⁴³³ Nonetheless, the problem of unoccupied youth in Kiambu District in general and Kikuyu Division in particular continued to worsen because of increased number of repatriation from Nairobi and other places. This increased insecurity.⁴³⁴

In the concentration camps, Christian missionary groups operated mobile units containing daylight screen and either a filmstrip or film projectors, which were intended to teach the Africans the full meaning of Christian life and responsibility.⁴³⁵ Mission groups frequently toured the camps preaching against the Mau Mau often using loud speakers.⁴³⁶ They started Christian classes in the camps that targeted women and children, emphasizing on Christian values and scripture readings.⁴³⁷

⁴³²KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report", 1957, p. 12.

⁴³³Standard Staff Reporter, "African Pastors Unite Against Mau Mau: Decision for Closer Co-operation by Missions in Rift Valley", E.A.S, Monday, February 15, 1954, p. 5.

⁴³⁴KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report" 1957, p. 6.

⁴³⁵Ibid.

⁴³⁶Caroline Elkins, *Imperial reckoning*, 2005, p. 172.

⁴³⁷KNA, MAA/9/930, "Memo to Christian Council of Kenya from Miss E. G. Martin, Kiambu Camp to members of the CCK, Executive Committee, Personal Subscribers and others", September 1955.

The rehabilitation process was not confined to the Christian missionaries. The *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* clubs, organized under the Community Development Department (CDD), participated in reforming women and caring for the children. Many women joined *Maendeleo ya Wanawake*. By 1954, *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* had 508 clubs with a total membership of 31, 810.⁴³⁸ See table 4.2 below. *Maendeleo Clubs in Kiambu District* had risen to 208 by the end of 1956.⁴³⁹

Table 4.2: Maendeleo ya Wanawake Clubs by 1954

District	Clubs	Members
Army Camp	8	400
Kiambu	45	5,050
Fort Hall	35	3,250
Nyeri	100	7,500
Embu	25	1,250
Meru	1	20
Settled areas	10	300
Naivasha	1	45
Thompson's Falls	1	85
Nairobi	5	400
Machakos	94	10,000
Other districts	183	3,510
Total	508	31,810

Source: KNA, KCP/AR, "Community Development", 1954, p. 13.

Under the supervision of the Community Development Department, the *Maendeleo* clubs engaged in various activities. They organized and coordinated women music competition and exhibitions.

⁴³⁸KNA, CPK/AR, "Community Development Department", 1955, p. 13-14.

⁴³⁹KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report; Community Development", 1956, p. 10.

In Kiambu District for example, the July 1957 singing competitions and the district Home Craft show, which were held at Kirigiti stadium were won by Kikuyu Division with Kinoo women club carrying the trophy.⁴⁴⁰ The clubs helped with running day nurseries, making and supervising the distribution of soup and milk to the hungry children. Moreover, women clubs cared for the sick children whose parents were missing or dead. They also assisted the other women in the villages to improve the standard of their homes.⁴⁴¹ In the guarded villages, the clubs aided the security forces by gathering information about Mau Mau operations and in persuading people to leave the Mau Mau.⁴⁴² Through the Maendeleo clubs, the government was on the winning side in its effort to dislocate the Mau Mau. In addition, the Community Development Department provided internal broadcasting services, libraries and distribution of paper; organized classes, barazas, recreation and instruction in various forms.⁴⁴³ By the end of 1957, the clubs had risen to a total of 986.⁴⁴⁴

From 1956, the rehabilitation process was carried out with such high speed that by the end of April 1959, the number of the Mau Mau detainees had reduced from over 80,000 in 1955 to 1,091.⁴⁴⁵ Officially, the process of rehabilitation came to an end in 1959 in the aftermath of the British massacre at Hola Detention Camp where 11 detainees were beaten to death by the security forces in charge of the camp, for refusing to perform manual labour.⁴⁴⁶ The last of the Mau Mau women

⁴⁴⁰KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report; Community Development", 1957, pp. 8, 11.

⁴⁴¹KNA, CPK/AR, "Community Development", 1955, p. 7; KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report; Community Development", 1956, p. 10; KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report; Community Development", 1957, p. 11.

⁴⁴²Ibid.

⁴⁴³KNA, CPK/AR, "Community Development Department", 1955, p. 25.

⁴⁴⁴Ibid, p. 14

⁴⁴⁵C. J.M., Arport, *African Affairs* Vol. 56, No. 22, 1957 in Veny's Ladislav, *A History of the Mau Mau Movement in Kenya*, 1970, p. 85; Great Britain, Colonial Office, *Further Comments Relating to the Death of Eleven Mau Mau Detainees at Hola Camp in Kenya*, cmnd, 816, London: HMSO, 1959, p. 2.

⁴⁴⁶Wunyabari O. Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya*, 1993, p. 143.

detainees were released and returned to their villages in 1960.⁴⁴⁷ However, rehabilitation of children continued. In Kiambu District, many children were taken to Githunguri Youth Club and Wamumu rehabilitation Centre.⁴⁴⁸

The official lifting of the State of Emergency in January 12, 1960, was followed by the abolition of a number of emergency regulations. These included all restrictions on African movement, pass, licensing of the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru, and the licensing of press and publications.⁴⁴⁹ However, some emergency regulations were retained. These included the right to hold the remaining Mau Mau detainees until the time when their rehabilitation would be completed and the right to control political meetings and organizations.⁴⁵⁰ By May 1960, only 630 detainees were kept in special establishments and 330 were in restriction.⁴⁵¹ Africans had by this time taken an active role in the process of constitutional amendments and negotiations for Kenya's independence, which continued through to 1962 when the Independence constitution was drafted in Lancaster, London. In June 1, 1963 Kenya was granted internal government (Madaraka), with Jomo Kenyatta as the Prime Minister. On November 6, Kenyatta granted amnesty to all prisoners in custody as well as free pardon to Mau Mau who were still hiding in the forests.⁴⁵²

Mau Mau and the general State of Emergency caused great suffering to children. Due to poverty and stringent emergency regulations, many children lacked basic necessities and western education. Others were imprisoned, detained or separated from their family members. Due to

⁴⁴⁷ Cora Ann Preslev, *Kikuyu Women, The Mau Mau Rebellion and Social Change in Kenya*, 1992, p. 162.

⁴⁴⁸ KNA, DC/KBU/1/45, "Kiambu District Annual Report", 1960, p. 11.

⁴⁴⁹ KNA, "Report of the Committee on Emergency Detention Camps", 1960, p. 3.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ Veny's Ladislav, *A History of the Mau Mau Movement in Kenya*, 1970, p. 87.

⁴⁵² Ibid, pp. 92-96.

frustration, majority joined Mau Mau. However, some children especially those who migrated into Nairobi and other sub-urban centres engaged in criminal acts. Nevertheless, the government in conjunction with women groups and Christian organizations undertook to care and rehabilitate the affected children.

CONCLUSION

This chapter was on the impact of the Mau Mau on children. The chapter found out that the Mau Mau movement and the general State of Emergency caused untold suffering to the children. Many were cut off from educational opportunities due to closure or burning of schools. While many underwent severe punishment in the hands of both the Mau Mau and the colonial government personnel, in particular, girls were raped or sexually assaulted thus causing low self-esteem and self-worth. The Mau Mau soured social relations and intensified enmity between pro-government and pro-Mau Mau supporters, which extended to children. Greater suffering was experienced as children were separated from their families and loved ones through deaths, detention and imprisonment. The chapter also established that like adults, children were arrested, detained or imprisoned. Nevertheless, the desire to exonerate the Africans from Mau Mau activities made the government to launch a rehabilitation programme thus systematically weakening the movement. Children were one of the targets on the rehabilitation programme. Their rehabilitation was done by the Community Development department, the *Maendeleo ya Wanawake* clubs, the Red Cross Society and the church organizations. It was this spirit of rehabilitation that motivated Geoffrey Griffins to start the Starehe Boys Centre and School. Though the Mau Mau officially ended in 1960, the rehabilitation of children was continued into post-colonial era.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Colonization had profound impact on the Africans. The presence of the colonizers interfered with their social, economic and political wellbeing. People were deprived of their land and therefore key among the African grievances was land alienation. Frustration and dissatisfaction aroused African political consciousness, which was expressed through the formation of political organizations, trade unions, resistance movements such as the Mau Mau.

Mau Mau broke out in 1952 following the declaration of Emergency. The movement comprised many ethnic communities but majority were the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru. Mau Mau used oath to cement unity, loyalty and secrecy among its members. The oath was administered to men, women and children. Having participated in oath-taking, children were obliged to adhere to the expectations of the Mau Mau.

Participation of children in the Mau Mau was facilitated by a number of factors. While some joined the Mau Mau voluntarily, others were enticed by peers. However, majority of children were sensitized and introduced into Mau Mau by parents or in the independent schools and churches. Difficulty in getting food and other basic necessities as well as problems in accessing education facilitated children to enlist in the Mau Mau. Some joined Mau Mau after Missionaries expelled them from school on suspicion that their parents were Mau Mau supporters. At the height of Mau Mau, schools were closed, burnt, thus leaving children amenable for recruitment.

Children were involved in the Mau Mau as combatants and supporters. Only a small number of children became Mau Mau forests fighters. Besides taking up arms and fighting alongside other Mau Mau, they facilitated and supported Mau Mau by cooking, collecting firewood, fetching water, cleaning, guarding or demolition of the camps when the need to relocate was necessary. Some children helped the medicine men in their activities as they moved around locating and collecting herbs. Others assisted in the collection of wild fruits, roots and honey, which supplemented their diet.

Majority of children however facilitated the operations of the Mau Mau especially when it became difficult for women to do this due to stringent emergency regulations. Children delivered food, ammunition and weapons to designated places for the Mau Mau. Children also served as scouts, spies and guards on the movement and operations of the government security personnel. Others were sent to buy and deliver tobacco for use by Mau Mau. To effectively be able to undertake these duties, children disguised themselves by herding livestock, through normal play or by pretending to be going to and from school.

School children gave their exercise books to the Mau Mau fighters, which they used for record keeping. Moreover, some gave their food to the Mau Mau thus saving them from hunger. When Mau Mau fighters visited their homes on various operations, children concealed their foot prints by sweeping around home compound. Furthermore, in the company of their mothers, children participated in the cultivation of food, which Mau Mau needed in order to survive and continue with their operations.

To be able to attend oath ceremony, women concealed their link with the Mau Mau by strapping young children on their backs. In this way, women managed to pass on information about the operations, plans and movement of colonial security forces to the Mau Mau. Similarly, women were able to transport food, guns, ammunition and other supplies to designated places for the Mau Mau fighters. Women were capable of undertaking these duties due to the fact that significant number of the security personnel comprised the Africans and according to African culture, expectant and breast feeding women were neither attacked and killed nor thought to have had links with subversive activities.

Children concealed the whereabouts of their parents to strangers. Children also helped in safe keeping of ammunition and weapons that were not on immediate use. This they did by nicely covering and burying them in the farm after which they marked the sites

Support to the Mau Mau was not confined to those who had taken the oath but some of the un oathed children assisted. The urgency with which Mau Mau needed some supplies such as food or the need to deliver information about the presence and plans of the colonial police and agents, made parents to employ the service of such children. However, such children were strictly instructed to maintain secrecy to strangers while on mission. With time, most of these children took the Mau Mau oath and actively participated in its activities.

Abraham Maslow theory on Basic Human Needs and Arnold Toynbee, Challenge-response theory hold true for this study. The participation of men, women and children in Mau Mau was due to frustration owing to inability to satisfy their basic needs. In particular, children were drawn into

Mau Mau due to lack of food, clothing, shelter and education; harassment by the Home Guards and colonial police as well as due to missionary attitude towards African culture especially female circumcision. The desire by the Africans to preserve their culture made them zealots. They swore to use all possible means to regain their land and independence.

Mau Mau and the general State of Emergency affected children. Some effects were immediate and short term while others were long term. Key among them was lack of education, which was caused by closure or burning of independent schools by the government. The problem of education was compounded by the missionary attitude of refusing to admit or expelling children whose parents were Mau Mau supporters or those who promoted cultural practices, which were against Christian values and teaching such as female circumstance.

The involvement of children in Mau Mau affected them in many ways. Under the emergency regulations, many Mau Mau supporters were arrested, detained, imprisoned or killed while food crops were destroyed just before harvesting. Consequently, children who otherwise would have continued with education did not. Many assumed parental duties and responsibilities such as provision of basic needs and caring for their still younger siblings. Children who transferred from independent to mission schools were harassed, hatred or compelled to repeat classes. Due to frustration, many dropped out and joined Mau Mau.

Children whose parents remained loyal to the government and missionary teachings experienced problem in pursuing education. As a means to discourage and punish the loyalists, Mau Mau attacked and destroyed some mission schools. Attacks were extended to missionaries, teachers,

Christians and their relatives. Fear caused some to have divided loyalty by showing commitment to Christian teachings but also supporting the Mau Mau.

The Mau Mau soured social relations between loyalists and Mau Mau supporters. The former saw the Mau Mau as hindrance to the attainment of western education and western civilization, which they considered as avenues for advancement. Contrary, Mau Mau saw colonialism and missionary activities as attempt to rob the Africans of their culture and civilization. They therefore swore to use all means to fight colonialism. This caused enmity between the two groups, which extended to children. Children who initially played together could no longer do so. Moreover, intermarriage between loyalists and Mau Mau was affected. The latter argued that intermarrying with uncircumcised would encourage betrayal to their operations. Uncircumcised persons could not be trusted since they were not considered to be full members of the community. This situation continued in post emergency period with ex-Mau Mau supporters arguing that the loyalists had betrayed them by allying with the government, therefore should not intermarry. To enhance good relations with Mau Mau supporters, some loyalists secretly had their daughters circumcised and even gave support to the Mau Mau.

Under the regulation of collective punishment to the Mau Mau supporters, children were beaten and harassed by colonial security personnel. In particular, women and girl children were sexually assaulted. Moreover, some of their homes were destroyed while others were compelled into communal labour. Children experienced a lot of hardship in village concentration camps. High levels of poverty led to malnutrition and outbreak of diseases, which caused death to many. Health

problems that otherwise could be treated resulted to death due to absence of hospitals and medical officers.

Children were cut off from the means of survival following the arrest, detention, imprisonment or killing of their parents. Out of frustration, many migrated into Nairobi. Unable to meet their basic needs, they resorted to criminal acts, which made the government to establish juvenile courts intended to address the situation. Under the 1955 Ordinance for the prevention of cruelty to and neglect of children, over a thousand children were repatriated to relatives in the various concentration camps. However, homeless children continued to flood into Nairobi as late as 1957, which made Geoffrey William Griffin to start the Starehe Boys Centre and School in 1959.

The government determination to wipe out the Mau Mau introduced detention and imprisonment for the thousands Mau Mau supporters including children. Children as young as eleven years old were sentenced to life imprisonment. Life in detention camps and prisons was unbearable for children. They experienced shortage of food, clothing, proper medical care, beating and hard labour. Consequently, some fell sick and died.

In order to dilute the Mau Mau, the government started rehabilitation programmes, which involved confession and cleansing and mainly targeted women and children. The programmes were organized under the Community Development Department and *Maendeleo ya Wanawake clubs*. Through the programmes, the government in conjunction with the mission groups aimed at inculcating Christian values and teachings by providing films and broadcasting services, preaching, starting of Christian classes, barazas and recreation services. Under the *Maendeleo*

clubs, needy children were cared for in nurseries, got milk, soup and other necessities. After the lifting of Emergency in 1960, rehabilitation of children in Kiambu District continued at Githunguri Youth Institute and in Wamumu rehabilitation Centre.

Mau Mau was a reaction to the insensitivity of the colonial government in dealing with the Africans. The aggression and violence by the Mau Mau was an expression of their determination to protect and conserve their social, economic and political civilization and independence.

Dispossessed of the basic necessities, children joined the Mau Mau movement, which in my view, provided shape to Kenya nationalism that culminated in the granting of political independence in 1963.

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APPENDIX

UNSTRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent(s)

I Peter Kinyua Njiru, am a student at the University of Nairobi, Kenya. I am carrying out a research on “Children and the Mau Mau: a Case Study of Kikuyu Division of Kiambu District, 1952-1960” This research is purely academic, carried out in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Master of Arts Degree in Armed Conflict and Peace Studies, University of Nairobi. I request you to provide the relevant information that would help to make the research successful. Confidentiality and/or complete anonymity would strictly be observed if requested for by the informant(s).

Thanks in anticipation.

PART A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name..... Location/Place.....

Age..... Sex..... Date of interview.....

PART B

1. Were you a member of the Mau Mau Movement? Since when? What reasons made you join?
2. What were the requirements for one to acquire Mau Mau membership?
3. What were the aims of the Movement?
4. What role(s) did you play in Mau Mau Movement?
5. Do you remember anybody today who was oathed as a child? If “yes”, why were they oathed? Did they know that they were taking an oath?

6. Were there children who joined the Mau Mau forest fighters? If “yes” what influenced them to join the Movement?
7. What role(s) did they play? Were there changes in the role(s) from time to time or it remained the same throughout the Emergency period?
8. Were there women who went to the forest with children? What did this mean to children/society?
9. Were children detained/imprisoned? Why and what problems did they experience in the prisons/detention camps?
10. What problems did children experience when their parents were detained/imprisoned or when they fled into the forests?
11. What problems did children experience following the introduction of the concentration camps/villagization programs in 1954 by the colonial government?
10. In what ways did children assist Mau Mau forest fighters when it became difficult for women to assist them as a result of the introduction of strict Emergency laws/regulations?