

Kenya's Freedom Struggle

The Dedan Kimathi Papers

by Maina wa Kinyatti



***Liberated from
capitalist control
to educate the masses
by
Socialist Stories***

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**DEDICATED TO ALL THE COMPATRIOTS WHO DIED FIGHTING FOR
THE LIBERATION OF THE HOMELAND, PARTICULARLY:**

General Gitau Matenjagwe

General Kago

General Ihuura

General Nubi

General Tanganyika

General Bata Batu

General Kubukubu

General Bamuingi

General Ole Kisio

General Mwangi Toto

General Mwangi Mambo

Colonel Manyeki wa Wangombe

Colonel Nyoro wa Kiragú

Kefa Wanyonyi

Gatimu wa Karanja

Glossary of Gikuyu Words

- Gikuyu na Mumbi* The original parents of the Gikuyu people.
- Guku ni gwitu* This is our land.
- Gutiri yuuraga na ndikie* There is no rainfall that does not cease. Literally, every misfortune has an end.
- Igongona* Gikuyu customary ceremony.
- Iri kuuma kimamo ndicokaga* Once an animal has left its den, it cannot return.
- Itungati* Guerrillas.
- Kabaka* King of Buganda.
- Kabuuru* General term of reference to imperialists, more specifically, Boers.
- Kipande* Identity instruments, equivalent to the South African 'pass'.
- Matemo* Kimathi's undercover name.
- Mbuci* Guerrilla camp.
- Mirango ya Nderi* Nderi's gates.
- Mugumo* Tree considered sacred by the Gikuyu.
- Muthigani uri nja ndahonaga* A spy in a homestead cannot survive.
- Muthiganwo ni uri nja ndahonaga* It is a Gikuyu proverb. It simply means he who is sought by a man already in the courtyard has no way of escape.
- Mwana wina murugiri ndariaga mai* A child with a guardian or parent does not live on shit.
- Ndaguthaitha na nguo cia nyukwa* It is a Gikuyu curse. Literally means I beseech you by your mother's dresses.
- Ndongu* Wild fruits.
- Ngai* God.
- Ngo* Shield.
- Ngong to Karimatura* Signifies the limits of the land, equivalent to the English 'from Lands End to John O'Groats'.
- Njamba ti ikere* Literally means the hero does not necessarily have muscles.
- Njohi* Gikuyu beer.
- No kinya tumonorie* We will kill them. Literally means we will pour their lives down.
- Panga* A heavy knife used as an implement and a weapon in East Africa.
- Thai Thathaiya Ngai Thai* Peace with God.
- Thayu wa Ngai* Peace of God.

Thumbi Gikuyu traditional hat.

Tigwo na wega Goodbye.

Tutigukua makiriaga We cannot die of starvation while they are eating.

Tutingihe hiti keru We cannot afford to sacrifice another comrade. Literally means we cannot give twice to the hyena.

Abbreviations

INA	Ituma Ndemi Army
KAU	Kenya African Union
KCAE	Knight Commander of African Empire
KCGE	Knight Commander of Gikuyu Empire
KDC	Kenya Defence Council
KLFA	Kenya Land Freedom Army
KP	Kenya Parliament
KPGC	Kenya Parliament Guard Commandant
MKP	Member of the Kenya Parliament
MMCC	Mau Mau Central Committee
NNR	New National Regulations
PWD	Public Works Department
SWC	Supreme War Council
WC	War Council

Glossary of Historical Events and Persons

- W.W.W. Awori** Editor of a Kiswahili language newspaper, *Habari za Dunia*, he was a vice-president of KAU from 1952 to 1956, and the member for Nyanza in the Legislative Assembly.
- Bamuingi** Mau Mau general who refused to abandon the struggle after independence; he was killed in an engagement with government forces.
- Baraza** Oldest Kiswahili weekly in Kenya until it ceased publication in 1979. The newspaper was founded by the colonial government in 1939 to serve as a propaganda instrument to mobilize African support for the war.
- Baring, Evelyn** Governor of Kenya, and commander-in-chief of the colonial forces at the beginning of the liberation struggle.
- Beecher Report** Intended to serve as the blueprint for African education in colonial Kenya, this report was opposed strongly by nationalist forces. It limited opportunities for Africans in higher education; only ten per cent of those in elementary schools would even be allowed to sit the KAPE, the primary school leaving examination. As a result, Njama notes, 'most Africans thought that the intention of the plan was to get these African children to go to work on the settlers' coffee or pyrethrum plantations after four or so years of schooling'. See Donald L. Bennet and Karari Njama, *Mau Mau From Within* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1966), p. 496.
- Brockway, Fenner** Labour Party politician and anti-colonial activist.
- Carothers-Henderson theory** D.C. Carothers was a colonial government psychologist who wrote a notorious pamphlet, *The Psychology of Mau Mau*, which argued that the liberation movement represented a return to a barbaric narcissism among the Gikuyu. Thus the Mau Mau oath was conveniently portrayed as a symptom of psychological deviation. A similar theory is to be found in Ian Henderson's *The Hunt for Dedan Kimathi*.
- Chege Kibachia** Veteran Kenyan trade unionist. He was the founder and president of the African Workers' Federation until he was deported to Baringo from 1947 to 1957 for his trade union activities.
- Colonial Orders** A reference to the colonial villages which were set up to isolate the guerrillas from their supporters among the peasantry.

- Gakure wa Karuri** A major collaborator with the colonial authorities in Central Kenya.
- General George Erskine** Commander-in-chief of the British colonial forces in Kenya during the war of national liberation.
- Kenyatta's theory of forgive and forget** After independence, Kenyatta embarked on what he called a programme of reconciliation; his philosophy is summed up by the title of one of his books, *Suffering Without Bitterness*.
- Khama and Mutesa** Sir Seretse Khama was exiled from the then Bechuanaland by the British colonial authorities in 1948, and he was not allowed to return until he renounced his chieftaincy in 1956. Similarly, the Kabaka of Baganda, Sir Edward Mutesa, was exiled from Uganda in 1953 for refusing to co-operate with the colonial government on a new constitution.
- Land Consolidation** Officially intended to amalgamate land holdings in Central Kenya to promote the interests of a new, rich African peasantry, the policy was seen by supporters of the Mau Mau as just another attempt to take away African land.
- Lari** An apparent reference to the Mau Mau attack on the village of Lari in which Chief Luka was killed. In return, British and Loyalist forces entered the village and massacred hundreds of civilians, and then blamed Mau Mau for their well-calculated actions.
- Levellation** The term was derived from the English word, 'level'. As Karari Njama informs us, 'Home guards and other traitors were regarded as stumps in a field, to be levelled or gotten rid of'. See *Mau Mau From Within*, p. 77.
- Longonot Mountain** A volcanic mountain (about 10,000 feet high) situated in the Kenya Rift Valley, 45 miles from Nairobi.
- Loyalists** This term was used to refer to all those Africans who supported the colonial government, in general, but more particularly to the home guards.
- Lyttleton plan** See Special Commission to Kenya, below.
- Markhan Singh** Famous Kenyan trade unionist of Indian descent. He came into prominence in 1937 when he organized a two-month strike in Nairobi as the secretary of the 'Labour Trade Union of Kenya. Interned in India during the war, Markhan Singh returned to Kenya in 1949 and took over the leadership of the African Workers' Federation, which he renamed the East African Workers' Federation. He was arrested in 1950, and detained in Mararal until 1961.
- Mathenge** The split within the movement reached its peak when Mathenge demanded equal powers with Kimathi within the Kenya Parliament. According to Njama, Mathenge portrayed himself as the defender of the interests of the illiterate peasants in the movement. See *Mau Mau From Within*, p. 471. Subsequently, Mathenge was arrested on the orders of the Kenya Parliament.
- Mau Mau and civilization** See the Carothers-Henderson theory, above.

- Mbiyu Koinange** Founder member of KAU and its official representative in the UK from 1951 to 1959.
- Moscow Society Oath** The origins of this term are not clear, but it referred to the groups of pseudo-guerrillas (and their pseudo-oath) formed and supported by the government to fight against, and discredit, the Kenya Freedom and Land Army.
- Muhoya wa Kagumba** Chief of the location in which Kimathi was born; he was the local representative of the colonial authorities, but as Kimathi's letters indicate, the two seemed to have developed some kind of understanding at one time.
- Mount Kenya Front** Known as the Mei Mathathi Army, this front was made up of guerrillas from the Mathira area of Nyeri, Kirinyaga District and from Meru, Embu and Ukambani. These forces were under the command of General China.
- Reforms** Allusion to the Lyttleton plan, above.
- Reserves** With the expropriation of the so-called white highlands, it was colonial policy to restrict Africans to specially-designated areas called reserves, in which they would provide a pool of cheap labour.
- Special Commission to Kenya** This resulted in the Lyttleton plan of 1954, which proposed a multiracial council of ministers with one African member.
- Wameru** Tanzanian nationality which lives around Mt. Kilimanjaro; not to be confused with the Meru of Kenya.
- Wat Tyler Rebellion** The peasant revolt in England in 1381 bore many similarities to the liberation struggle in colonial Kenya. Both were directly ignited by the desire for land among the peasantry, and, more indirectly in the case of the Kenyan revolt, harsh taxation.
- Yatta** Dry plains in Eastern Kenya which became a place for resettlement and exile for those who had been uprooted from their homes by the colonial government.

Foreword

Why is history subversive?

Human beings make history by their actions on nature and on themselves. History is therefore about human struggle: first with nature as the material source of the wealth they create—food, clothing and shelter; and secondly, struggle with other humans over the control of that wealth. Labour, human labour, is the key link between the two struggles. It is labour, with all the instruments and accumulated skills, that makes wealth out of nature. The struggle among humans is over control of the entire organization of the production, exchange and distribution of the fruits of labour.

Development in society is brought about by changes in the human struggle with nature; and in the social struggle. The changing social formations, institutions, values, outlook, reflect the ever-changing relationships between labour and nature, and between social groups in one nation and between nations.

Change, movement, is hence the eternal theme in history. It is the universal expressed in all the particularities of the various nations and people of the earth over the centuries. Therefore no society is ever static: there is movement all the time since the two relations or struggles are ever active. History is ever reminding the Present of any society: even you shall come to pass away. Tomorrow will be The Present; and The Present will be The Yesterday.

But it is precisely because history is the result of struggle and tells of change that it is perceived as a threat by all the ruling strata in all the oppressive exploitative systems. Tyrants and their tyrannical systems are terrified at the sound of the wheels of history. History is subversive. And it is because it is actually subversive of the existing tyrannical system that there have been attempts to arrest it. But how can one arrest the wheels of history? So they try to *rewrite* history, make up official *history*; if they can put cottonwool in their ears and in those of the population, maybe *they* and *the people* will not hear the *real* call of history, will not hear the *real* lessons of history.

Kenya, under British colonialism and now under neo-colonialism, is a good example.

If there is one consistent theme in the history of Kenya over the last four

hundred years or so (that's since the sixteenth century), it is surely one of the Kenyan peoples' struggle against foreign domination. At various times and places, they have fought against the Arab, Portuguese and British invaders. The British invasion in the 19th century and their colonial occupation in the first half of the 20th century were accompanied by the heroic resistance of Kenyan people of all nationalities. Some names, like those of Waiyaki, Koitalel, Hassan, Me Katilili have become legends. Brilliant battles were fought. Fortifications built by Bukusu nationality around Mount Elgon, for instance, still stand as a reminder of Kenya's heroic tradition of resistance and struggle.

And during the years of British settler occupation, the resistance was continued, acquiring a new character because a new class, a wage-earning class (a proletariat) was born with colonial capitalism. The new working class joined hands with peasants and tried to forge links with the workers and peasants of all the nationalities to overcome the divide-and-rule tactics of British colonialism. The highest peak of this heroic tradition of resistance was the armed struggle initiated and carried out by the Kenya Land Freedom Army (KLFA), otherwise widely known as Mau Mau. The supreme leader of Kenya Land Freedom Army was Dedan Kimathi.

But of course there has been another tradition: SELL-OUT, traitorous tradition whose highest expression was in the actions of the homeguard, loyalist collaborators with the British enemy, which are continued in the neo-colonial system suffocating millions of Kenyans today.

British colonialism tried to cover the true history of Kenya. They tried to rewrite Kenya's history to justify their invasion and subsequent occupation of the country. *Kenya Land Freedom Army*, the first of its kind in the post second world war period in Africa, became the focus of British propaganda, to prevent armed struggle becoming a model as a form of resistance. The British even trained some Kenyans and brought them up to look at Kenya history with the eyes of the British bourgeoisie. The British propaganda history consisted of burying the real tradition of struggle and, erecting in its place, the tradition of loyalist collaboration. Loyalist historians were praised, honoured, while the people's historians were incarcerated.

This attempt to bury the living soul of Kenya's history of struggle and resistance, and the attempt to normalize the tradition of loyalism to imperialism has continued into neo-colonial Kenya. The loyalist colonial homeguards of yesterday are the neo-colonial' Mbwa Kalis (guard dogs) of imperialism today. There have been two types of history in Kenya: the *Real Living* history of the masses; and the approved official history. Those who run neo-colonialism (those who today have even given military facilities to the leader of world imperialism, i.e. the USA) are mortally afraid of any symbols or reminders of the Kenya people's history of struggle and resistance. And naturally, KLFA (Mau Mau) and Dedan Kimathi, as the highest symbols of that tradition, have received total official neglect or distortion.

The two types of histories have produced two types of historians. There are the official historians, the approved state historians, whose role is to give rational legitimacy to the tradition of loyalism and collaboration with imperialism. These have received state accolades and honours.

But the Kenya people's real history of struggle and resistance has also thrown up its historians. First are the ordinary people who, in their songs, poems, stories, sayings, anecdotes, remembrances, still talk of the Waiyakis; the Koitalels; the Me Katililis; the Hassans and the Kimathis of Kenya history. And secondly, a few progressive intellectuals who have negated their roots among the petty-bourgeoisie, and joined hands with the people. These have put their learning, their intellect, at the service of the people. They are committed to unearthing the buried history of struggle and resistance.

In Guyana we have the example of Walter Rodney. In Kenya we have the example of Maina wa Kinyatti. Since his return to Kenya in the 1970s, Maina wa Kinyatti saw his role as that of being the ears and eyes of the people as far as this concerned their history. Whereas the official state historians borrowed eyes and ears from the colonial and neo-colonial heritage, Maina wa Kinyatti and other patriotic historians, borrowed their eyes and ears from the people. Maina wa Kinyatti travelled extensively in Kenya. He spent many an evening and week-ends in the homes of those who had fought the British and who were now condemned to living in hovels, and on the edges of starvation. He recorded their stories. They in turn came to trust him. They started giving him documents they had hidden for years. They gave him information they had kept among themselves for fear of official, neo-colonial wrath. They knew that those holding the reins of power in post-independent Kenya were those actually sabotaging the struggle for independence. But here was a historian who seemed not afraid; who was talking their language of struggle.

The papers Maina wa Kinyatti was able to rescue are contained in this book. They speak for themselves. They need no introduction, or defence or explanation. It is a record of how the participants, the Kenya Land Freedom Army, saw the struggle as contained in some of their written documents.

Theirs was a national struggle—for land; independence; freedom from hunger; freedom from foreign control; freedom from external and internal social oppression—and they put their lives at the service of those ideals of political liberation.

They were completely surrounded by the enemy. Unlike the armed liberation movements that followed them in Africa (in Algeria, Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Zimbabwe, etc) they had no rear or supply bases in neighbouring countries, for the simple reason that these were also under the same colonial enemy. Their bases were entirely among the Kenyan people.

For arms they depended almost totally on what they could capture from the British army, and on their own factories in the liberated and semi-liberated zones around Mount Kenya and Kirinyaga.

Again, they had hardly any easy access to national and international

propaganda to counter the stream of lies coming from the British settler colonial regime in Kenya and the Colonial Office in London. In the country, KLFA depended mostly on word of mouth to explain their case and the progress of the struggle to Kenyan people. But still, with all the limitations under which they operated, they tried to keep written records of these activities; and to establish written communications with the national and the international community.

Some of the documents were later captured by the colonial enemy. Some were destroyed, or distorted. Some are still held in secret by the British government; and the neo-colonial regime in Kenya. But some escaped capture; and it is to the credit of Maina wa Kinyatti that he has managed to recover a number of these letters and documents and put them at the disposal of Kenyan and the international community.

When the history of the armed liberation struggles in Africa is finally written, KLFA will stand supreme, not so much because of the heights it reached; or the depths from which it rescued Kenya and Africa. KLFA (Mau Mau) was the first organized armed blow against imperialism in Africa. In this they showed the way which was later followed with such brilliant results in Algeria, Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Zimbabwe, and in South Africa today.

Maina wa Kinyatti has now paid a price for his work in Kenya history. In 1982, he was arrested, and imprisoned for six years. He just about escaped the fate of another historian of the people, Walter Rodney from Guyana. But has he? He is losing his eyesight. His health has been deteriorating. Conditions in Kenya prisons are among the worst in the world.

Those who have imprisoned him hope that he will lose sight of the Real History of Kenya. But they are wrong. These documents and his other works like *Thunder from the Mountains; Mau Mau Patriotic Songs* and *Mau Mau: The Highest Peak of Resistance*, will always stand as a memorial of his commitment and courage.

But even if they were to silence Maina wa Kinyatti, would they silence the history of Kenya? Would they arrest, imprison the living history of Kenya? This history is being written by the millions of workers and peasants of all the nationalities in Kenya who in their actions and songs are saying *NO* to imperialism and its comprador alliances in Kenya. The spirit of the Kenya Land Freedom Army (KLFA) and its leader Dedan Kimathi is being reborn in Kenya today!!

History *IS* subversive because TRUTH is! The unavenged father's ghost of Kimathi's struggle and his KLFA, walks the days and nights of today's neo-colonial Kenya. The masses know it. So, too, do the ruling comprador bourgeoisie. Hence the continuing repression; and its opposite—RESISTANCE. The 1980s and 1990s will see the conflict played out to its logical conclusion—liberation from neo-colonialism. These papers will play their part in that struggle by providing lessons from the weaknesses and strengths; the failures and the successes of the past.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o
Stockholm, 1986.

Preface

It was Dedan Kimathi's strong belief and wish that the political and military work of the Mau Mau movement should be documented and preserved for posterity. In this connection, Kimathi insisted that every guerrilla front commander should send a written monthly report on his unit's activities, including the minutes of all meetings held in his camp, to the Kenya Parliament. Similar instructions were given to all Mau Mau leaders in the villages and urban centres. In keeping with this policy, Kimathi appointed Field Secretaries to tour all guerrilla camps and battlefields and to document the activities of the guerrilla army.

From the time he established his army in the forest, Kimathi made a habit of writing down his daily observations of the independence struggle in a personal diary; he also filed all the communications he received and copies of the letters and documents he wrote. At the same time, he made sure that the minutes of every session and General Conference of the Kenya Parliament (KP) and the Kenya Land Freedom Army (KLFA) were set down. 'These documents,' he once told members of the Kenya Parliament, 'will be concrete evidence that we fought and died for this land'.

To preserve these historical materials, the Kenya Parliament established underground archives in Nyandarwa forest in 1953, and appointed guerrilla experts to man them. Thus the first truly national archive in Kenya was established.

However a most unfortunate incident occurred early in 1955: a KLFA turncoat led British forces to the site of the archives in the forest, and the entire collection of Mau Mau records was captured. According to the *Baraza* of 27 August 1955:

Mapema mwaka huu jeshi la Sepikali lilishambulia maficho katika msitu wa Aberdares yaliyotumiwa na Dedan Kimathi. Kati ya vitu vingi vilivyopatikana kulikwa na makaratasi mengi na vitabu vingi kama vinavyoandikwa katika skuli vilivyokuwa vimetumiwa na Kimathi kwa kuandika matokio.

Mahali pa maficho ya Dedan Kimathi palijulikana kwa majeshi ya ulinzi kama matokeo ya habari zilizotolewa kwao mwaka 1954. Baada ya kujulikana mahali penyewe, maficho yenyewe yalionyeshwa hasa na

picha ya kupigwa kutoka Eroplenini na halafu walikwenda huko.

Early this year, government forces attacked a camp used by Dedan Kimathi in the Aberdare mountains. Among the numerous things found in the camp were many papers and exercise books used by Kimathi to record events.

The location of Dedan Kimathi's camp was discovered by the armed forces as a result of information received in 1954. After the location was known, the camp itself was pinpointed through pictures taken from an aeroplane; then government troops moved in.

The captured documents and letters, written in Gikuyu, Kiswahili and English, were intact and well-preserved in four sacks. With the help of their African servants, the British colonial authorities translated and indexed these documents, and then collated them into 14 volumes of about 30 pages each; they were filed under the title: 'The Kimathi Papers'. Copies of these documents were sent to the British M.I.5 and the Public Records Office in London, and a copy was deposited in the Kenyan colonial archives. None of these documents have been made public to this day.

Obviously, the British colonial authorities had concrete reasons for not wanting to avail these documents and letters to the public. First, they confirm, in no uncertain terms, the heroism of the Mau Mau movement, and the tremendous support that Kimathi had among the Kenyan masses; they also expose the brutality of the British forces and some of the many defeats they suffered at the hands of the Mau Mau fighters. Secondly, these texts describe the British imperialists and their Kenyan collaborators (to borrow Fidel Castro's words), 'in terms which they deserve and with words that cannot be erased from history'. What is more interesting, however, is the fact that the government of independent Kenya has collaborated with the British authorities in their efforts to conceal this glorious chapter of Kenya's history. These texts, and many others dealing with Mau Mau, are 'classified materials' in our own 'national' archives; and under a joint British-Kenya agreement, they cannot be made public until 2013 A.D.

Is the whole affair then a cover-up, a conspiracy to protect those Kenyans and British settlers who committed murder and other serious crimes and atrocities against the Kenyan people during the war of national independence? Indeed, it is a mystery that the rulers of an independent country should have agreed to withhold such important information from the Kenyan public. It is also shocking to know that large quantities of Mau Mau documents were destroyed shortly after independence.

In an attempt to unearth this mystery, I was able to obtain some original texts and copies of these documents from some Kenyans who had them in their personal libraries. I also managed to photostat quite a few of the Mau Mau documents held in libraries and academic institutions abroad. A few of the documents and letters included here have also appeared before,

in a contextually distorted form, in some bourgeois newspapers, periodicals and books.

Because I was not able to obtain the whole collection of the Kimathi papers, some of the documents and letters included in this volume remain incomplete; nevertheless, these texts are factually accurate and wholly authentic. I have refrained from altering them in any substantial way. My role as a translator and editor has been simply to make them consistent and legible.

These texts were written by, and were for, those thousands of unnamed Kenyans who joined forces in the patriotic war against British colonial occupation. Their study will, therefore, make us more aware of: the development of the armed struggle in Kenya, its political weakness and strength; Dedan Kimathi's relationship with his guerrilla fighters, workers and peasants; his political understanding of the social forces around him; and his undying love for his homeland. From these texts, we will become aware of the great sacrifice these compatriots made for the liberation of their country.

In summary, the main purpose of publishing these documents is twofold: first, I believe it is a matter of simple academic responsibility for me to make available to the Kenyan people documents and letters of such national and historical importance in the hope that this new information will help to stimulate serious research on the subject among Kenyan intellectuals. Secondly, I want to preempt the publication of a distorted, pro-colonial version of 'The Kimathi Papers' which might be aimed at reinforcing the Carothers-Henderson anti-Mau Mau theory. In the process, I want to undermine the anti-Mau Mau arguments that are being propounded by a handful of pro-imperialist Kenyan intellectuals.

Introduction

The dialectic of colonial repression has proved that . . . no colonialist aggressor can overcome peoples who are determined to win their freedom.

Amilcar Cabral

To wage a revolution is to annihilate what is bad, and build what is good . . . Our revolutionary work is, therefore, not yet completed, because these evils still undermine and sabotage the constructive process of the Revolution.

Ho Chi Minh, 1952

After the formation of the Kenya African Union (KAU) in 1944, the nationalist movement began a concerted, largely legalistic, struggle for changes in the system of government in the colony. Toward this goal, the KAU leadership effectively mobilized a considerable segment and strata of the Kenyan masses as the first step in the acquisition of political and economic power. Their ultimate political aim was a government of the majority; they sought political dialogue with the British government in pursuance of this aim. Although the nationalist goals of the KAU leadership mainly reflected their preponderant petty-bourgeois outlook, the organization was able to heighten the national consciousness of a majority of the Kenyan masses through numerous political activities. But its immediate political objective was never the overthrow of British colonialism through armed struggle. The majority of the KAU leadership did not understand that imperialism is a violent monster which has to be fought violently, and were hence determined to use constitutional methods in their efforts to achieve majority rule.

This approach to Kenya's anti-imperialist struggle was fiercely opposed by a number of KAU militants (men like Bildad Kaggia, Fred Kubai, J.D. Kali and James Beuttah) and the leaders of the working class movement, particularly Chege wa Kibachia and Makhhan Singh. For these patriots, the only road to national independence was through armed struggle. Their stance reinforced Kim Il Sung's famous thesis: 'History has not yet seen

any instance of imperialists making a gift of independence to colonial peoples, nor any case of a people deprived of their country that received independence from others without waging armed struggle'.

The divisions and contradictions within the nationalist movement brought about the birth of the Mau Mau movement in the 1950s. In other words, the Mau Mau movement was organized as an outright rejection of the Kenya African Union's non-violent methods of struggle. To quote Bildad Kaggia: '... Mau Mau was an organization formed by KAU militants who had lost faith in constitutional methods of fighting for independence. . . It was clear [to us] that the [British] Government would never give in in Kenya without a struggle'.

The movement was initially organized from Nairobi, which was the headquarters of its Central Committee (CC) and the main base of its revolutionary activities. When the Mau Mau Central Committee was set up in 1951, it was composed of twelve members, with Eliud Mutonyi as the Chairman, and Isaac Gathanju as the Secretary.

The Central Committee was the supreme organ of the movement and was responsible for its overall policies. Through the 'Group of Thirty' (national congress), District, Divisional, Locational and Village Committees, the CC mobilized, and gave political education, to hundreds of Kenyans, especially workers and peasants in Central Kenya*, and the Narok, Nanyuki, Laikipia, Naivasha and Nakuru regions. In the process, it exposed the contradictions between the interests of the Kenyan people and those of the British occupiers.

The military wing of the movement, which was later named the Kenya Land Freedom Army (KLFA), was under the command of General Mathenge wa Mirugi. It was a small force of about 300 fighters based in Nairobi.

During the early period of the movement, the primary duties of the military wing were:

- to help the CC in mobilizing the masses against British imperialism;
- to recruit Kenyan youths into the movement, particularly the Mau Mau armed forces;
- to eliminate the enemies of the movement;
- to collect funds, weapons and strategic information for the movement;
- and to give military training to Mau Mau cadres.

From the beginning, Mau Mau leaders used oathing as a major political weapon in politicizing, educating and mobilizing the Kenyan masses against the British occupiers. The oath served not only as a political instrument, but also as a tool to strengthen and enforce discipline and maintain security in the movement. Thus the first oath bound the recruits in the following words:

I will never reveal the secrets of this organization, or anything concerning this organization, to the colonial authorities or to any person who is not

**The old colonial Central Kenya.*

himself a member; and if I violate this vow, may this oath kill me.

I will obey without question all the rules and regulations of this organization, and should I ever transgress against them, may I die.

Aside from its function as an effective tool in ensuring obedience, loyalty and truthfulness to the Mau Mau leadership, the Mau Mau oath was also a pledge to uphold national patriotism:

I swear in the name of our country, in the name of this movement, that I will use all my power for the total liberation of Kenya from British colonialism sacrificing even my own and my family's lives. I shall never reveal the names of members of this movement nor those of the leaders, even if I am caught, tortured or killed. I shall always be loyal to the leaders of the movement. If I betray this vow, I shall deserve every punishment meted out to me as a traitor.

Such an oath, administered in the name of the country and people of Kenya, was an expression of true patriotism and an uncompromising commitment to freedom. To make sure that the oath was effective, the punishment for those who broke it was death, which was meted out quickly and mercilessly on the direct orders of the Central Committee.

As a patriotic, revolutionary movement, Mau Mau subjected its cadres to rigorous discipline, self-sacrifice and self-denial. Every cadre was required to participate fully in all the movement's activities, obey all its rules and regulations without question, and carry out its decisions without compromise. Thus ran one of the movement's pledges:

Should I ever be called, at any time, to go and kill the enemy of this movement, I will arm myself and proceed to fulfil the orders thus given to me by the leaders. I shall never compromise the principles of this movement.

In terms of financial support, every Mau Mau member was required to surrender all his wealth to the movement without hesitation:

I swear before *Ngai* (God), and the compatriots present here today, that all my wealth—land, livestock, money, etc—belongs, from now on, to this movement. I will offer all my strength and energy in order to further the cause of this movement. If I violate this vow, may I be killed.

After the British declared war on Mau Mau on 20 October 1952, and arrested some of its Central Committee members and all key KAU leaders, the movement went further underground, and its leadership was reorganized and strengthened. The Central Committee was transformed into a War Council, and its headquarters were moved from Kiburi House to Mathare Valley, then a major base of the Kenyan working class. Under its new organization, the major duties and responsibilities of the War Council were to co-ordinate the movement's war efforts, mainly to: provide the guerrilla army with men, weapons, medical supplies, clothing and strategic information; and organize more Mau Mau cells in the urban centres and in the rural areas. The War Council was also charged with reinforcing discipline in the movement, and with the elimination of all its enemies, traitors, spies

and informers; the recruitment of more members; and the organization of an elaborate system of agents, whose task was to infiltrate the colonial machinery in order to obtain weapons and strategic information.

Within the War Council, a new body, consisting of three political leaders and three military commanders, was formed to deal with legal matters within the movement. At the same time, the 'Group of Thirty' was enlarged and reconstructed into a powerful committee known as the Central Province Committee (CPC), under the direction of Gichohi wa Githua. Basically, the CPC was to function as the national congress of the movement. All the districts in Central Kenya were represented in this committee; but it also had members from the Rift Valley and Ukambani. The CPC's main task was to assist the War Council in coordinating the Mau Mau war efforts.

The KLFA forces entered the Nyandarwa mountains in June 1952 to begin a national war against British occupation, and in December 1952, Dedan Kimathi joined this army at the age of 32.

In the early period of the war, Kimathi helped General Mathenge in organizing and strengthening the guerrilla army in Nyandarwa. Under their supervision, many guerrilla camps were established, including the Kariaini camp, which had more than 3,500 guerrillas, and was to become the headquarters of the Kenya Land Freedom Army.

Kimathi drafted the rules and regulations governing these camps. Because of his literary skills, it was his responsibility to maintain contacts with the Mau Mau War Council in Nairobi on matters dealing with new recruits, arms, ammunition, clothing and medical supplies. It was also his responsibility to contact the KLFA village leaders, whose duty was to supply food and strategic information to the guerrilla army. The nature of Kimathi's work meant that he was always on the move—visiting guerrilla camps, talking to the peasants, and organizing attacks against the enemy.

Two weeks after the Battle of Naivasha, which took place on 20 March 1953, a three day conference was held at the Githugi camp in Murang'a to discuss the war efforts in detail, and to celebrate the Naivasha victory. The conference was attended by 250 guerrilla leaders, including Kimathi and Mathenge.

Kimathi, who opened the conference, called upon the guerrillas and the people of Kenya to fight with unceasing determination in order to expel the British occupiers from the country. Other speakers included Mbaria wa Kaniu and General Mathenge. This was the first major conference held by the guerrillas since the inception of the armed struggle. In the ensuing discussions, the guerrilla leaders agreed that in order to strengthen the armed struggle, the recruitment drive would have to be intensified, and more fronts had to be established in the country. Furthermore, it was decided that all the existing guerrilla units would immediately be brought under Mathenge's command. A resolution was also passed establishing a twelve member Supreme War Council (SWC), with Mathenge as Chairman and Commander-in-Chief of the Mau Mau forces; Mbaria wa Kaniu was appointed Mathenge's deputy, and Dedan Kimathi became the SWC Secretary-General.

It was clearly established at the conference that the SWC would function temporarily as a High Command of the armed movement until a general conference was held to form a more permanent war council. Kimathi was appointed the convener of the first KLFA general conference. At the end of the Githugi meeting, SWC members were instructed to tour all the guerrilla camps and explain the proceedings of the conference; each SWC member was assigned to cover a specific region. Kimathi was assigned three districts: Murang'a, Kiambu and Narok. Accompanied by Mbaria, he visited all the existing guerrilla camps in Murang'a, where he met the district's KLFA Front Commanders, principally Generals Matenjagwo, Kago and Ihuura. But his journey to Kiambu and Narok was cancelled because of a lack of enough contacts.

On 16 August 1953, in accordance with the decision reached at Githugi, Dedan Kimathi called a four day general conference: letters concerning the meeting were sent out to all guerrilla front commanders. However, according to Karari Njama, when Mathenge received his letter, he was furious at Kimathi for calling such an important gathering without first consulting him. Mathenge argued that since Kimathi was his 'clerk', he had neither the power, nor the right, to call any guerrilla meeting without his authority. He accused Kimathi of plotting to take over the leadership of the armed movement. Consequently, Mathenge decided to boycott the conference and tried to use his position to sabotage it, but without success.

Mathenge's line on this issue was incorrect. From all indications, Kimathi was not motivated by personal interests; his exclusive commitment was to the liberation of his homeland and, in this connection, he was thoroughly aware that the only way to drive out the British occupiers from the country was through the unity of all Kenyans, and particularly the unity of the guerrilla fighters. His ardent patriotism is evident in a conversation he had with Njama soon after being informed about Mathenge's decision to boycott the General Conference. He told Karaari:

Mathenge has lost a great chance to be known to many guerrillas. . . I hope he is not suffering from megalomania. I would certainly attend any meeting he would call me to. I would like to meet him and resolve our differences. . . Nevertheless, I will postpone nothing due to his absence.*

Later, he told the members of the Kenya Parliament that:

Although I have never mentioned his name in this Parliament before, there is nothing wrong with Mathenge. I would not like to cause any ill-feelings because he might think that I consider myself superior to him. I always like speaking well of people because I am not perfect. He is still doing his work, and he is a brave and active leader. Those helping me [to lead the struggle] are all efficient leaders and we have one target.

*See Donald L. Bennet and Karari Njama, *Mau Mau From Within* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1966), p. 235.

But I want to make my position very clear: My concern and responsibility is for the people of Kenya, for those comrades who have decided to sacrifice their lives for our land and freedom. I have no other ambitions.

The conference was held at Mwathe in Nyandarwa, and was attended by more than 5,000 guerrillas and a large number of local peasants.

In the course of the discussions, the delegates supported the formation of the Kenya Defence Council (KDC) to replace the SWC. Dedan Kimathi was elected the council's president and Field Marshal of the KLFA forces with Macharia wa Kimemia as the vice-president, Kahiu-Itina as the treasurer and Gathitu wa Waithaka as the Secretary-General. In total, the KDC Executive Committee was composed of twelve members. Mathenga and Mbaria were dropped from the leadership altogether.

Essentially, the KDC was designed to function as the vanguard of the armed movement, and was charged with the following duties:

- to deal with the overall planning and coordination of the military campaigns;
- to be responsible for the overall discipline and political direction of the movement;
- to strengthen and maintain contacts and communication with the Nairobi War Council headquarters, which was mainly responsible for recruitment and financing of the movement;
- to work closely with Mau Mau village leaders, who were supplying guerrillas with food and strategic information;
- to function as a propaganda machine for the armed struggle;
- to keep a record of all the movement's activities for future generations;
- to be in charge of the promotion and demotion of guerrillas.

On the second day of the conference, the delegates' major task was to identify the armed forces of the movement. Eight armies and their areas of operation were identified. They were:

- Gikuyu Iregi Army (Murang'a)
- Ituma Ndemi Army (Nyeri)
- Kenya Inooro Army (Kiambu and Narok)
- MEI Mathathi Army (Mt. Kenya forces)
- Kenya Levellation Army (Special KLFA forces based in the Nyeri countryside under Commander Kariba)
- Mburu Ngebo Army (Rift Valley Army)
- The Townwatch Battalions (all the urban KLFA forces)
- Gikuyu *na* Mumbi Trinity Army (composed of any individual or individual Kenyans who sympathized and supported the movement one way or another)

Broadly, the KLFA was divided into two armed wings: the forest guerrilla wing, based mainly in the Nyandarwa and Kirinyaga mountains; and the urban guerrilla wing, with its headquarters in Nairobi.

The backbone of the movement was largely made up of peasants and

workers, who dauntlessly supplied it with guerrilla recruits, shelter, weaponry, medicine, food and important intelligence. In organizational terms, the movement derived much of its strength and energy from tightly-knit and well-disciplined cadres in the towns and the countryside.

As we have mentioned above, the Kenya Defence Council (KDC) was the KLFA High Command in the forest and was under Kimathi's direction. The Nairobi KFA forces were under the leadership of Enock Mwangi. These forces were divided into small columns; they were hence able to carry out swift attacks against the foreign enemy and local traitors, and then disappear among the people for safety. It was the revolutionary duty of the Nairobi KLFA forces to conduct vigorous campaigns against the forces of exploitation and oppression among the working class; they were charged with the task of distributing propaganda leaflets, of giving military training to new Mau Mau cadres before they joined the guerrilla army, of enforcing discipline in the movement; and of guaranteeing the security of the members of the War Council.

Because of vicious attacks on the movement and the arrest and detention of key Mau Mau leaders in Nairobi, the KLFA headquarters was moved to Nyandarwa in January 1954; here it came under Kimathi's leadership. At the same time, the Kenya Parliament, which was formed in February 1954 to replace the Kenya Defence Council, became the supreme organ of the entire armed struggle.

With an elaborate and formidable network of field secretaries and couriers who kept him in contact with the KLFA leadership in Nairobi, the front-line commanders, the village detachments and the Kenya Parliament, Kimathi began the armed struggle against a technologically advanced British army. Kimathi had apparently learned the lesson which Fidel Castro was later to articulate:

The only way a small, poor country can defeat a large, technologically advanced country is to mobilize, educate, and organize the whole population to resist.

As the KLFA Supreme Commander, it was his duty to write to front-line commanders, KLFA village leaders, and the War Council in Nairobi, to explain developments in the struggle. For instance, after the surrender of General China to the British forces on 15 January 1954, Kimathi sent a circular to all KLFA commanders explaining the position of the Kenya Parliament vis-à-vis that of China and the colonial authorities. To justify his surrender to the enemy, General China had written a two-page letter to Kimathi asking him to call off the fighting and to cooperate with the British imperialists. In reply to General China's letter, Kimathi said:

My soldiers will never leave these forests until the British government accepts our demands:

1. disarm its forces unconditionally;
2. release all the political prisoners;
3. recognize our country's independence.

However, most of the letters Kimathi wrote were principally aimed at strengthening the armed struggle and politicizing guerrilla fighters. Thus, he sent the following lines to a guerrilla comrade: '... you should be proud of your black skin because the black keys of a piano always give the sweetest music...' Again: 'You have done well to understand that our country and the people are the dearest things in the world. I advise you to support, with dedication, the great struggle of our people. It will lead us to self-government and the recovery of our stolen land. Do not follow those who preach peace and submission. Follow the truth; as you know, a man dies but truth lives forever...'

Some of Kimathi's letters dealt with the strategy of the armed struggle: how to obtain ammunition and guns from the British forces, how to ferry medicine, clothing and food to the guerrillas in the forest, and how to organize workers and peasants around the armed struggle. To quote one of the letters he sent to Colonel Wamugunda:

Try to put every effort into organizing food for guerrillas. We need plenty of ammunition because I don't want to see the guerrillas walking around with empty rifles. The cadre who goes to Nyeri town for ammunition should go regularly. . . Tell the women to make us sweaters, for this place is very cold, ask them to supply us with the following items: sugar, coffee, salt, tea-leaves, matches, soap and above all, medicine. . . The medicine you sent me is finished and my teeth are still aching. Please send me some more.

In the section of the text dealing with strategy, I have also included the letters sent to Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi by his comrades-in-arms. Most of these letters dealt with the nature of the national struggle, discipline among the fighters, the relationship between the guerrillas and peasants, and the contradictions between the enemy and the masses of Kenya. Broadly speaking, these letters constitute the most important chapter in Mau Mau history. For the first time, we are able to understand the dialectical relationship which existed between Kimathi and his men. It is clear from these documents that Kimathi was a popular leader, and that the guerrillas viewed and recognized him as their undisputable commander and teacher. In this respect, any guerrilla who had problems or needed some advice could write to Kimathi for assistance. Let us quote one of the letters sent to Kimathi by a guerrilla in need of help:

Dear D.K.,

I have no blanket. The one I had was taken away by Juma; he said he would give it to Karaari to bring it back to me, but I have heard that Karaari has gone to Ruthaithi for a mission. I have only a raincoat, but it is not enough because this place is very cold. If you have one extra blanket please send it immediately. I will be waiting for it.

Major Kahiga wrote the following lines to Kimathi:

Dear Marshal,

Your only fault is that you send your Generals maize and wheat flour

but never remember to send them cigarettes. If you have some in the store, please send them to us. Things are not bad over here. We are doing our work as usual. When we are not fighting, we concentrate mostly on making guns. . .

Kimathi received many letters of this type, but he also received reports like this one:

To D. Kimathi:

Wamaitha joined my battalion in August 1953. I have given her permission to go home to Gethi on 1 November 1954 because she is pregnant. I have asked Colonel Wanjohi to escort her to her village. She was living with comrade Ruku as his wife. Due to her efficiency and patriotic commitment, I have promoted her to the rank of captain.

Kimathi's reply:

. . . It is against KP's regulations for the commander of the unit to give his men new ranks. That is the task of the Kenya Parliament and myself.

Possibly the most revolutionary letters Kimathi received were from Col. Wamugunda. In reading this Colonel's letters, no one can doubt his revolutionary zeal, commitment and patriotism. It is also worth observing that Col. Wamugunda was very much aware of the importance of discipline and secrecy in the revolutionary process. Writing to Kimathi, he said:

. . . There is something important I would like to share with you. I hope you won't mind. As a Supreme Commander of the KLFA armed forces and the leader of the national movement, you should be very careful and disciplined in what you do. Every step you take should be well-calculated. You should always suspect those you meet, even your own relatives . . . In short, what I am trying to say is that discipline and secrecy are our greatest weapons in this unequal war.

Revolutionary songs and poems were also composed in the forest and distributed amongst the guerrillas and their supporters in the country. Here is one of the poems:

I try to forget and to wipe
The memories out of my mind.
I die every moment
I see her picture.
I tried to persuade her
To join me in the forest
But she refused;
Now she is no more.
The homeguards tortured her;
They killed her.
Will I ever find peace
Of mind without her?

She was mine
But she was unkind
She was so unkind
Although she was mine.

Between 1953 and June 1956, the British authorities wrote several letters to Kimathi calling for peace negotiations. In reply, Kimathi consistently demanded that before any peace conference could take place, the British would have to withdraw their forces from the country and disarm their Kenyan allies. In a letter to the District Commissioner, Nyeri, Kimathi said:

To make my position clear, peace can be restored in this lovely nation only if your Government withdraws its armed forces from our country unconditionally.

Similarly, he wrote to colonial chiefs like Makimii, Njiiri, Eliud Mugo, Muhoya, Ignatius, and other high-ranking colonial agents, warning them that they would pay with their lives for their treacherous support of British rule. He urged them to stop killing their people, and to unite with them in fighting for the liberation of the country. In a letter sent to one colonial headman in Nyeri, he said:

I really pity all of you who are collaborating with the British—the enemy of our country. Being surrounded by trenches, daily parades and subjugated to rigid orders, you suffer more than those of us who are championing the people's cause. But why suffer for crumbs? How terrible it is to die as a traitor!

Meanwhile, the spread of Mau Mau into Northern Tanganyika (now Tanzania) forced the colonial Government there to declare a state of emergency in the region, and to order the mass deportation of Gikuyu, Embu, Meru and Kamba workers to Kenya. Under these circumstances, some of these Kenyan workers suspected of being members of Mau Mau were mercilessly tortured, while others were murdered.

In his effort to counteract the British anti-Mau Mau propaganda in Tanganyika, Kimathi wrote to certain African political leaders and some colonial chiefs there, asking them to reject imperialist propaganda and to support the Mau Mau struggle. In a letter to Salehe Kibwana, he stated:

It is not true that we are against civilization, that our aims are to take our people back to ancient times. Our fighting is for the return of our stolen land and freedom. If you can remember, the Europeans have occupied our best land and have reduced us to slavery. . .

We are not savages or murderers as the British continue to claim. We know what we are doing; and we know what is best for our people.

Kimathi also wrote to patriotic individuals in Kenya and the rest of Africa urging them to support the Kenyan anti-imperialist struggle. He contacted the governments of Egypt, India and the Soviet Union, and progressive individuals abroad, in an attempt to build international support

for the movement. Some of these communications are included in this collection.

Thus, Kimathi's major task from the moment he assumed the KLFA leadership was to speak for the movement, to articulate its aims and goals. In this connection, he published several articles in newspapers such as the *East African Standard*, *Citizen*, *Habari za Dunia*, *Baraza* and *Rhodesia and East Africa*; he also authored a series of pamphlets and circulars which were widely distributed in the country, particularly in Nairobi. The two documents: 'The New National Regulations' (NNR) and the 'KLFA Charter', which are included in this collection, were among the major documents Kimathi wrote and circulated. Both texts were issued in late 1953.

The NNR document was meant to rally the Kenyan masses around the armed struggle. Whilst it strongly urged the African masses to revolt against British colonial occupation, it also called for cooperation and unity among the African people, regardless of their social positions. It made it very clear that any Kenyan who sided with the British occupiers would pay with his life.

The KLFA Charter, on the other hand, was a national political manifesto for the movement, and was hence widely circulated in the country and throughout the world. The document was specifically addressed to the British authorities in London. Significantly, in sending the document to the Soviet Union, India and Egypt, Kimathi was very much aware of these countries' anti-imperialist stance. For Kimathi, the Egyptian, Indian and Soviet peoples were natural friends and allies of the Kenyan masses in their struggle against British imperialism.

Despite its nationalist world outlook and its lack of a theoretical and ideological analysis of world imperialism and capitalism, the KLFA Charter took a very strong anti-imperialist line. Apart from outlining the position of the movement, the document made it very clear that the people of Kenya would continue fighting until they drove the British out of the country. The document concluded with the following remarks on the Wat Tyler Rebellion in Britain:

Do you not remember what your grandfathers did during the reign of King Richard II, when sixty thousand slaves [serfs] went to [the King] and demanded their freedom? These people tore down prison walls and the houses of the rich men they hated, and killed many who were their enemies. They burned the houses of the lawyers, tax collectors and King's Officers who had wronged them, and killed many men of that sort, cut off their heads, put them on poles and set them up on London Bridge. [Because of their resistance] the King made them free forever. . .

Internally, the KLFA leadership worked tirelessly to consolidate the armed movement. For instance, circulars and directives concerning discipline among the guerrilla fighters were sent to all KLFA front-line commanders. At the same time, the KLFA field secretaries were dispatched to the battlefield to record the activities of the guerrilla army. In addition, a series of

meetings and conferences were held in the Nyandarwa mountains to discuss the war efforts and to draw up new strategies. The minutes and reports of these historic meetings and conferences clearly show how the movement was organized, especially the important role played by the Kenya Parliament in the development of the armed struggle.

Kenneth Watene's play, *Dedan Kimathi*, like Ian Henderson's book, *The Hunt for Kimathi*, portrays Kimathi as a lone, sadistic dictator, who used his position in the movement to eliminate those compatriots who criticized his leadership; but the study of the KLFA minutes and reports in this collection will show that the KLFA leadership was very democratic, and that like any other KLFA leader, Kimathi was criticized when he took an incorrect line. As the 'Notes From his Diary' show, Kimathi was very much concerned with the financial state of the armed struggle. He tried to keep a record of every cent spent on the struggle.

Ideologically, Mau Mau, as Kimathi's writings show, was based on patriotic nationalism rather than on the theory of dialectical materialism. During the early stages of a national struggle, nationalism is a positive element. However, it eventually poses the danger of channelling the people's struggle away from class struggle and socialism, because of its ideological limitations. For instance, because of its nationalist outlook, there was no ideological struggle within the Mau Mau movement to transform nationalist consciousness into class consciousness, nor was there a serious and systematic analysis of imperialism, the class struggle, and the relation of socialism to the Kenyan revolutionary process.

Algeria provides a good example of this failure: since the armed struggle against French imperialism was based on a nationalist ideology, it was easily hijacked by the bourgeois nationalists and the revolution was quickly halted before the masses acquired real power. As Amilcar Cabral, who was himself a guerrilla leader, observed:

The ideological deficiency, not to say the total lack of ideology, within the national liberation movements—which is basically due to ignorance of the historical reality which these movements claim to transform—constitutes one of the greatest weaknesses of our struggle against imperialism, if not the greatest weakness of all.

What I am saying then, is that nowhere in the world has nationalist ideology succeeded in consolidating working class power by overthrowing the forces of imperialism and establishing a socialist government.

Part 1: Strategy for Armed Struggle

Proclamation of the KLFA's Political Position

New National Regulations

The Europeans who govern Kenya and their government have killed many Africans and stolen their property—cattle, sheep, goats and land. They have enacted anti-African laws, and they have justified the burning down of many African homes; they have illegally removed many of our compatriots from their land. These sinister acts have caused great suffering and many deaths amongst our people, suffering which we shall never forget or forgive.

In order to fight this brutal enemy successfully, the Kenya Defence Council calls for cooperation and unity among the African population. The Defence Council also urges the African people to stop killing one another, and to stop supporting the colonial occupiers. If any African, be he a policeman, a KAR soldier, a homeguard, a chief, or an ordinary civilian, disregards this call, he will be severely punished.

Below are the new regulations:

1. No African shall pay taxes to the White man and his government.
2. No African shall be employed by the White man in the towns and/or in the rural areas.
3. No African shall obey the laws of the White man, or seek protection from his government.
4. No African shall join the homeguard, KAR and police forces, unless he is working as undercover agent for the movement. Those who collaborate with Europeans will be killed.
5. No African is allowed to trade with the White man or establish any economic cooperation with him.
6. Taxation Act: From January 1954 onwards, Africans shall start paying taxes for the development of their country to the Kenya Defence Council. Only women and children are exempted. This act also applies to all Europeans, Asians and Arabs who reside in the country. The tax payments will be as follows:
 - (i) Africans shs. 15 per year
 - (ii) Asians and Arabs, shs. 30 per year
 - (iii) Europeans, shs. 120 per year.

In conclusion a breach of these new regulations is punishable by death. Once you have been found guilty, you will be shot outright in the interests of the people.

Kenya Land Freedom Army Charter

In October 1953, in an attempt to explain the political position of the armed struggle, Kimathi published an important document which he called the KLFA Charter. It consists of 79 articles. It was specifically addressed to the British colonial authorities in London, but copies of the document were also reported to have been sent to the governments of India, France, Egypt; to President Eisenhower (USA), Georgi Malenkov (USSR), George Padmore (UK), Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Fenner Brockway (UK), W.E.B. Du Bois, the chairman of the Pan-African Congress, and Mbiyu wa Koinange, KAU representative in the UK.

The following is an extract from the document:

1. We want African Self-Government in Kenya now.
2. We reject foreign laws in Kenya, for they were not made for Kenya and are therefore not just.
3. We want an African Magistrate's Court with full authority, which will judge us lawfully and justly.
4. We strongly reject a foreign Attorney-General in Kenya, one who deals with appearances more than justice.
5. We reject the trial of 'criminal' and 'murder' cases by European judges, for we have discovered that the death penalty is used to sacrifice many of our people.
6. We want to know who handles the money paid by settlers for our land and where the money goes.
7. We reject being called terrorists for demanding our people's rights. We are the Kenya Land Freedom Army.
8. We want to know why so many different churches have come to Kenya. Since there is only one God in heaven, is one Church not enough?
9. We strongly object to foreigners sleeping with our wives and daughters; we also oppose the imprisonment of females and the carrying of passes.
10. We demand that Africans should have control of gold, markets, roads, co-operative societies and auctions.
11. We reject colonization in Kenya because it has turned us into slaves and beggars.
12. We claim the full authority to make fire-arms and all other kinds of weapons without any restrictions.
13. We demand that Europeans, rascals, troops and policemen be withdrawn from Kenyan African Reserves.
14. We reject the imprisonment of KLFA cadres.

15. We oppose the dropping of poisons from the air, as the Europeans in Kenya are now doing to Africans.
16. Our real fight is not against the white colour but against the system carried on by the white rulers.
17. Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom. Only when we have achieved our independence can our people have genuine peace.
18. Our people will chase away the foreign exploiters, wipe out the traitors and establish an independent government of the Kenyan people.

Fraternal Solidarity and Support

Georgi Malenkov
Moscow Press,
Russia

KLFA Headquarters
P.O. Nyandarwa
Kenya

Dear G. Malenkov,

I, Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi, the Commander-in-Chief of the Kenya Land Freedom Army and the President of the Kenya African Defence Council, hereby notify you and your government how cruelly we Africans are treated in Kenya, and how we are suffering under the laws of British imperialism. Under these laws, we are being killed, discriminated against, and have already been robbed of our fertile land.

Briefly, these are the political developments in Kenya:

1. The fight for political [freedom] and the hunger for land started in 1920.
2. The African's wealth—for example, cattle, sheep, goats and land—have all been taken away from him and have been shared among the British settlers.
3. The wages paid to African squatters for a month are:
 woman, shs. 6.00
 man, shs. 8.00
 male children, shs. 3.00.

An African squatter is not allowed to keep any cattle, goats or pigs, except 5 to 15 sheep in the one acre of land given to the family for cultivation.

4. Colour bar is the strongest weapon being used by the British rulers to govern in Kenya.
5. Kenya is a country of 245,000 sq. miles; out of that, only 3% of it is owned by Africans.
6. You will be amazed when you find out about the number of Europeans [who] occupy most of the land in Kenya, [while] Africans continue to be treated mercilessly:
 - a. The British and their settler [compatriots]: 45,000
 - b. Indian traders: 120,000

- c. Africans, the real land owners: 6,000,000.
7. When they realized how overcrowded they were, Africans became agitated, and from 1922 onwards formed political societies, many of which were banned without cause.
 8. Later in 1945, after the Second World War, we formed another political body named the Kenya African Union, which was proscribed [in 1953] and its leaders exiled . . . after they were charged with being the directors and managers of the underground movement nicknamed Mau Mau, of which no one knew the meaning.
 9. After the detention of the Kenya African Union leaders, the British declared war in the colony and started killing the remaining African politicians, who then ran to the forest to save their lives. The British rulers used excessive brutality and hunted us from one village to another. They shot young militant politicians to death; they caused many young men to run to the forest, where most of them still live. The British colonialists, realizing that we had escaped their first death trap, hurried to prevent us from getting food from our parents. That is when the fiercest fighting. . . began.
 10. From that time onwards, the British colonialists began buying us . . . at five shillings per head to their fighting forces. (Editor's note: In order to bolster the morale of their fighting forces, each British soldier was paid £5 for each African he killed. The African soldier was paid five shillings for the same job.)
 11. Women and girls are raped by British soldiers, who are spreading. . . a dangerous disease [which will affect] the country in future.
 12. Hunger has become a threat to all of us in the country, especially to the very young and the very old.
 13. Africans with sticks, swords and spears are chased with rifles. . . bombs dropped by Lincoln [warplanes], each of which drops a bomb of 1000 lbs. Harvards and jet pilots [are] killing defenceless Africans without concern for their age or sex.
 14. No villages are left with houses; all have been destroyed.
 15. In Central Province, Africans are [severely tortured], then screened and brought to one area where they are ordered to live together in poor, cage-like houses, in which many deaths occur.
 16. Our Generals—Matenjagwa (Gitau Ng'ang'a), BataBatu and Gachuma—who first agreed to peace negotiations were killed. We therefore [insisted that] any peace negotiations [should not] take place without representatives from free nations of the world: Egypt, Russia, India, etc.
 17. For and on behalf of the 6,000,000 Africans who greatly honour me, I welcome [any] support and help [from your Government]; unless you give us such help, we shall all be killed by the British who intend to inherit our land once they have killed us all. We are. . . sure that your intervention in this conflict will bring a ceasefire in Kenya and a happy life and a peaceful existence will return to us and to our lovely country.
 18. Can you keep. . . silent while we are all destroyed?

19. In conclusion, I would like to assure you and your good government that there is no such thing as Mau Mau in Kenya. Only a deep sea of slavery exists, a sea into which we have been dropped and [are now] struggling in.

We shall greatly appreciate any support you will offer us.

Yours,

F.M. Dedan Kimathi (KCAE)

Dr. Mabuyo Mugwanji
Omulamuzi
Entebbe

KENYA FREEDOM ARMY
NYANDARWA HQ
MAY 23, 1954

Dear Sir,

We, in Kenya, are horrified and terrified that the British have seen fit to depose and exile our two great kings, namely Seretse Khama and Kabaka Mutesa II.* What disturbs us most is the realization that although these two great Kingdoms—Baganda and Tswana—existed before the coming of the European imperialists to our Continent, it is now clear that the primary aim of the British is to use all weapons to destroy them. This evil design is clear proof that the British don't want any other kingdom to exist except their own.

Imagine what would have happened if the people of Uganda had detained Queen Elizabeth when she was visiting their country recently.* The British would have used blood and fire to release her.

What I am simply asking now is this: are the Baganda going to gaze and do nothing about their exiled Kabaka? Are we going to watch passively when African Kings are deposed by foreign rulers. Is this not the time to organize our people, arm them and fiercely fight this enemy in our midst? To shed our blood for the Kabaka, for the African cause, is a big lesson for future generations.

With the support of the Kenyan people, I am ready to volunteer my forces, the Kenya Land Freedom Army, to come there and crush the enemy Forces. The Kabaka is a great African King, and we just cannot let him be dethroned and exiled without a bloody struggle. In this connection, I am requesting the Lukilko's permission to enter Uganda; I am also requesting you to cooperate with, and support, my forces once they arrive there. Commander General Magu, Colonel Ruanjane, and Major Muirigo will be in charge of this army. If all goes well they will arrive there in early June, 1954.

With your cooperation and help, we will plant a seed which will never be uprooted, and one which the coming generations will always be proud of.

In reality, our experience in Kenya has clearly shown us that the liberation of an oppressed people cannot come through prayers and tears, but through a bloody confrontation with the Oppressor.

The unity of our peoples is our strength.

Yours,

Field Marshall Sir Dedan Kimathi (KCAE)

Discipline and Unity

KLFA Directives

1. Beware of those who pretend to be intelligent. They might be dangerous.
2. Beware of Christian priests. They are leeches.
3. Discrimination in the distribution of food will weaken our unity. It should be fiercely opposed.
4. Concentrate more on fighting. Too many meetings will create disagreements and lead to disunity in our ranks.
5. We must be united in all our actions.
6. Prostitution in the movement is a serious crime.
7. Resist tendencies toward banditry and terrorism and turn each guerrilla into a patriotic warrior.
8. Hold frequent meetings with the population in the areas of your operation to explain the war situation.
9. Make your judgements with politeness and truthfulness.
10. Europeans are our enemy and so are all those among our people who have sided with them against our nation.
11. Don't tell lies. Always speak the truth. Truth never perishes.
12. Don't rob or steal. Be polite to our supporters.
13. Always be interested in your revolutionary work and love your country.
14. Pray and do your revolutionary duties with vigour and determination.
15. Help one another.
16. Don't fear death because it is better to die with dignity than to live in slavery.
17. Cowards should be castrated.
18. Learn from the experience of our struggle so that you will not be cheated next time.
19. Don't be afraid of the enemy's superior weapons. We will win with courage and determination.
20. Protect the secrets of the movement with your own life.
21. Discipline is our greatest strength.

Guerrilla Camp Regulations

1. Every guerrilla camp must have a Field Secretary. His responsibility will be to write a daily report on the camp's activities; these include:
 - (a) battles fought and all war materials seized during the battle;
 - (b) names of guerrillas killed or wounded during the battle;
 - (c) discipline in the camp;
 - (d) social relations between guerrillas and peasants;
 - (e) everything obtained from the peasantry.This report must be sent to the KLFA Field Marshal monthly. Failure to do so will be considered a serious crime and the Field Secretary will be charged for it. No guerrilla fighter, including the commanding officer, should interfere with the secretary's work. If this happens, it should be reported to the Kenya Parliament.
2. No guerrilla should disobey the orders of his Commander.
3. No guerrilla should misbehave or abuse his Commander, Our rule is that guerrillas should respect their Commanders.
4. No guerrilla should disclose the secrets of the movement to the enemy. The penalty for breaking this regulation is death.
5. No guerrilla should damage or spoil anything that belongs to his fellow fighter.
6. Stealing food from the kitchen or store is a crime which carries a heavy penalty.
7. Guerrillas should not abuse one another or fight one another. Any disagreement should be settled through discussions.
8. A guerrilla should not use his fellow fighter's belongings without permission.
9. To poison food or to put rounds of ammunition into the fire is an offence.
10. Every guerrilla camp must have its own hospital, foodstore and archives.
11. A guerrilla unit must construct its own gun-factory.
12. Camps must always be guarded.

Secrecy and Security

A Kenya Parliament representative was strictly prohibited from being accompanied by anyone, except his main bodyguards, when attending a session of the Parliament. The Kenya Parliament Guard Commandant (KPGC) was empowered to deal with such matters. For example, when Representative King'ori attended a session of the Kenya Parliament accompanied by three men in addition to his bodyguards, he was barred from attending the session by the Guard Commandant, and was questioned about his motive for bringing the three strangers with him. What follows is a discussion between the KPGC and King'ori.

- KPGC: How many new men have you brought with you?
- KING'ORI: I have come with three men.
- KPGC: Where did they come from?
- KING'ORI: They joined me at the Ruthaithi Camp. Two of them are young boys who had been abducted by Gacheru and his men.
- KPGC: Why did you bring them here and who is the third man? Where is his home location and what is his district? What is his purpose for coming?
- KING'ORI: His home location is Mahiga, Nyeri, but right now he has come from Nairobi. His name is Ndiritu Wa Theuri. I have not had a serious discussion with him about his journey here. However, he briefly told me that he had been sent by the Nairobi War Council to see the Marshal and other KLFA leaders. He mentioned some of our leaders in Nyeri to whom he had written a letter asking them to await him on 6 March 1954. One of these leaders is Njango.
- KPGC: Why did you bring these people here today knowing very well that the Kenya Parliament is meeting and that the Marshal and other KLFA leaders would be here? Whose fault would it be if this man tried to kill one of our leaders?
- KING'ORI: It would be my own fault.
- KPGC: Did you think we would believe him because you believed him?
- KING'ORI: No.
- KPGC: Have you told him anything concerning our military activities?
- KING'ORI: No, I have told him absolutely nothing.
- KPGC: Do you think he might be our enemy?
- KING'ORI: No, he told me that he bought 90 rounds of ammunition and sent them to General Karba. He has also brought shs. 55/50 and one fountain pen for the Marshal. I do not think he is an enemy.
- KPGC: Let him speak for himself.

Ndiritu Speaks

My name is Ndiritu Wa Theuri from Mahiga Location, Nyeri. My clan is Mumbui wa Mbari ya Njogu. I am Assistant Chairman of the Mau Mau Committee, Mahiga Location. Our Chairman is Ndirangu and our Secretary-General is Wambugu. Mathenge wa Kamotho is also a member of this committee. I also know Sosto King'ori wa Kiiru, Kimondo wa Thirikwa and Githaiga wa King'ori, who are fighting with General Mathenge wa Mirugi's force. I was one of those who persuaded them to join the armed force movement.

I came from Nairobi on 5 March 1954, by train. I got off the train at Nyeri Station and spent a night in the P.W.D. quarters. On the following day I went to Nyeri town to meet Gituku. For security reasons, he took me to stay with Sosto Wambugu from Tetu Location, while he tried to contact the nearby KLFA unit. He succeeded in establishing contact with

Strategy for Armed Struggle

a KLFA unit, and on 9 March 1954, he escorted me to General Rui's Camp. I explained to General Rui the reasons for my journey, and he organized an armed guard to escort me to Ruthaithi.

I arrived at Ruthaithi on 11 March 1954, and met Commander Totha who is in charge of the Ruthaithi Camp. After I had rested, I told him that I would like to see Dedan Kimathi because I was carrying an important message for him from the War Council in Nairobi. He told me that Kimathi was not in the area, but he would find someone who would take me to him. And that is how I came here.

After receiving two letters from Dedan Kimathi (on 20 February and 22 March 1954) concerning the war situation, and in particular about the living conditions of our fighting men, the War Council resolved to send me and another compatriot from Murang'a here to discuss these problems with Kimathi and other members of the Kenya Parliament. The compatriot from Murang'a was refused a road pass by the colonial administration, so he could not accompany me.

The War Council wants Dedan Kimathi and the Kenya Parliament to know that two special commissions have been established purposely to tour Nyandarwa and Mt. Kirinyaga in order to investigate the living conditions of our fighters, and also to discuss the war effort with the army commanders. One commission which is composed of eight members of the War Council from Murang'a and Nyeri will visit Nyandarwa, and the other one composed of eight representatives from Embu, Meru and Nyeri will tour the Kirinyaga front.

These two special commissions were supposed to begin their investigations later in December 1953, but the money (shs. 11,000) which was set aside for this important task, together with large quantities of medicine, were seized by the enemy just a week before the commissioners started their work. Consequently, it will take some time before these special commissions are dispatched. I was also asked to explain to the Kenya Parliament that Kenyatta and other KAU leaders are no longer in Nairobi; they have been detained in Kapengurra. As a result, the possibility of rescuing them from the jaws of the enemy are almost nil.

In conclusion, I am supposed to prepare a report concerning this mission for the War Council as soon as I return to Nairobi.

KPGC: Comrade King'ori, you can go and attend the Parliament, but we will detain your three friends until the session is adjourned. Do you have any objections?

KING'ORI: No, Comrade.

Circular to KLFA Field Secretaries

1. History books should contain the following information:

- (a) Names of all our people who have died in this war.
 - (b) Names of all the people who are alive and are supporting the struggle.
 - (c) Record of the guerrillas' activities
 - (i) Social problems
 - (ii) Battles fought
 - (iii) Names of guerrillas killed
 - (iv) Weapons seized by our people from the enemy.
2. Document all property damaged, destroyed or confiscated by the enemy for future compensation.

These documents should be forwarded to me or the Secretary-General of the Parliament, Karari wa Njama.

Marshal D. Kimathi
Nyandarwa 1954

Circular to the Front-line Commanders

According to our intelligence task force, the British government will be sending a Special Commission to Kenya. This Commission will be composed of 3 members of the Labour Party and 3 members from the Conservative Party. The purpose of this Commission is to investigate the causes of the war. They will stay in the country until 31 January 1954.

During their presence in the country, our job is to intensify the struggle on all fronts and kill as many enemy soldiers as we possibly can. When they go home they will tell their Queen that we mean business.

Field Marshal D. Kimathi

Speech of Major General Chumali to his Unit

My Compatriots,

Now that we are armed, we have the greatest opportunity to help our people, to fulfil their noblest aim—the liberation of this land. So we have to work hard and fast. Remember our Father Gikuyu said: '*Muthii tene akinyaga tene*' (The traveller who leaves early arrives at his destination early).

With untiring efforts and extraordinary heroism, we will be able to change the history of this country and consequently improve the social and political life of our people; although some of our compatriots have collaborated with the imperialists to oppose this great national effort.

In order to succeed in this national endeavour, we must work tirelessly among the African people, teaching them the importance of our struggle, thus uniting all our forces against the foreign occupiers. Remember that

Strategy for Armed Struggle

Kenya does not only mean Nyandarwa and Mount Kirinyaga. It is a large country, it requires many committed cadres to go and work vigorously where our influence has not been felt. You should know that apart from the Gikuyu, Embu and Meru, other nationalists are determined to join the national struggle, but we haven't sent KLFA cadres to mobilize them. They want this country to be liberated, just like we do.

In this connection, each and every cadre should try to convince the oppressed masses of this land of the significance of this struggle. It is a great mistake for some of us to think that we are fighting for the liberation of Central Kenya alone.

Finally we should try to be concerned with, and be interested in, the political struggle of the African continent because our liberation struggle is part and parcel of the great struggle of the African peoples against imperialism. Remember, because we dared to challenge the forces of colonialism with arms, most people in Africa think highly of us; we have their moral and political support.

If we succeed in liberating this country from British imperialism, our people will immortalize us. We will become their great ancestors.

Combat Parochialism and Chauvinism

Minutes of a Meeting of the Kenya Defence Council

Leaders Present

Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi
Brigadier General Kahiu-Itina
General Kimbo Mutuku
General Kibiru Gatw
Commander Ndiritu wa Thuita
Commander Nyaga Gathure
Colonel Gathitu Waithaka
Commander Abdullah Gitonga
Colonel Wambararia
Colonel Kariuki (Makanyanga) Mathinji
Comrade Kibuku wa Thiuri
13 Majors
7 Captains

Importance of History

The meeting discussed how the history of the struggle should be preserved for future generations. It was collectively agreed that every army unit should have a Field Secretary whose main responsibility is to document the daily activities of the guerrillas. In collecting this data, the Field Secretary will be required to use the following method:

1. Record every battle fought, including:
 - (a) the date the battle took place
 - (b) the names of the guerrillas killed or wounded
 - (c) the names of the enemy dead and the number of weapons seized by our forces
 - (d) a short account of the battle.
2. Record all the property destroyed by enemy forces for future compensation.
3. List the names of the homeguards, headmen and chiefs in the region.
4. List the names of Mau Mau cadres and leaders in the area.
5. List the names of widows, orphans, and detained compatriots in the area.

6. This report should be sent to the Kenya Defense Council through the Unit Army Commander.

Recruitment of Cadres

It was agreed that in order to strengthen the guerrilla army, the recruitment of youths in both the urban centres and the rural areas should be intensified. However, the leaders felt that the recruitment team must thoroughly screen potential candidates to make sure that they fulfil the ideological requirements of the movement. Only those who are conscious and brave, they stressed, should be allowed to join the armed struggle.

Desertion

The problem of desertion was seriously discussed. Some leaders, such as General Kimbo and General Kahiu-Itina, argued that desertion is the result of hunger among the guerrillas, and that this is why many deserters are running to the Kiandongoro region where food is plentiful. Other leaders, including Kimathi, rejected that argument and insisted that desertion is the result of indiscipline among the fighters, plus the failure of the unit army commanders to maintain firm control over their men.

To solve this pressing problem, it was agreed that deserters should be treated as war criminals and would, therefore, be punished severely.

National Treasure

Comrade Kibuku wa Thiuri told the meeting that there was plenty of wealth in the forest which should not be destroyed or wasted. Things like ivory and other valuable items should be documented and stored under good care until the war has been won.

Clothing Issue

General Kimbo urged the leaders not to keep the money given to them by the War Council to themselves, but to buy clothes and other necessities for their fighting men. He pointed out that cold and rain might force guerrillas to desert.

Two Ways of Fighting

General Kahiu-Itina told the meeting that there were two effective ways of fighting the enemy:

1. by organizing a surprise attack
2. by ruthlessly destroying the enemy's property.

He also said that money should be distributed to army units for buying guns because guerrillas cannot fight with empty hands. In his contribution to the debate, General Kimbo said that it was about time the guerrillas learnt how to manufacture their own firearms. 'We have been given wisdom by God and we must use it,' he argued. 'Pipes are plenty and easily obtainable; I will be responsible for supplying pipes. But let us make a rule that if a

certain camp does not make its own guns, its Commander will be removed from his position of leadership.' In this connection. Kimathi said that every guerrilla leader would be required to bring the best rifle he had made to the next meeting of the Council, to be held at the end of the month. The makers of the best three guns, he said, would be rewarded.

Propaganda Unit

Commander Ndiritu proposed that each guerrilla column should organize its own propaganda task force, whose responsibility would be to politicize the guerrillas and counteract the enemy's false propaganda. He emphasized that war was fought through propaganda; it was therefore the duty of every unit commander to know how to use it. He also said that every unit army commander should talk with his men before and after the battle to bolster their morale. Emphasizing the significance of organizing propaganda units, Kimathi said that radio broadcasts were being used by our enemy in an attempt to force us to despair and lose faith in the struggle. He observed that newspapers reached us in a poor condition, and they all carried the enemy's propaganda. It was therefore necessary, Kimathi advised the Council, to have our own propaganda machine which would be able to expose the enemy's real intentions and at the same time strengthen and harden the fighting spirit of our armed forces.

Nyandarwa,
25 December 1953.

Kimathi's Report of the Nguthiru Consultative Conference (EF1/3/3/542)

On 19 May 1953, I was informed by Muruthi wa Wamathi that a young man called Ndiritu wa Thuita had led an attack on enemy forces at Ichagachiru Location, and that he was a brave and courageous patriot. I tried to locate his camp without success. I arrived in Murang'a on 17 July 1953, and on 19 July 1953, I headed for the Kiandongoro Camp. I was fortunate enough to find comrade Ndiritu there, and I congratulated him for his heroism and patriotism. Subsequently, we had a serious talk about our war efforts and our lives in the forest.

The following morning, Ndiritu's force escorted me to the Ruhotie guerrilla camp. On the way, we had a fierce battle with the enemy forces at Kamigo. While Ndiritu's force was in pursuit of the retreating enemy forces, I was ordered to return to the Kiandongoro Camp with immediate effect. After two days of rest, we embarked on our journey for Ruhotie. On the way, we found another bloody battle going on between our forces and the imperialist robbers. Though the enemy had tanks and other sophisticated weapons, we managed to chase him out of the region. We killed several enemy soldiers and seized their weapons; our casualties were light. I left

the Ruhotie camp on 2 August 1953, for the Chania Front, to supervise the construction of a new hospital for our sick and wounded comrades.

On 3 August 1953, I received a letter from some of our war leaders, who were at the Nguthiru Camp with Commander Nyaga's forces. The letter stated that Nguthiru was an excellent place in which to hold a conference because it was at the centre of Nyandarwa. Therefore, it would be easier for guerrillas from all parts of the forest to travel to Nguthiru without alerting the enemy forces. This letter was written by Quartermaster General Macharia wa Kimemia on behalf of the following leaders:

1. Mbaria wa Kaniu, Chairman of Murang'a armed forces
2. Senior Commander Muraya wa Mbutia
3. Commander Abdullah Gitonga Muthui
4. Commander Nyaga (Muriuki wa Gathure)
5. General Kibeera wa Gatui
6. General Kahiga wa Wachanga.

I agreed with their suggestion and wrote back, asking them to wait for us on 7 August 1953. At the same time, I requested them to start preparations for the conference which was to be held on 9 August 1953.

On 6th August accompanied by Muruthi wa Wamathi, I returned to Kiandongoro to inform my comrades about the Nguthiru Conference. Next morning, a group of us began the journey to Nguthiru. We spent the first night on the banks of the Chania River, and the following day we continued our journey to Nguthiru.

About four miles from the camp, we were met by a welcoming party led by General Kibeera and Commander Nyaga. General Kibeera was carrying a calabash of honey, which, he told me, symbolized our unity in the struggle and our undying love for our country. He handed the calabash to me and asked me to drink some honey. I drank the honey from the calabash with great relish. I then suggested we move away from the road, so that we could all drink from the calabash of unity and love.

After drinking from the calabash, we prayed to *Mwene-Nyaga* (God) and thanked Him for this historic reunion. Afterwards, General Kibeera and Commander Nyaga led us towards the camp. On our arrival, we were received with great enthusiasm, including cries of joy. For two and a half minutes, I stood in silence. 'In a situation like this,' I told myself, 'why should we be hunted down and be killed in our own country? Why should we live in the forest like beasts—hungry and in rags? What crimes have we committed? If fighting for our land and freedom is a crime, then we shall fight to the last drop of our blood. We shall never give up until we have driven these foreign murderers from our beloved country.'

After a night's rest, I sent guerrilla units to Murang'a and Nyeri to summon our guerrilla compatriots to the conference. Others were sent to the Rift Valley Front on a similar mission.

But on 9 August 1953, before the conference could begin, we learnt from our military intelligence network that there were enemy forces in the

area. While we were discussing this important security issue, the Murang'a forces, led by their commanding officers—General Commander Matenjagwo—(Gitau wa Ng'ang'a), Brigadier Gakure wa Karuri and Muraya wa Mucheru, arrived. The following KLFA leaders also arrived at about the same time:

1. Brigadier Gathitu wa Waithaka
2. Mathenge wa Gathiru
3. Major Ndirangu wa Kariuki
4. Colonel Kibiru wa Muchiri, Field Secretary of Murang'a Armed Forces
5. Karari wa Njama
6. Comrade Ndirangu wa Kanoe
7. Comrade Rubia wa Wandua
8. Comrade Waweru wa Ngirita, and many others whose names I cannot now remember

After consultations among the delegates, we decided to continue with the conference despite the presence of the enemy in the region. When the conference began, we discussed and criticized our war efforts; we agreed to develop a new war strategy. We also discussed the problems of promotion and discipline in the guerrilla army. At the same time, we agreed to put more efforts into combatting the enemy's propaganda among the Kenyan masses, particularly the peasants. We also agreed to intensify the struggle on all fronts.

The conference approved the promotion of Ndiritu wa Thuita to the rank of commander for his dedication and heroism. He was transferred from his small unit and given a full battalion. Ndururi wa Gititika was appointed field secretary of Ndiritu's former force. I also appointed Kibuku wa Theuri to be the coordinator of the Tetu force and requested him to attend the KLFA general conference to give a report on his activities, but he never did.

The conference was closed after two days of tough and serious discussions. We decided that the KLFA general conference would be on 16 August 1953, at Mwathe, Nyandarwa, and that I should contact all the KLFA front commanders and the leaders of village militia.

Before winding up the conference I requested every commander to work harder, and to make every sacrifice necessary for the liberation of our country. After these remarks, we scattered and returned to our respective areas of operation. I left for Murang'a accompanied by Brigadier Gathitu, Col. Kibiru and Comrade Ndirangu wa Kanoe. Karari wa Njama, Kahiga wa Wachanga and Mathenge wa Gathiru went to Nyeri through Ndunduri in the Rift Valley Province.

It was a great conference.

Report to the Kenya Defence Council

We moved from Thaina Camp to Kianjiru where we pitched our tent. Nyaga

and 40 fighters remained in the new camp, while Kibuku wa Theuri and I went to Ruthaithi because I wanted to visit a guerrilla unit there.

We arrived on 16th November, but we did not find the guerrillas; they had moved out of the camp. We visited Ndiritu wa Wang'ombe's camp where we found General Kahiu-Itina and Colonel Gathitu wa Waithaka whom I had sent there to prepare the KLFA expenditure account.

I spent the night there. The following morning, I visited Captain Wambararia's camp near the Rithu river. During our discussions, Captain Wambararia reported to me that Comrade Gatete had attempted to kill Comrade Juma a while back.

According to Colonel Wambararia, Gatete's undignified act had something to do with a girl, whose guerrilla name was Mutama, from Thigingi Location, Nyeri.

Because of the seriousness of the matter, the Kenya Defence Council should appoint a special committee to investigate this incident.

Field Marshal D. Kimathi,
18 November 1953

Minutes of the Kenya Parliament: EF1/3/3/629

Karari wa Njama, the Secretary-General of the Kenya Parliament, opened the meeting by saying that we had all come to these forests to fight for our land and freedom, and if there were any members who disagreed with him, they should leave the meeting because it was obvious that they did not understand what we were fighting for. He told us that our principal aim was to gain independence for the whole of Kenya, not for Central Province alone. He clearly pointed out that our liberation struggle was closely linked with the struggle of the peoples of East Africa and the rest of the continent.

The Kenya Parliament, he continued, was the backbone of the struggle; its primary task was to guide and direct our war efforts, and to strengthen our military and political leadership. He stressed that good leadership would contribute to the improvement of the combat ability of the entire army and of every guerrilla fighter. It was therefore the duty of the members of the Kenya Parliament to work efficiently and with great dedication. Given the fact that we were struggling under great difficulties, he continued, the K.P. members should become an example of courage and vigilance in the face of any hardship, be it hunger or death. If we cannot have these qualities, he said, we should quit and let other compatriots take over the leadership of the movement.

Commander Karari said that he was very concerned about disunity, disorganization and, above all, lack of discipline in the army. He pointed out, for example, that Mahiga Location and Laikipia District used to be the best organized regions because there was unity and cooperation between the

guerrillas and the general population, but due to the weakness of the leadership, growing conflicts between the leading army commanders, and the influence of harmful elements within the army units in both regions, work there was no longer going smoothly, and the enemy seemed to have taken advantage of this weakness.

In this connection, Comrade Karari gave us the history of the Karianini KLFA Headquarters before it was evacuated. He said that 3,500 guerrillas from Nyeri, Murang'a, Meru, Embu, Ukambani and the Rift Valley used to live there, and the peasants supplied them with food, clothing, medicine, and other important material needs. Because the leadership was firm and vigilant, there was cooperation and unity amongst the fighters. Everything, including guns, was shared communally; there existed a great spirit of togetherness and discipline was high among the fighters. 'What happened to this great spirit of togetherness? What is happening to us?' he asked.

He said that he was worried and concerned when he saw guerrilla fighters, living in one camp, unable to share things such as medicine. 'If we are fighting for the same thing, if our goal is to drive the British robbers out of our country, why,' he bitterly asked, 'should this harmful tendency be allowed to exist?'

This dangerous trend, Karari pointed out, had been engineered by those comrades and unit army commanders who preached and practised individualism, regional chauvinism, parochialism, nepotism and disunity among the guerrilla fighters, as well as in the Kenya Parliament. These individuals are dangerous enemies of the movement and should be dealt with ruthlessly and mercilessly. When a unit commander starts talking about 'I', of 'my location and district', of 'my army', of 'my camp', he violates the rules and regulations of the Kenya Parliament and should be considered a criminal, an enemy of this great struggle; he should be severely punished.

Our victory, Karari concluded, depends on strong leadership in the Kenya Parliament and unity in the armed forces.

MURIITHI WA GAKUU: In support of Karari's statement, he said that there had been a serious discussion in his guerrilla column concerning the same issue and he was very happy that it had been raised. He emphasized the seriousness of this matter.

GITONGA WA GACHINGU: He asked Karari to explain specifically how the guerrilla camps should be organized, and how they would be run more smoothly.

Karari replied that it was difficult for him to explain exactly how guerrilla camps should be run, because each camp depended on its leadership and the concrete situation in the region it was located in. He made the following general observations:

1. Each camp must have one kitchen, headed by one person.
2. Food should be well-prepared and guerrillas should be given equal rations. However, senior ranks should be served first.
3. All utensils should be used communally. No one should have his own utensils.

4. The head of the kitchen, and not the leader of the brigade, should be responsible for the smooth running of the kitchen.
5. Women guerrillas should do the cooking and be responsible for fetching water and firewood because that is their main job. It is wrong to send men to fetch water and firewood when there are women to do it.
6. The storekeeper should be in charge of handing out food and other items to the master of the kitchen. No one else should be allowed to enter the store. In addition to the food store, the unit must build two more stores – one for clothing and writing materials, and the other one for war materials and historical documents about the unit's activities. These stores should be underground.
7. Every guerrilla base must have separate common-rooms. One for senior ranks and the other for junior ranks.
8. The unit commander must have a separate house and should be well-guarded, because if something happened to him it would affect the morale of the entire column.
9. Women in the unit should have separate accommodation, but they should be given equal treatment in all activities concerned with the war.
10. The camp must be guarded twenty-four hours a day. This is the responsibility of the guard commandant.
11. A war committee must be established in every guerrilla camp. It should be a military and political watchdog for the unit.
12. The camp must organize its own intelligence force. This force must work closely with the war committee and the unit's commander-in-chief.
13. A medical task force must be organized and a hospital be constructed. It is the responsibility of the entire column to defend sick and wounded comrades from attacks.
14. Every guerrilla camp must maintain close political relations with the masses of the peasants in the area of its operation.
15. Parochialism, individualism, and regional chauvinism should be fought on all levels of the unit's activities. It is the duty of the unit to weed out harmful elements and traitors.
16. Political and military guidelines should be followed by the unit as they are laid down by the Kenya Parliament.
17. The unit commander-in-chief should be the main force and inspiration of his detachment.

KABUGA WA NJOGU: He asked Karari to explain in detail how food should be distributed to the guerrillas, and whether the leaders of the unit should be given special food. In this connection, Comrade Karari said that the distribution of food to the guerrillas is the responsibility of the head of the kitchen. There should not be special food for the senior ranks, but he made it clear that the senior ranks should be served first.

GENERAL KIMBO: To strengthen the armed struggle, he said, we members of the Kenya Parliament must trust each other, and each member, regardless of his rank and title, must accept the collective decision of the

Parliament. 'I am saying this because after the Parliament made the decision that any comrade who wants to see the Marshal should seek my permission first, the Marshal himself has decided to disregard this decision by allowing certain comrades to see him without consulting me,' said Kimbo 'For instance, Comrade Karari and Commander Abdullah are with the Marshal every evening. My question therefore is this: who has given them permission to visit the Marshal? Secondly, why does Kimathi allow them to visit him without my knowledge? Does it mean that there are those of us whom the Marshal trusts and others whom he distrusts? Isn't this supreme council weakened when its President disregards its rules and regulations? This really disturbs me.'

MARSHAL D.K.: In response to this criticism, Kimathi said that he was pleased with General Kimbo's concern about roles and responsibilities in the struggle, and that he fully supported that line. He said that with the exception of Karari and Commander Abdullah who had visited him without Kimbo's permission, no other comrades had been allowed to see him without the General's knowledge.

GENERAL KIMBO: In reply, General Kimbo told Kimathi that what he seemed to have forgotten was that he was the most important personality in the struggle, and that is why we were so much concerned with his security. But we could only protect him from the British enemy and national traitors, Kimbo went on, if he, Kimathi, would accept the collective decision, the rules and regulations of the Kenya Parliament. Addressing Kimathi's response more specifically, Kimbo said: 'You said that you only allowed Comrades Karari and Abdullah to see you without my knowledge but I remember Comrade Ndiritu wa Theuri visiting you two nights ago. If we cannot trust each other, be sincere to one another, maintain close relations with one another, then I don't see how we can lead this great struggle.' In support of General Kimbo, Brigadier Kirihinya, Commander Ndiritu wa Thuita and Major Ndururi criticized Dedan Kimathi for his actions and demanded that he accept Kimbo's criticism.

MARSHAL D.K.: Acknowledging that he had been wrong, Kimathi said: 'I accept Kimbo's criticism and I apologize to this body and to individual comrades for not maintaining the discipline of the movement. The error I have committed is serious; I hope I will never repeat it. I know that lack of discipline and misunderstandings cause serious errors in our military organization, and that is why I clearly understand and appreciate General Kimbo's concern.'

COMMANDER NDIRITU WA THUITA: Contributing to the debate he said that all members of the Parliament should understand that we are fighting for national liberation, for the total liberation of Kenya, and not for one nationality or region. As we continue to intensify the struggle, he said, other nationalities will join us here in the forest. He went on to say that after we have kicked the British out of this country, after we have liberated our homeland, our compatriots will welcome us as national heroes; they will immortalize this glorious struggle. 'With the support of the Kenyan masses,

we will form the first national government under Dedan Kimathi's leadership,' he said. In conclusion, he told us that if our primary aim is the liberation of Kenya, we should make every effort to combat chauvinism and regionalism.

MARSHAL D.K.: In strongly supporting Commander Ndiritu's remarks, Dedan Kimathi stressed that we should use every effort, and exert all our sweat and blood, to build an invincible liberation army. Without a strong army, Kimathi said, we will not be able to bring the whole country under our leadership. But he said that it was difficult to build a strong and united army unless we solved the communication and transport problems, and unless we met with the army commanders in Mt. Kenya to coordinate our war efforts.

'As you remember,' the Marshal told the Parliament, 'a few days ago, I wrote a letter to General Kariba informing him of my plans to tour the Mt. Kenya Front as soon as the Kenya Parliament approved my request. I am now asking the Parliament to allow me to visit the Mt. Kenya Front. I think the members understand the importance of my visit. My presence will bolster the morale of our fighting forces there, and, above all, I will have an opportunity to meet General Kariba and the leaders of Embu and Meru and have a concrete discussion with them on our war efforts. From there, I will travel to Nairobi to meet the members of the Supreme War Council to discuss the expansion of our political and military work in all regions of our country.'

MAJOR NDURURI: He observed that the Parliament highly appreciated Marshal's effort to contact Army Commander Kariba in Mt. Kenya, but it would be a great risk to allow the Marshal to go to Mt. Kenya in these uncertain times. He proposed that we send another comrade instead.

Contributing to the same debate, Commander Ndiritu said that while he understood the seriousness of the Marshal's proposal and his intention, he strongly opposed his visit to Mt. Kenya Front because the Parliament could not guarantee his security at present. 'Since you are the father and inspiration of this great movement,' Commander Ndiritu told the Marshal, 'if something happens to you it will mean the death of all of us; it will kill the struggle. No, we cannot approve your request. We cannot consciously sacrifice you to the hyena (*Tutinghe hiti tukionaga*). Commander Ndiritu supported Major Ndururi's proposal that the Parliament should appoint another commander to lead the mission to Mt. Kenya.

After further discussion, the Parliament rejected Kimathi's request, but agreed to appoint a special mission to tour the Mt. Kenya Front.

Commander Ndiritu said in conclusion, 'I hope the Marshal understands our concern, and the patriotic motives which compel us to refuse him permission to tour the Mt. Kenya War Front.'

COLONEL NDIRITU WA WANG'OMBE: Col. Ndiritu pointed out that most members failed to arrive for the parliamentary session in time because of communication, transportation and security problems while others couldn't come at all. This created a major problem since the Parliament couldn't meet unless two-thirds of its members are present. Since we trusted each

other and we were all working for the liberation of our country, he suggested that Parliament should meet even if there were only three members present. His proposal was supported by Commander Ndiritu wa Thuita and Colonel Ndiritu Omera.

Although he agreed with the sentiments of the previous speakers, Major Ndururi suggested that Parliament should only meet if six members and the president were present. Similarly, General Kimbo said that to hold a parliamentary session with only three members and without the president would be unacceptable to him. He argued that if members were informed about the date for their meeting beforehand, they would certainly make every effort to arrive in time. He went on to say that the problem arose when an announcement for a meeting did not reach some members until the session had been adjourned.

Nyandarwa, February 1954.

February 1954

Minutes of the General Meeting of the Sixth KLFA Column under General Commander Muthui

Note: Every KLFA unit was required to hold a general meeting once a month to review the war situation and to discuss any social contradictions which might have occurred in the unit. The minutes of these general meetings were sent to the Kenya Parliament for examination. The following is a copy of the minutes of such a meeting sent to the Kenya Parliament by Commander Muthui.

A Letter of Transfer

Colonel Wachira wa Nginya's motion that any guerrilla fighter who wants to transfer to another camp must produce a letter of transfer from his original camp was seconded by three comrades. Contributing to the motion, Captain Ndiritu said that if a guerrilla fighter decides to join a new army unit, he should not be accepted unless he provides a letter of transfer from his unit commander. In addition to that, Major Ngungu observed, any unit commander who allows a guerrilla to join his column without a letter of transfer should be demoted right away. General Commander Muthui said that in addition to his demotion, the unit commander in question should be charged before the Kenya Parliament.

Guns and Ammunition

Speaking about firearms and ammunition, Col. Wachira said that the rules demanded the arming of each and every guerrilla fighter, otherwise the whole exercise would be a big joke. He said that although our main source for guns and ammunition was the enemy himself, it was the duty of each guerrilla fighter to try to make a new rifle. If he did not know how to make

one, he should consult the gun experts. As for ammunition, Colonel Wachiira wondered why our gun-experts had not yet discovered how to manufacture them.

In support of Wachiira's remark, Commander Muthui said that a gun was a decisive element in the struggle; it should be guarded jealously, regardless of whether it was loaded or empty. He had noticed, he said, that there were comrades who thought that a gun was only useful when loaded. He said that this was a serious error which should be corrected.

Financial Assistance for Widows and Orphans

Sergeant Kinyanjui told the meeting that it was the duty of army commanders to see that widows, orphans and other war victims were receiving financial assistance. The fund which had been reserved for this purpose, he said, should be distributed equally among these people. Commander Muthui added that most of the war victims were in Central Kenya and the settled areas, and that their condition was very serious. He said that every camp should use all means necessary to help these compatriots.

Decentralization Programme

General Commander Muthui told us that the decentralization policy meant that large armies would be divided into small and equal columns. He said that armies which were unnecessarily large were difficult to organize and feed. To implement this new policy, Commander Muthui explained, our force would be divided into small brigades and it would be known as the Sixth Column. Because of these new changes, he said, there was a need to promote some of us to head these new units, but he stressed that promotion depended on one's ability and revolutionary commitment. Thus everyone should accept and respect his rank and the title he was to be given. It was also very important for lower ranks to respect high ranks. He stressed that without a military hierarchy, discipline and collective responsibility, orders could not be respected and carried out.

According to Kenya Parliament regulations, Commander Muthui pointed out, every KLFA battalion should consist of 2,000 men; it should also have its own war committee, whose major task would be to supervise the fighting. He explained how the members of this war committee would be chosen.

Politicization of the Masses

Commander King'ori proposed that we should continue to spread the Batuni Oath among the masses, without violence, and at the same time we should make an all-out effort to explain the aims of the movement to them. Without the support and cooperation of the people, he said, our movement would die.

Discipline, Cooperation and Unity

Captain Ndiritu wa Gitonga told us that cooperation, discipline and unity must be maintained in all guerrilla camps, and that unit commanders must be respected. In the same vein, Col. Wachiira stressed that we must obey our

leaders without hesitation or complaints. When we serve food, he said, we must serve the senior ranks first. In addition, he added every camp must have a commanding officer appointed by the Army General Commander; otherwise, it would be an illegal camp. This point was strongly supported by Commander Muthui.

Captain Njeki said that we must help each other and work as a team. Cooperation between lower and higher ranks, he emphasized, would strengthen our position against the enemy. By helping one another, he concluded, we would be helping our fatherland. He attacked regional chauvinism and individualism.

Sergeant Karuga said that cooperation between the leaders and guerrillas was a must if we were to succeed in our struggle. Speaking along the same lines, Major Munyi told us that cooperation would strengthen our unity. He went on to say that we should avoid jealousy and discrimination of any kind and help each other.

Attack on Enemy

Lt. Major Ndiritu wa Kiara said that guerrilla fighters must be well prepared during an attack, and should do whatever they are ordered to do by their commanders. They must also be disciplined and ready to move into action. Contributing to the same debate, Major Kariuki said that before we kill a compatriot who has sided with the British we should try to re-educate him; if he does not repent, he should be eliminated.

Construction of Guerrilla Camps

Army General Commander Muthui said that a camp should be constructed in a strategic position and it should be guarded at all times. Sentries should be positioned a mile away in all directions. The camp must be self-sufficient in food, medicine and firearms. It must also have its own hospital. In addition to that, Captain Wathurura said that the camp must have its own place for storing food, medicine, clothing and war materials. Commenting on the same issue, Commander King'ori said that the camp must have at least three stores constructed underground, some distance from the main camp.

- (a) The first camp must be three miles away
- (b) The second one should be two miles away
- (c) The third must be a mile and a half away

He said that these stores should be manned by experts under the supervision of the unit commander.

KLFA Archives

Lt. Wahi wa Macharia proposed that we should try to preserve the history of our struggle for future generations. He advised field secretaries to record every aspect of our daily activities – battles fought, acts of individual and collective heroism, names of our compatriots killed by the enemy, our general meetings etc. In addition, he said that we should continue composing songs about the movement which will provide documentary evidence of our

struggle in the future. He also suggested that we should store all the treasure we find in the forest for future use.

Medicine

Commander Dr. King'ori informed us that in order to be self-sufficient in medicine, we should try to manufacture our own medicine from the leaves and roots of certain trees like our ancestors used to do. He said that any comrade who knows a particular tree which produces healing medicine should report about it to the medical unit. It was agreed that thorough research should be conducted to identify such trees.

Nyandarwa, 1954

The General Meeting of the Kimuri Army Unit

Leaders Present

1. Major General Vido, Chairman
2. Brigadier Mathenge
3. Major Gathura
4. Captain Irungu
5. Captain Mathenge
6. Lt. WaWeru
7. Major Muriithi

Agenda

1. Improvement of our armed forces
2. Politicization of the masses in the region
3. National unity and mobilization
4. Efficiency and discipline in our ranks
5. Responsibility and good leadership in our guerrilla army
6. Protection of sick and wounded fighters
7. Problems of communication and transport

At 2.20 pm Major General Vido, Chief of Staff, opened the meeting. He said that he and General Commander Magu were very disturbed about the inefficiency of the commanding officers of some columns. He argued that their inefficiency would no doubt disorganize and disorient the force and lower its fighting spirit. Without steel-like leadership and firm discipline in our ranks, he said, we will not wage the war successfully, and the enemy will no doubt force us to our knees. He stressed that leaders should try to reorganize their units, work together as a team, and always try to solve their political differences through discussions. This way, he noted, we would strengthen our unity and bolster our fighting morale. He said that a fierce war should be waged against opportunism, over-ambition, individualism and petty quarrels among the fighters.

Finally, he reminded us that we were the backbone of our people, and that the liberation of our country depended on us — our sacrifices and efforts. If we fail to drive the British out of Kenya, he pointed out, our people will never forgive us.

MAJOR MURIITHI: In support of Major General Vido's line, he said that leaders of a unit must learn how to work together before they try to organize others. He stressed that unity among both low and high ranks was the cornerstone of our strength. In order to strengthen our force, he argued, past quarrels and petty disagreements should be forgotten, and individual competition should be sacrificed to our collective spirit. He concluded by saying that beginning 22 August 1954, we should try to make an all-out effort to improve our forces.

LT. WAWERU: He said we could improve our army only if we made an all-out effort, and exerted all our energies, to bring about unity and discipline within our ranks.

BRIGADIER MATHENGE: He said that from the time he joined the Kimuri Army on 19 April 1954, our force had been well-organized and well-disciplined, until it was divided into three sections. He criticized the commanding generals for their inefficiency and parochialism. He pointed out that if this harmful disease was allowed to spread, it would break our unity, derail our aims and goals, thus weakening our fighting spirit. He called for the realization of our responsibilities and increased commitment and dedication.

CAPTAIN GATHURA: Although he supported the previous speakers, he said that the situation was not as bleak as the majority of them had presented it, that the fighting morale of the army was excellent, and we had excellent relations with the peasants. What worried him most, he said, were our communication and transport problems. He suggested that we appoint a task force to deal with these problems, otherwise they would hamper our progress.

Finally, the meeting agreed that it was the duty of the army and of every guerrilla to defend and protect sick and wounded comrades from enemy attacks.

Major Vido adjourned the meeting with the following prayer:

O Mwene-Nyaga,

We know that thou chooseth good things
Which last for ever.

We trust and believe in you dearly
Because of your greatness and kindness
I beseech you to give us wisdom and power
Which will make us acquire our land
And enable us to lead our compatriots
From this colonial madness to freedom and happiness.

O Mwene-Nyaga,

You know how the Europeans hate, oppress and exploit us,
Give us strength to drive them into the sea,
To drive them out of this our country.

In the name of our ancestors—Gikuyu na Mumbi,
We beseech you.

Thai Thathaiya Ngai,
Thai.

Nyandarwa,
22 August 1954

Commander Ndiritu's Report to his Unit on the Meeting of the Kenya Parliament

After returning from the session of the Kenya Parliament, Commander Ndiritu called us to report the proceedings of the meeting. He began his report by telling us how well the meeting had been attended. The leaders who attended included the Supreme Commander of the Kenya Land Freedom Army, Marshal Dedan Kimathi. For this reason, he told us that he would only tell us what he had been authorized to disclose by the Marshal and the Kenya Parliament.

1. He said they discussed the reorganization of the entire armed forces. The K.P. members felt that in order to make it effective and strong, the guerrilla army must be decentralized and be reconstructed into small solid columns. Each column would be led by an experienced guerrilla leader. Each Army Commander, he said, would be responsible for the implementation of this policy and the selection of leaders for these new columns.
2. To implement this policy, he told us, our unit would have to be divided into three equal columns, since it was unnecessarily large. This process would be accomplished through democratic discussion amongst the guerrilla fighters, and discrimination and favouritism would not be allowed to hamper these new changes. In this regard, the rules and regulations of the liberation army would have to be followed to the letter; nothing contrary to these rules would be done.
 - (a) Each column must establish its base and organize a medical task force to take care of the sick and wounded comrades. In addition it must be self-sufficient in food, etc.
 - (b) Each column must follow the rules and regulations of the movement and a steel-like discipline must be maintained and enforced with firmness.
3. He pointed out that the Marshal was seriously concerned with petty quarrels and disagreements in various guerrilla camps, and that he had ordered us to stop these divisive activities with immediate effect. He said

that if someone was annoyed with a particular person, he should have a peaceful discussion with that individual instead of blaming everybody. There is no purpose in having guerrilla fighters in one camp if they cannot work together.

4. If a leader or an ordinary guerrilla fighter wants a period of rest, he told us, it should be granted; however, the leader must make sure that someone is performing his duties during his absence. To take a vacation without permission is a crime punishable by death.
5. Finally, Commander Ndiritu asked Karuu wa Githumbiri to give us a report on the war efforts on the Mt. Kirinyaga Front. Karuu spoke well of the place. He said that the guerrilla army in that area was well-organized and well-disciplined; each guerrilla commander was responsible for drawing up a war strategy for the area in which his army unit operated. The commander was also responsible for developing good relations with the peasantry in the region. Furthermore, he said that promotion was regarded as a very significant thing, and that only those who had proved their heroism got promoted. He regarded Generals Tanganyika and Kariba as the best Mau Mau strategists.
6. In closing the meeting, Commander Ndiritu said that if we worked with determination and displayed exemplary heroism, we would be able to liberate the country within a year.

Nyandarwa,
17 June 1954

Report: Punishment of Deserters

The following five guerrillas were tried in Marshal D. Kimathi's court on 25 November 1953 for desertion, and for committing rape. As a result, they were sentenced to be caned as shown below:

1. Karuhi Muthami – 15 strokes.
2. Munuari Ndungu wa Wandete – 10 strokes.
3. Kiraiku M Wanjiri wa Theuri – 10 strokes.
4. Mukungi Mukemi wa Githanga – 5 strokes.
5. Kinguru Ngaoha wa Kibogoro – 5 strokes.

Since discipline is the most important weapon in this struggle, it must be strictly observed. We can win this war only if we have the support of the population.

Comradely yours,
Gathitu wa Waithaka,
KDC General Secretary
November 1953

Report on Kimathi's Visit to Ichagachiru

On 3 April 1954, at about 4 pm, we began our journey to Ichagachiru. A party of about 150 strong was escorting the Marshal. When we arrived at Gakanga, Commander Ndiritu ordered Major Muirigo to organize an armed escort to protect the Marshal and his party from a possible surprise enemy attack. Some took their position in the front and some in the rear. It was a good journey.

On our way back, we composed a new song which we sang with vigilance and determination:

When we arrived at Ichagachiru
The peasants gave us food
And slaughtered a ram
As rations for our mission.

Chorus:

We were happy as we went
We were happy as we returned
Our mission was a victory both ways.

When we arrived at the Chania river
Kimathi commanded boldly:
'Put your guns in position
The enemy is approaching.'

Before we reached the fringe of forest, Kimathi decided to visit his home village. So Major Muirigo ordered comrade Gitokobe to proceed with a few armed guerrilla commandos in order to check the movement of the enemy forces.

We passed by Dedan Kimathi's house, where he was enthusiastically greeted by peasant women. Some wept with bitterness and anger when they remembered the price set on his head by the colonialists.

It was a moving scene.

Karaari Njama
Chief Secretary

Reorganization of the Kenya Inoora Army

The following leaders have been sent by the Kenya Parliament to Kiambu for an important mission:

1. Major Kahiga wa Gateri—Rwathia, Murang'a
2. Major Ndirangu wa Kariuki—Tetu, Nyeri
3. Acting Commander Ruiru wa Gaceru—Tetu, Nyeri
4. Captain Gathumbi wa Kamau—Githunguri, Nyeri

Purpose of Their Mission

- a) To administer the Batuni Oath in order to unify the people behind the armed movement.
- b) To recruit more youths into the guerrilla army.
- c) To reorganize the Kenya Inoora Army and to establish its headquarters in the district.

As freedom fighters, we must realize that we are fighting for the whole of Kenya. There are some of our comrades who place their location or district above our country; there are others who naively think that we are only fighting for the freedom of Central Province. This is an evil which we must combat without mercy. Our people are being killed, tortured, raped and convicted because they are demanding land and freedom, because they want our country to be free.

We must remember that we are only a small [nationality] amongst all Kenyan [nationalities], and our actions will be remembered forever if they are good and patriotic.

Marshal D. Kimathi,
Nyandarwa 1954

Report on our Mission to Kiambu: EF1/3/3/650

We started our journey from the Honi river in Nyandarwa. We were twenty guerrilla fighters who had been sent by Field Marshal Kimathi wa Wachiuri to politicize the masses in Kiambu in the name of Gikuyu na Mumbi.

After walking for twelve miles, it started raining heavily and we were soaking wet. Captain Wang'ombe wa Mwangi suggested that we should make a fire to warm ourselves, but this suggestion was turned down. We decided to proceed with our journey despite the rain and cold. At about 1 pm, we rested and ate our lunch. Then we started off, and after walking half an hour, we saw two rhinos grazing across the path we were following. Commander Waihua wa Theuri tried to force them to move from our path, but they resisted violently. To avoid a dangerous confrontation, Comfander Waihua commanded us to go back and try to find another path, but the beasts followed us; they were ready for a fight. They troubled us for half an hour before we managed to escape. We could have gunned them down with our machine guns, but KLFA's rules prohibited the killing of animals unless it was for food.

It was still raining heavily.

At about 1 am, we decided to find a place to sleep. Luckily, the path we followed led us to a guerrilla camp, and after the Guard Commander was satisfied that we were not enemy soldiers, he welcomed us to the camp. The fighters in this camp were operating in North Kinangop under General Muraya.

The guerrillas made a fire for us and gave us some food. After a long and friendly conversation, they showed us where to sleep. After sleeping for two hours, we woke up. We said goodbye to our comrades and we left. Since our guide did not know the way from the camp, the unit commander ordered two of his men to guide us. After escorting us for a distance, the men returned to their camp. At about 3 pm, we rested and ate our food. We then continued with our journey until we were completely exhausted; then we decided to rest. We lit a fire and warmed our food. We ate and then went to sleep. It was very dark.

We took off early next morning. As we were crossing the South Kinangop plains at about 3 pm, we met two of our comrades whose guerrilla unit was based in this region. They gave us some information on enemy operations in the area, and then we parted. After walking for four days, we reached a small town called Kinyahwa, located in a European's plantation. From there onwards, 28 miles of plains lay ahead of us, and we had to hurry to avoid detection by the enemy at dawn. We started crossing this plain about 3am, but unfortunately the place we were supposed to hide had been burned down by the enemy and our contacts had been arrested. Consequently, we spent the whole day lying on the grass; we could not stand or sit up for fear of being discovered by the enemy. Despite these difficulties, we were determined to fulfil our mission, to contribute our sweat and blood for the liberation of our country.

We started off again in the evening, but because we were hungry and exhausted, we could only cover ten miles of the plain before we were forced to rest. The following morning, we sent out scouts to see whether the way was safe. We started off again when they returned, but despite our courage and determination, we could hardly walk this time; we were too hungry and tired. It was under these difficult circumstances that one of our comrades, Kamwamba, went out and brought back some honey which saved us from starvation. We started our journey again and managed to reach Munyu Railway Station at about 5 am. We took cover by the roadside.

We knew that some loyalists delivered their milk to the station during this time of the day and we were determined to use whatever means necessary to seize some of their milk. At about half past six, we saw one loyalist bringing milk to the station on a donkey. Commander Waihua gave the order, we captured the man and seized his milk and everything else he had in the name of our struggle. The chap looked so frightened and shocked that we decided not to kill him; but we made it very clear to him that if he reported this incident to the colonial authorities we would find him and cut him down. We released the bastard after giving him a good beating. We drank the milk, released the donkey, and then we left the station, following the tarmac road for 20 miles. A car passed us almost every five minutes, and we were instructed to lie down by the roadside to avoid detection. However, one comrade, Mburu wa Njiraini, had not been following these instructions, as we discovered the following morning; Commander Waihua was very furious about it.

After walking for 15 miles, we saw some cattle lying by the roadside and decided to kill one for food, but Comrade Kimani wa Kahora advised us not to do so for our own safety; we took his advice.

We Were Given a Friendly Welcome at Thwariga's Camp

The whole journey from Nyandarwa mountains to Kiambu took us six days. We arrived on the night of 16 August 1954. The following morning, we entered Lari Forest and since we were dead tired, we decided to rest. After we had rested, it was decided that two comrades – Major Muhinju and Kamanga—who knew the area well, would go out to survey the situation and also try to find ways of obtaining food. For security reasons, the rest of us remained in the forest until our two comrades returned. They shortly returned accompanied by another comrade called Captain Thwariga, who took us to his camp where we were given a tremendous welcome by his men. We remained in that *mbuci* (camp) from 17 to 31 August.

Thwariga was very kind to us during this period. He was particularly, happy to hear that Dedan Kimathi had sent us to Kiambu to politicize the masses, and to help in the reorganization of the Kenya Inooro Army. At first he had suspected us of being members of the Moscow Society but after questioning us carefully he was satisfied that we were not enemies of the movement. In fact, Captain Thwariga organized a meeting with the leaders of the movement in the area, so that we could explain the purpose of our mission more concretely. The meeting was held some distance from Thwariga's main camp.

Captain Wang'ombe spoke on our behalf. He explained the primary aims of our mission with great clarity. The leaders asked him many questions, to which he replied to the best of his ability. Since it was too late for the leaders to back to the village, they stayed with us until the following morning. When we parted, they promised that they would do everything possible to make our mission successful.

Two days after we returned to Thwariga's camp, we were attacked by enemy forces. The battle continued until late in the evening. When the enemy retreated, we held an emergency meeting. We decided to divide our large force into small columns in order to defend our position effectively if and when the enemy returned. Our group, which had 20 people, was ordered to go to the Kirangi camp for protection. However, Captain Wang'ombe was unable to come with us because he was having pain in his knees; he had been wounded twice during the battle. He remained with Thwariga's column.

Next morning, as expected, the enemy deployed its forces in the whole region. Peasants were being beaten, tortured and killed with incredible brutality by the enemy soldiers. Many peasants were arrested and detained. Meanwhile, our column was intercepted by the enemy before it could reach the Kirangi camp. It was a fierce battle, but the enemy was able to force us to scatter. The majority of men in our group returned to Thwariga's camp and a few, including Commander Kimani, headed on for Nyandarwa. They joined up with Murang'a guerrillas who were operating on the border region.

Captain Thwariga and another comrade had gone out to survey the situation, but unfortunately, they were ambushed and killed by the enemy. We lost a real comrade; Thwariga was a real patriot. He died a martyr.

We remained in Thwariga's camp for four days. On the fifth day, Major Muhinju ordered us to go to Kirangi to try to find the rest of our comrades. We were guided by those guerrillas who knew the area well.

On arrival at Kirangi, we joined up with General Nubi's force. General Nubi led a group of fierce guerrilla fighters who never slept if they heard that the enemy was in the region. At any rate, after two days in the camp, Comrades Nubi, Muhinju and Gatimu decided to go out and fetch some food. They were out for two days. Before they could get the food, they had to wage a fierce battle with some homeguard traitors, killing several of them. After forcing these traitors to flee, they broke into a shop and loaded everything into the truck they had seized; then General Nubi drove it to the forest edge, unloaded the food and burned the truck. They brought plenty of food for the camp. There was a great joy in the camp where there was nothing left to eat.

At this time, we learned that the enemy was planning an attack on our camp. We were prepared for it; when it came, we stood our ground. We killed twelve of the enemy soldiers and forced the rest to flee. We suffered two dead and two wounded. Despite the deaths of two of our comrades, we were very happy because we had won the battle and seized guns and ammunition.

After the first battle, however, the enemy poured reinforcements into the region; we decided to leave the area for Longonot to escape from their deadly weapons. Captain Kanyenye was leading us when, after only five miles, we met the enemy coming to guard the path we were following. But it was pitch dark, and we were able to cross the tarmac road without being seen by the enemy. On the other side of the highway, there was a maize *shamba*: we loaded some green maize into some bags and took them with us. At about 2 o'clock in the morning, General Nubi gave us permission to light a fire and cook. After eating, we slept. At about 5am, Major Muhinju woke us up to pray and to begin preparations to climb the mountain. We climbed up to Kihiko's camp, which had been in existence for a long time. Kihiko's men welcomed us and gave us food. After eating, we were informed that the unit commander, Comrade Kihiko, had returned from Nyandarwa and was on his way to the Kirangi camp with 140 guerrillas. We sent him a message and he came back. Although we still had to watch for the foreign enemy, our main immediate enemy was lack of water. There was no water on the hill. Under these circumstances our woman seer advised us that if we sacrificed another goat for our food, it would definitely rain. We had killed a goat before for the same purpose, but it had not rained because, according to the seer, a mistake was made during the ceremony. This time we managed to kill two goats: one to replace the first sacrifice and the other for purification. The ceremony was performed on 6 November 1954. On the same night, a star was seen shooting from east to west, and the follow-

ing day it rained heavily. We had enough water to drink.

On 11 November 1954, we were attacked by enemy aircraft from 6 o'clock in the morning until 12 noon. During this attack, we lay on our stomachs to avoid being seen by the murderous pilots. A funny thing happened during the attack: Major Kabuthia ran and lay on the legs of the comrade seer. He pressed her legs so hard that she had to move from that position although the air attack was still on. As an old woman, she felt that it was indecent for a young man to lie on her legs.

The problem with Longonot Mountain is that it has no trees, so we had a rough time trying to hide from the jet bombers; but thanks to our God, none of our men was hurt. After the aircraft left, we changed our position and went further up the mountain. While we were doing this, an enemy scout plane circled the mountain; it appeared so suddenly that we thought we had been spotted. Under these dangerous circumstances, General Nubi ordered us to change our position again and we went two miles away from our previous position. But all of a sudden, we saw the enemy coming up the mountain on foot from all directions. Army General Commander Karii ordered us to get our guns and prepare for battle.

We had sick comrades up on the mountain and, knowing the barbarity of the enemy, we were really worried. In this tense situation, Comrade Nyamunditu and Captain Wanjiru volunteered to risk their lives to save our sick comrades. They crept with steel-like determination up to the place where the sick fighters were until they managed to bring them down safely to us. The whole operation took two hours and a half.

We decided it was not tactically wise to stage a battle with the enemy and we managed to leave the area under cover of darkness. We marched towards Lari Forest, and after four days, without food or water, we joined up with Captain Thwariga's former brigade, now under Captain Kihia. Altogether, we were now 368 men. We stayed in Kihia's camp for six days and we had plenty to eat. At the same time we were able to organize successful attacks against the British forces and the Kenyan traitors.

On the seventh day, we decided to go to the Kirangi camp in order to hold a meeting with peasant women. Quartermaster Lt. Muriu was chosen to lead the force. He ordered the guerrilla guards to go ahead of us. But when we arrived at the camp, we discovered that our guards were dead — killed by the enemies of our people.

The brutal murder of our comrades was clear proof that the enemy was in the region and that we should expect a surprise attack any time. We had some peasant women with us who had taken refuge in the forest to escape the homeguard's brutality. We were worried about their safety. Captain Kihia who had escorted us to Kirangi sent out a guerrilla detachment to check the movement of the enemy; suddenly the enemy surrounded us from all sides, and we were forced to evacuate the base and also to change our strategy. In accordance with the decision of our commanders, we divided ourselves into small columns in order to escape the enemy's encirclement.

I was in a group of nine comrades (five women and four men), and several

peasant women. It was under Captain Kihia's command. After a fierce battle we were able to break through the enemy's encirclement, and we walked for two miles without resting. In fact, Captain Kihia and Comrade Murua wa Wanjiku wanted to go out and study the situation without resting, but their request was unanimously rejected because it was too dangerous to walk alone when the enemy was everywhere.

At about 6 pm, Captain Kihia issued orders to S.S. Major Muhia to lead us to a safe hideout where we could at least rest peacefully. In the meantime, the women comrades were given orders to collect firewood. Whilst collecting the firewood they met Comrade Wanjiku who had disappeared during the battle; we thought they had killed her. We rejoiced on seeing her again. We went to sleep after warming ourselves around the fire. We had no blankets, but you know we had become used to the cold and other harsh conditions of these forests. In the morning, we prayed to *Mwene-Nyaga* as usual, seeking His support in the struggle.

Around 10 o'clock in the morning, S.S. Major Muhia was sent out with armed guards to study the situation. They came back at about 12 o'clock and informed us that the enemy was nowhere to be seen. At 4 pm, Captain Kihia ordered us to go out and get some food; we had not eaten for two days. Quartermaster Lt. Muriu was ordered to go ahead of the column with a small well-armed detachment. With Captain Kihia in front and Captain Murua wa Wanjiku at the rear, we followed Lt. Muriu from a distance.

Because we had some old women with us we were going slowly. And before we had gone a mile away from our hideout Lt. Muriu and his men were suddenly attacked by the enemy; after an intense engagement, the enemy fled. Knowing the ruthlessness and savagery of the enemy, we felt it was better for us to return to our new hideout until we were very sure of the situation. However, our women comrades disagreed with this decision and instead insisted that we continue. '*Guku ni gwitu,*' they said, '*tutigikua makiriaga*'. ('This is our country, we cannot die while they feed.') We fought the enemy as we went along and it was not until two days later that we reached a farm where we could gather green maize and sweet potatoes. We then returned to our temporary camp still amazed by the brave stance the women had taken. We felt that with this kind of heroism, the Europeans would have to quit this country, come what may.

On the following day, we were reunited with other fighters from whom we had been separated four days ago. They informed us that they had lost one comrade during the fierce battle. However, they were happy because they had managed to force the enemy to leave the region. They also informed us that a detachment from the Lari camp was looking for Captain Kihia and the women. We were happy to hear all this, and we immediately began our journey to Captain Kihia's camp. We arrived safely, and we were informed that the situation was under control in the region. We ate, and sang revolutionary songs throughout the night.

On 29 November 1954 Captain Wang'ombe and Comrade R.S.M. Njagi wa Gitari insisted that we return to Nyandarwa mountains in order to attend

the KLFA conference. Consequently, we decided that 16 Kiambu comrades should remain behind to continue our war efforts and four of us would return to Nyandarwa to report our mission to the KLFA Supreme Commander, Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi.

Accompanied by Major Gichaga wa Njuguna's forces, we started our journey to Nyandarwa. We were under Captain Kihia's command. We arrived at the Longonot Camp in the morning, 1 December 1954, and we were given a friendly welcome by our compatriots. We shared the food we had; after eating, we discussed the seriousness of our struggle. We said goodbye to Captain Kihia and the rest of our comrades at about 8 pm, and headed for Naivasha with Major Gichaga's force as an escort. As soon as we reached the foot of the mountain, it started to rain heavily. When it stopped raining, we marched to Longonot town. As we approached the town, we split into two groups. One group went to the Railway Landhies and the other went to the P.W.D. quarters. Although the enemy had put watchlights around the town, our compatriots were not afraid, they came out in large numbers to welcome us. After receiving some food and explaining the purpose of our mission, we left. We arrived at Munyu camp on 2 December 1954 at 7 am. The camp was under the command of Colonel Kibe wa Kimani. We were given a big welcome by our comrades. They slaughtered two cows for us. The cows had been seized from a European's farm in the area.

On 4th December, Major Gichaga's force returned to its base in Lari Forest. We stayed in Comrade Kibe's camp for two weeks. On 13th December, we met with Army Commander Gichuki wa Mwai and agreed to hold a meeting at his camp on 15th December in order to explain the purpose of our mission. The following guerrilla leaders attended the meeting:

1. Colonel Kibe wa Kimani - Kiambu District
2. Major Matheri - Kiambu
3. Major Muigai - Kiambu District
4. Captain Wangware - Kiambu
5. Sergeant Major (Shida) Kamau - Kiambu
6. Sergeant Njoroge - Kiambu
7. Lieutenant Gikuhi - Nyeri
8. Commander Gichuki - Nyeri
9. Captain Wang'ombe - Nyeri
10. General Kihara - Nyeri
11. Regimental Sergeant Major Njagi - Nyeri
12. Major Mwarangu - Muranga
13. Lieutenant Mwanangi (Mburu wa Waweru)
14. Captain Mirugi wa Karanja
15. Comrade Kirio wa Mugacha.

The meeting was addressed by Captain Wang'ombe, General Commander Kihara and Commander Gichuki. The guerrillas were pleased with what the speakers said; they were especially glad to know that there was to be a KLFA General Conference in Nyandarwa on 23 December, and that they had been

invited to send a delegation. In this connection, they selected the following commanders to be their representatives at the KLFA conference:

1. Colonel Kibe wa Kimani
2. Captain Gikuhi
3. Lieutenant Mwanangi
4. Sergeant-Major Shida
5. Captain Mirugi
6. Commander Kihara
7. Captain Wangware
8. Comrade Kiriro.

The meeting ended at about 5.30 pm. The following day, we left for Kibe's camp. On 17 December at about 6 pm, after saying goodbye to our comrades, we left for Karati; at about 8.30 pm, we were crossing Njabini plains. We entered Nyandarwa Forest at about 9.45 pm, and after eating we slept. The following day, we tried to find those of our comrades who operated in the region without success. When we got water, we prepared our meal and slept.

On 19th December we headed for the Mugura camp. The region was so hilly that we were completely exhausted when we arrived there. It was late in the evening and since we were so tired, we prepared our meal and went to sleep. The following day, as we were busy searching for a guerrilla camp in the region, we saw footprints. Since we were not sure whether they were the footprints of the enemy or of our comrades, Commander Kihara ordered two commanders, Captain Wangware and Gicheru wa Mukuro, to find out whether they belonged to our people. At about 11.25 am, they came back accompanied by two elderly guerrillas. They were thoroughly questioned by Commander Kihara. After he was satisfied that they were our comrades-in-arms, he ordered us to give them food. They told us that their camp was a mile and a half away, and that they had been sent out by their commander to look for food.

After we parted with the two guerrillas, Commander Kihara and comrade Kiriro went out to look for a good hideout for us to sleep in; soon after comrade Kiriro returned and ordered us to follow him. After crossing the Muruga and Gakuru Rivers, we found Commander Kihara at a deserted guerrilla camp. We figured that it had been attacked by the enemy and that was why it had been abandoned. We decided not to sleep there for security reasons; we moved to another place.

On 21 December 1954 we started on our last leg for Mihuro in Nyandarwa where the KLFA General Conference was scheduled to be held. After walking for 45 minutes, we reached a place called Mirango ya Nderi. Since Captain Wang'ombe and R.S.M. Njagi knew this region very well, they were ordered to be our guides. We reached Mihuro late in the night, and after eating our meal, we slept. At 10 am, Captain Wang'ombe, accompanied by two comrades, went out to try and find out where the conference was taking place. After a while they came back and asked us to follow them. When we

reached the place where the conference was being held, we met Field Marshal D. Kimathi, Army General Commander Abdullah, and other prominent KLFA Generals. We were very happy to join them. In the meantime, we introduced the eight Naivasha comrades who had accompanied us, and then we were given an enthusiastic welcome complete with patriotic songs.

When we gave the account of our journey to the conference, we were given a tremendous applause. We were personally congratulated by Field Marshal D. Kimathi for our noble work.

Part 2: There Will Be No Compromise

Letters to the Colonial Authorities

An Open Letter to the British Authorities

Dear Sir,

After taking a long journey, travelling throughout Africa and Palestine for three months, I have found that many things have changed and evil has increased a great deal. For the return of peace and the birth of a new Kenya, I have told all leaders of our army in the forest to stop fighting from 1st August 1953. General Kahi-Itina, who is a special leader, is now under arrest for attacking Kagunduini, the Tetu Location of Chief Muhoya wa Kagumba of Nyeri, without my permission. We want peace but we maintain that we must first be recognized as a people. We will always find food despite your efforts to stop us from getting it.

As a member of the Defence Council of the whole of Africa, and the President of its branch in Kenya, I ask the [Colonial] Government to withdraw all its armed forces—the police, the KAR troops etc.—from all areas of our country and stop the European settlers from hunting in the forest; then fighting will cease and racial cooperation will be established. I am telling you very clearly that there is no Mau Mau; since the poor man is Mau Mau, it is only Mau Mau which can finish Mau Mau, not bombs and other weaponry.

Because of the [Colonial] Government's policy of moving people without any consideration, and of harassing them in the Reserves, many people have come to the forest for fear of being killed or badly beaten. As a result, Mau Mau has increased a thousand times and now I am glad that I have many soldiers.

When KAU (Kenya African Union) was proscribed, I congratulated the [Colonial] Government because I received many *askaris*. Many Africans who were confined in Nairobi said they had been given a good reason to follow me in the forest. Every week and every month, I received many people in my office coming from Nairobi, Nakuru and other small towns.

1. If people are being wantonly attacked in the towns and even in the reserves, how can they put up with it without running into the forest?
2. If the police and KAR and Homeguards withhold food who can put up

There Will Be No Compromise

with hunger?

3. If there is no political organization here in Kenya why should everyone not side with Mau Mau?
4. If colour discrimination continues in Kenya, will the Africans, who have eyes, ears and a brain, remain the underdog?
5. It is better to die than to live in misery; why should we put up with suffering in our hearts?

Now it is the responsibility of the [Colonial] Government to see whether [what I have said is], true or not. The foundation of lawful cooperation is also the foundation of peace, wealth and progress. . .

Why should the [Colonial] Government not believe me? I am certain after next month, it will.

Yours,
Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi

Editor's note: A copy of this letter was sent to the editor of *Habari za Dunia* for publication. The letter reached the editor, W.W.W. Awori, on Monday, 26 August 1953; on the following day, he handed it over to the police. Speaking to the *East African Standard* about the letter, Awori said:

It is the only [letter] we have received from Dedan Kimathi. I am sure the signature is authentic because I know the writing. Kimathi was at one time a branch secretary of the Kenya African Union. The letter was dated 14 August, and written with a ball-pen. The address appears to be the Ihururu Location of Nyeri. It was delivered through the normal post office channels, and although the franking on the envelope is not very clear, it appears to be Nyeri. I have been wondering whether it is a copy of a letter sent to the Governor, but I am not sure. I cannot understand the use of the date 1 August, as the date to end the fighting, [and even] his reference to the defence council of all Africa is an enigma to me, as is his visit to Palestine.

The colonial newspaper, the *East African Standard*, published a distorted copy of this letter on 28 August 1953.

The District Commissioner
P.O. Box 32
Nyeri

21 May 1954

Dear Sir,

This is to inform you that if the [Colonial] Government wants to communicate with me about a peace settlement, it should do so through my mother. The communication should be given to Senior Chief Muhoya, who will pass it to Headman Joshua Wakabe, who will then hand it personally to my

mother. This is one of the ways by which I can be contacted.

The other way to communicate with me is to organize a special letter box near the liberated territory which we could use as a point of contact. However, if your Government wants to write to me directly, my address is:

Field Marshal Sir D. Kimathi (KCAE)
GMK Ngobo Office
P.O. Karuri
Ngamune

Please inform the [Colonial] Government officials, particularly the British Commander-in-Chief, General George Erskine, about this communication.

To make my position clear, peace can be restored in this lovely land only if your Government withdraws its armed forces from our country unconditionally.

Best regards,
D Kimathi

Sir Frederick Crawford
Acting Governor of Kenya
P.O. Secretariat
Nairobi

A.G.M. Chumali
P.O. Box 32
Nyeri
23 May 1954

Dear Sir,

The consistent murder of unarmed Kenyans, the administration of an anti-Mau Mau oath to the peasants in Central Kenya and the Rift Valley, the imposition of a dusk-to-dawn curfew throughout the country, the confiscation of our livestock, the burning of our homes, and the destruction of the crops in the field, is clear evidence that the principal intention of your government is to use atrocities to force our people to submit to your inhuman rule.

To put it simpler language, we consider you, the Chief Native Commissioner, PCs, DCs, and the Colonial African Chiefs, as our principal enemy, and we will make every effort to destroy you.

Finally, we want to make it clear that the majority of our people support Mau Mau against your government, which is based on oppression and exploitation.

A.G.M.

Copy to:
Hon. E.W. Mathu
Hon. W.W.W. Awori
Chief Native Commissioner

The Magistrate
Supreme Court
P.O. Nairobi

P.O. Box 32
Nyeri
28 May 1954

Dear Sir,

I, A.G.M. Chumali, hereby file a case against the persons whose names appear below for being the managers and organizers of an unlawful oath ceremony. The accused have set up an unlawful society whose aims are to engineer civil war amongst the Gikuyu.

The names of the accused are:

1. Sir Frederick Crawford
2. George Erskine, the C-in-C
3. E.A. Sweatman, PC, Southern Province
4. Mr Johnstone, PC Central Province
5. R.E. Wainwright
6. C.F. Alkins, DC.

Kindly send the forms to file the case. Names of witnesses will be inserted on the forms when they are received.

Yours sincerely,
A.G.M. Chumali

Editor's note: The anti-Mau Mau oath campaign was the brainchild of Lord Delamere. It was endorsed by a white settlers' conference which was held in Nakuru on 20 January 1953. To quote the *East African Standard*:

A delegate conference of white settlers, at a meeting at Nakuru, today adopted a plan to try to settle the Kenya emergency by making all Kikuyu employees swear an oath of loyalty to the Queen.

The suggestion was made by their chairman, Lord Delamere, who was presiding at a meeting of the recently-formed United Kenya Protection Association.

Lord Delamere suggested that within the next three weeks every employer of Kikuyu labour in the settled areas should hold meetings which should be attended by a Resident Magistrate. The meetings would be formal, with the Union Jack and a picture of the Queen displayed, and every Kikuyu would be asked to take the oath of allegiance to the Queen and renounce Mau Mau.

Each Kikuyu should be photographed at this ceremony and issued with an armband bearing the number of his photograph. Any Kikuyu, without an armband, would be suspect and liable to arrest.

With the support of the colonial authorities this anti-Mau Mau oath campaign was extended to Nairobi and Central Province.

Letters to the Colonial Chiefs and Headmen

Land Freedom Army
HQ Nyandarwa
28 May 1954

Dear Chief Kabucho,

Ndaguthaitha na nguo cia nyukwa that you stop suppressing Mau Mau. If you continue, I will have you eliminated. Also tell Chief Gichuhi, Gichiriri, Samuel Wamunduru, Lazaro Waichigo, Mbiro Mugathi, Mwithuka Thaiya, Headman Richard Njoroge Njau, Wanjohi Kimani, Mwangi Karogi, Giathirithi Giathi, Hosea Wainaina, Douglas Rigitari, Murimi Njau, Muchiui Kamau, Josphat Kamanda, Ngari Gichamu, Mwaura Kinyanjui, William Gitu, Daniel Kariithi, Dahara Kariho and Joshua Nyangui that if they continue supporting the British in killing our people and destroying their property, I will order their extermination. They have probably forgotten the lesson of Lari.

I am sending this letter with the clear understanding that you will read it and take what I have said seriously. It really makes my blood boil to see our own people supporting the British who have occupied our country and reduced us to slavery.

We pay taxes, and yet we are not allowed to make decisions concerning policies for this country. How long shall we continue to pay poll-tax, and still continue to allow ourselves to be killed and our property to be confiscated?

We are fighting in order to liberate our people and country. For those who stand in our way '*no kinya tumonorie*'. We will crush them together with their families like we did in Lari.

Let me emphasize this: If you want me to come to Kiambu, continue to suppress women and children. Don't you read newspapers to find out that we are winning this war? Can't you understand that your support of the British is a betrayal of your own people? Why do you want to die as a traitor?

In conclusion, let me say this: there is nothing which does not have its end. What I mean, in short, is that this war will end in our favour and, consequently, those who have betrayed our country and murdered our compatriots in support of the foreign occupiers will pay the ultimate price.

It is better to die for your country because the people will remember

you forever.

F.M. Sir D. Kimathi

Dear Headman. . .

First accept my greetings; after this listen carefully to what I am going to say.

If you want to live try and behave like Chief Muhoya. I mean you should be neutral in this war. First of all, I don't want you to patrol at night because your men are harassing women and children; I have witnessed this several times when I passed through that area. However, despite your criminal act I have ordered my men not to eliminate you, but to seize your cattle as a form of punishment. But if you don't take this warning seriously, I will have no other choice but to cut you down.

I really pity all of you who are collaborating with the British – the enemy of our country. Being surrounded by trenches, daily parades and subjugated by rigid colonial orders, you suffer more than those of us who are championing the people's cause. But why suffer for crumbs? How terrible it is to die as a traitor!

I would like all of us, including yourself, to unite as a people in order to fight for our land and freedom. True, our sacrifice will be great and many of our compatriots will fall, but we will definitely reach our goal – we will win this war. And if we all die, the coming generations will pick up the banner and continue the struggle.

This is all I wanted to tell you. Please don't bother women and children any more.

Dedan Kimathi,
Supreme Commander of the KLFA.
Nyandarwa 1954

Chief Kugudo Kavido,

Many greetings to you, your father, mother, and children. I am appealing to you to assist all Gikuyu who are forcibly brought there by the British authorities. Would you ask the other chiefs in the area to do the same.

I also want you to organize the Pokot youths in your area to join the Kenya Land Freedom Army in order to fight for land and freedom. Remember how [the British] mercilessly killed many Pokot youths, including our compatriot Lukas, during the Baringo confrontation. You are also aware that Europeans have taken our land, cattle, goats, and sheep. More and more are grabbed every month. This is clear proof that Europeans are our principal enemy.

As soon as the Pokot youths join the struggle against our common enemy,

I will supply them with firearms. Once we free our motherland, the Pokot and other [nationalities] will have enough land to graze their livestock and to cultivate.

I think these few lines are enough. Your friends, Kagiri wa Ngumo and Mirigu, send their regards. Kagiri is planning to visit you in the near future. He is now a great Captain in our liberation army.

Yours,
Dedan Kimathi

23 May 1954

Dear Chief Philip Kioko,

This is to inform you that I have dispatched General Vido to that region with an army of 1500 strong. He is in the Yatta area at the moment. If you want to save your life, you should be careful how you treat General Vido and his army. My advice is that you should take a neutral stand in this war, as Chief Muhoya has done, otherwise General Vido will not hesitate to cut off your head.

The British are the enemy of our people and it is about time that we Africans united against these foreign robbers. Remember that many Wakamba youths were slaughtered during the two World Wars fighting for the British; but what did the Wakamba get for their bravery and loyalty? Their reward was to have their cattle, goats, and sheep confiscated for the benefit of the White Settlers.

For this reason, I am asking you not to be taken in by British propaganda. Mau Mau is the cry of a people suffering from poverty and exploitation. It is a vehicle to liberate our country – to regain the Kenyan soil which the Europeans have occupied by force. You should encourage the Wakamba youths to join Mau Mau; this will strengthen our position and, above all, help us to dislodge these foreign robbers from our land.

If war is bad Europeans would not have been fighting. In other words, war for the liberation of one's country is a just war.

Marshal D. Kimathi

Letters to Tanganyika

To Arusha

23 May 1954

Dear Mr Sylvanus Kaaya,

This is a fair warning to you not to harass the Gikuyu who are in that area. The Gikuyu are good people who are being oppressed by Europeans; a people whose land, cattle and other wealth have been forcibly confiscated.

You are not such a fool as to ignore the fact that your people have also been oppressed by settlers. You are a great chief; it is therefore your duty to think about your people first. Let our two peoples unite and fight against this slavery.

The land which the White Settlers have occupied here in Kenya is ours; our intention is hence to unite all of our people, and to fight until this land is returned to us. For this reason do not treat the Gikuyu as your enemies but as your friends. I once tried to set up a political organization on behalf of the Wameru in Tanganyika, but the forces of imperialism cut me off.

In conclusion, think about your country and the freedom of the African. Do not be deceived by the money or sweet words from these White robbers; they are nothing but bloodsuckers.

I am the Commander-in-Chief of all Kenya Armies.

Marshal D. Kimathi

P.O. Tanga
Tanganyika

23 May 1954

Dear Mr Salehe Kibwana,

I hope you are well. I understand that you are collaborating with the Kenya settlers to harass and arrest the Gikuyu for being members of Mau Mau.

I would like to inform you that what is being referred to as Mau Mau is a genuine struggle of the African people against British slavery. As an African, therefore, you should not support the British against the Gikuyu. Don't you

believe in the struggle for land and freedom?

It is not true that we are against civilization, that our aims are to take our people back to ancient times. Our fighting is for the return of our stolen land and freedom. If you can remember, the Europeans have occupied our best land and have also reduced us to slavery.

We are not savages or murderers as the British continue to claim. We know what we are doing; and we know what is best for our people.

It is in this connection that I ask you not to be blinded by British lies, propaganda or money. I think you, and Mr. Mohamed Ali, and Mr. M.M. Kihere, are the patriotic leaders of the African people. You are the only leaders who can organize the people to fight for land and freedom in that region. But it is better to know that freedom does not come through love but through fierce struggle. In short, the journey to freedom is full of sacrifices: tears, hunger, clothes full of lice, blood and death.

Imagine the thousands of Africans who lost their lives during the two World Wars. What did they die for, and did we benefit from these Wars? Our reward was slavery.

Furthermore, it is important to understand that all this love that the British preach is nothing but a cover for our exploitation. In reality, the British colonialists hate us and wish us death. In this connection, I urge you to unite with us to fight for our freedom. Let us offer our own lives for the freedom of our people. If we sacrifice our lives for our country, our people will never forget us. They will immortalize our names.

On my part, I consider myself a great African patriot fighting, not for the liberation of Kenya alone, but for East Africa and the rest of the continent. I believe that the liberation of [Nigeria or] any other African country will strengthen our liberation.

Field Marshal Sir D. Kimathi

P.O. Tanga
Tanganyika

23 May 1954

Chief Olkarsia Safania Smeli,

Warm greetings.

I am writing to request you not to cooperate with the Europeans who are mistreating the Gikuyu, for the Gikuyu people are fighting for the liberation of the Kenyan people. Mau Mau is, therefore, the backbone of that struggle.

We would also like you to know that we are not only fighting for the liberation of Kenya, but of East Africa as a whole. In this regard, your support will strengthen our force.

With these few lines, I am asking you to treat the Gikuyu people as freedom fighters – support them against the common enemy.

It is better to die than to live in misery and slavery.

Marshal D. Kimathi,
The Leader of the War in Kenya.

Terms for Negotiation

General China to Dedan Kimathi

General China W.I.
16 February 1954

Dear D. Kimathi,
Greetings as usual.

I am writing to tell you about the development of the situation since I was captured. As you have already heard, I was shot by the enemy in the battle on 15 January 1954 and captured. The bullet passed through the veins on my neck; even my throat was seriously injured. I could hardly breathe properly.

On 3 February 1954, I was sentenced to death by the [British] court at Nyeri. I have appealed against my sentence but I don't know whether they will accept my appeal. However, whatever they decide does not matter much to me. At any rate, as soon as I hear from you I will let you know their final decision.

I have had several talks with [Colonial] government officials, and I have given them a letter to send to the governor. During our discussions, they asked me why you lead terrorists, and what prevents them from surrendering. I told them that they don't surrender because they fear being killed. In this regard, I tried to enlighten them on the mistakes they make when they capture the freedom fighters, particularly the guerrilla leaders, and kill them instead of talking to them in order to know the reason behind the fighting and how it can be stopped. Furthermore, I told them that if they want guerrillas to surrender, they should remove their armed forces from the 'reserve' as a gesture of good will or compromise. But there are some questions they asked me concerning this issue. That is, if they remove their armed forces from the reserves, what will happen to the '*thata cia bururi*'? What will happen to those who collaborated with the [Colonial] Government? I told them that I could not give them definite answers to these questions until I had consulted you.

In the meantime, I agreed with the British officials that it was possible

to arrange a conference in order to discuss our surrender. We agreed that four guerrilla leaders (two from Nyandarwa and two from Kirinyaga) should attend the surrender conference. The British Government would send its own four representatives: two will be appointed by the Governor; General Erskine will appoint the other two. They have assured me that if these guerrilla leaders attend the conference they will not be harmed or arrested, and that they will be allowed to return to the forest to report the proceedings of the conference, but they have made it clear that I will not be released until all of you have come out of the forest.

In connection with this the [British Government] would like to know your position on the following questions:

1. Are you willing to accept a ceasefire so that the negotiations to end the war can start?
2. Do you think it is appropriate to send four guerrilla leaders to attend the surrender conference?
3. In regard to the fact that the [British Government] is calling for a peace conference, do you think it is trying to trick us?
4. What are your terms for negotiations?

In conclusion, I want you to understand the reality of the situation and to realize that I am talking to you as one of the guerrilla leaders. In this case, I am insisting that we agree to attend the surrender conference. One thing is certain: if the negotiations fail to take place, if we refuse to surrender, the British are determined to continue fighting. My views are that if we don't negotiate for surrender now, there will not be any other chance. Remember we are fighting both Europeans and Africans.

Please give me your views regarding these important issues. You can contact me through the following address:

W.I. Kimani
P.O. Box. 21
Naro Maro

I use this address so that the Europeans on the farms will not confiscate the letters. You know they don't want such things.

Goodbye,
Yours,
General China.

Kimathi's Reply to General China's Letter

This letter was sent directly to the British authorities. It states:

These are the answers to your questions:

1. If the [British Forces] withdraw from the countryside we will not kill

'*thata cia bururi*'. The basic reason is that we know that many of them are victims of British propoganda. Generally, we believe in reconciliation and harmony between races. . .

2. Many Africans, including those who are helping the [British] Government in this war, generally long to see peace restored in the country. We believe that the unconditional withdrawal of your armed forces from the country, particularly from the African Reserves, will restore peace in the nation and cooperation among the people.
3. Those of other races – especially Indians and Arabs – who have sided with your Government' in this war will have to leave the country when we regain our self-government. The rest have nothing to fear; they are welcome to stay.
4. I don't lead terrorists, I lead Africans who want their self-government and land. I lead them because God (Ngai) never created any nation to be ruled by another nation forever. Furthermore, we cannot allow anybody to deprive us of our [birthright]. If any one wants to take our [birthright] away, he has first to kill all of us. Terrorists are persons who commit evil deeds, while we do the opposite. Of course, the [Colonial] Government is practising terrorism and continuing to commit barbaric acts against our people, hence it has no right whatsoever to call us terrorists.
5. The call for peace negotiations is a dirty trick to kill my guerrilla fighters. We cannot forget that after our gentlemanly agreement of 8 August 1953 that both sides should observe a ceasefire while peace negotiations were going on, your government took advantage of this, arrested and murdered several of my best men.
6. My soldiers will never leave these forests until the British Government accepts our demands:
 1. disarms its forces unconditionally;
 2. releases all the political prisoners;
 3. recognizes our country's independence.

These are our terms for negotiations.

Field Marshal D. Kimathi

EF1/3/3/620

Release the KAU Leaders

On 3 April 1954, Kimathi issued another statement concerning the peace negotiations. Copies of this statement were sent to Governor Baring, General Erskine, the British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee and the Prime Minister of Russia. Several copies of this statement were circulated in Nairobi and were published by different newspapers in the city. The Citizen, a Nairobi weekly newspaper, was one of them. The statement was signed by Kimathi's

private secretary:

1. If the ceasefire is to be arranged with immediate effect, our people here are only ready to listen to the African leaders now in detention camps. It is only the release of these leaders that would convince [us] and the world that the [British] Government really wants peace.
3. It is useless to expect the African members of the Legislative Council to conduct such negotiations. It must be borne in mind that up to now they are not our chosen representatives, they are [Colonial] Government African nominated members. How can you expect us to have confidence in them? When matters come to a head, they have no public to turn to for a vote of confidence.
4. General China is a sensible man, but we must state in no uncertain terms that we will not be moved by his pleas unless he and the [British] Government agree to the *Charter* issued last year by F.M. Dedan Kimathi.
5. China is one of the qualified Generals in Kenya. We therefore thank the Governor of Kenya, Sir Baring, and General Erskine for the thoughtful way in which they have treated our honoured general. But we stress that it is absolute nonsense to reorganize the Government of Kenya today without first acting upon the points raised in the *Charter*.
6. We are not fighting for an everlasting hatred but are trying to create a true and real brotherhood between white and black, so that we may be regarded as people, as human beings who can do each and every thing.
7. No green branches will be raised in Kenya. In other words, there will be no ceasefire until our demands are met.

Part 3: Firmly Demand the Total Withdrawal of British Forces from Our Country

Letters to the Kenya Parliament

The Liquidators Must Be Fought

To the Kenya Parliament

Just a brief note to inform you about what is happening with us down here. We are working day and night for our people and country.

According to our intelligence task force, there are liquidators bent on seizing our armed organization and eliminating our genuine patriots. On 1 January 1954, for instance, General Kihiu-Itina and Kibiru attacked me and seized my gun after a struggle. They are using false accusations to justify their actions against the people. They said that I didn't lead my force well, implying that my force didn't fight the enemy as it was supposed to. They said that they wanted to reorganize the entire guerrilla army. The same day they attacked Kinyua wa Waweru and Thure wa Gitonga and took their guns.

Two weeks later, on 13 January, General Kihiu-Itina returned and showed me a letter which stated that the Marshal would be relieved of his responsibilities because of his political impotency and that he loved women too much, contrary to the rules and regulations of the movement. The letter went on to say that if we allowed the Marshal to continue with this undignified behaviour, he would turn the majority of the guerrilla women into prostitutes. He wanted me and my Force to support him and his group but I adamantly refused. I told him to bring this matter before the Parliament, but he rejected my suggestion.

Since this is a very serious matter, the KLFA Supreme Commander should take a strong stand against these renegades. Our fighting tradition dictates that we mercilessly wipe them out.

Yours comradely,
Commander Ruanjane

A Warning Circular

To the Kenya Parliament

There is an unconfirmed report that the enemy is organizing a major attack on us: ground and air forces will be used during this attack. It is likely that the enemy offensive will start on 4 May 1954, but this is not definite.

My advice, therefore, is that our forces should take precautions and be ready to punish these killers of innocent people.

Similarly, it has been confirmed that the British are bringing in 2,000 more soldiers in their effort to strengthen their shaky forces in the country. The soldiers will be arriving here in May. With the bringing in of these thousands of soldiers, it is definitely true that the British authorities are contemplating genocide against our people.

However, I am certain that the strength of our struggle will force the British to accept our demands: land and freedom.

That is all I wanted you to know.

May God (*Ngai*) be with you always.

Your Comrade,
Colonel Wamugunda.
25 April 1954

The Kinangop-Kinyumi Army Unit

To the Kenya Parliament

This is to inform you that the troops operating in the Kinangop-Kinyumi region are under General Muraya wa Mbuthia, and that these are their difficulties:

1. Lack of clothes and medicine.
 - (a) Right now there are more than 15 comrades with bullet wounds, but there is no medicine to treat them.
 - (b) Several comrades are in rags. They particularly need heavy coats, for this place is extremely cold.
2. Our greatest complaint is that things which are sent through the Murang'a Front do not reach us. We would like the Parliament to investigate this issue.

KLFA Battalions and their Commanders

To the K.P. members

This is the report you had asked me to circulate. I apologize that it could not reach you earlier than this.

1. Ituma Ndemi Battalion:
 - No. 1: General Kahiu-Itina
 - No. 2: General Kitura
2. Gikuyu Iregi Battalion:
 - No. 1: General Kago
 - No. 2: General Ihuura
 - No. 3: Brigadier Njatu
3. MEI Mathathi Battalion:
 - No. 1: General Tanganyika
 - No. 2: General Achira
 - No. 3: General Kubukubu
 - No. 4: General Bamuingi
 - No. 5: General Mwariama
4. Kenya Levellation Battalion:
 - No. 1: General Kariba
 - No. 2: General Kamami
 - No. 3: General Mukura
5. Townwatch Battalion:
 - No. 1: General Enock Mwangi
6. Highlands (Mburu) Ngebo Battalion:
 - No. 1: General Gateru
 - No. 2: General Kimbo
 - No. 3: General Muraya.

This last battalion includes all settled areas from Nanyuki, Thompson's Fall, Nakuru to Kapenguria. Everyone who came from Rift Valley before or after the outbreak of the present struggle for land and freedom must be associated with this battalion. All officers and other ranks will in future be known by the name of their battalion.

Decentralization of the KLFA Forces

To the Parliament

I hereby notify you that the undermentioned comrades have been appointed to lead the units within the Ituma Ndemi Army (INA). These arrangements are in accordance with the recent decision of the Kenya Parliament to decentralize the KLFA forces.

1st INA Commander: General Ndiritu Thuita
2nd INA Commander: General Kihara Kagumu
3rd INA Commander: Karari Njama
4th INA Commander: General Kahinga Wachanga
5th INA Commander: General Gikonyo wa Kanyungu
6th INA Commander: Major-General Ndururi wa Gititika
7th INA Commander: General Gitonga wa Muthui
Divisional Commander: Kabuga Njogu.

I hope the Parliament will accept these new arrangements. As soon as the Parliament approves these appointments, the secretary-general should stamp the letter officially and circulate it among the fighting forces immediately.

I am disappointed that I don't get answers to my letters nor do you send me newspapers. I am really puzzled about this silence.

F. Marshal D. Kimathi

Recommendation for Joining the Guerrilla Army

To the Kenya Parliament

Hannah Wamuyu is an educated and intelligent girl. She loves her country and people very much. Although many educated women cannot be trusted nowadays, Wamuyu can be. She is a committed and serious patriot.

She is a trained nurse; so she can help in reorganizing our hospitals. She can also type.

I am, therefore, recommending that she be allowed to join the Liberation Army.

Kimathi to Guerrillas

EF1/3/3/529
Kenya Land Freedom Army
HQ Nyandarwa
2 March 1954

Dear General Kago,

Many greetings.

First I want to inform you that I am proud of your courage and patriotism. If we have many leaders like you we will be able to develop our guerrilla army into an invincible force. There is no doubt—your steely leadership and revolutionary commitment are a great example to all of us.

The report you sent to the Kenya Parliament is encouraging. I strongly believe that through your leadership and commitment, we will be able to liberate Murang'a district before the end of this year. General Kariba has also forced the enemy to evacuate a large area of Nyeri district, and, according to his recent report, his strategy is to liberate the whole region by the end of the year.

From your report we also learnt about the atrocities and brutalities that the British forces are committing against our people—solely because they dared demand their human rights and the land which was stolen from them. The British talk of 'democracy', but is it democracy when hundreds of our people are sent to the cemetery for saying that they want our independence and our land back? Perhaps the British don't understand the meaning of our struggle; we have repeatedly said that we will fight until we drive them out of this land — we shall never surrender.

Did you receive the circular-letter I sent to all Front Commanders concerning General China's surrender? China has agreed to collaborate with our enemy, to work against the homeland, to save his neck. In this connection, he has told the enemy all he knows about the movement, including our military secrets. Furthermore, in order to prove his loyalty to his new friends, he has written to all Mount Kenya Front Commanders and the members of the Kenya Parliament urging them to call off the fighting and surrender to the British forces. I received a copy of his letter and when I read it, I was

filled with indignation. If China thinks that I will mortgage this great struggle to save his life, he must be crazy!

We have written to China and denounced him for his treacherous acts. We have, at the same time, made it clear to the British authorities that we will not lay down our arms until they dismantle their war machine and leave the country.

In these circumstances, my advice is simply this: you should have a general meeting with our forces and try to explain our position to them. Tell them to be more valiant and ruthless against the British effort to sell their terms of surrender to our people. During the meeting, stress the importance of unity and national patriotism and denounce China's treacherous acts simultaneously.

Be satisfied with these few lines for now. I will let you know when and where the next KLFA General Conference will be held.

Marshal Dedan Kimathi

Dear General Ihuura,

I received your report and I was happy to learn about the progress of the war on that front. The best thing to do, if the enemy intensifies its bombing, is to divide the army into small units which will be easier to scatter when the attacks come. Large camps are also dangerous because they can be surrounded easily.

I have sent the things you wanted and one copy of your report for your file.

Tell our warriors to fight with determination; there is no doubt that we will win this war no matter how long it will take.

A report I received recently informs me that the Kenya Liberation Army unit under Brigadier Nduati and Colonel Manyeki Wang'ombe is doing an excellent job in Kihoru Division. When you contact them, let them know that the Kenya Parliament is proud of their work.

F.M. Dedan Kimathi
HQ Nyandarwa

EF1/3/3/528
4 April 1954

Dear Major King'ori,

I am writing to ask you and your comrades not to be disheartened by the loss inflicted upon you by the enemy. Tell your men to have courage; tell them to remember that even if we die this war will continue and our land

will one day be free.

When I received news of the battle, I was not happy to hear that we had lost quite a number of our compatriots. However, you should know that bad luck sometimes falls on people and such losses do occur. But in spite of all this, we have made a pledge to our people never to leave these forests until our country is free. So when death occurs it should be taken as one step forward towards our goal.

Finally, I would like you to know that I received a letter from Mr. Fenner Brockway and another one from Mbiyu Koinange. Both letters support our struggle and provide us with great encouragement.

D. Kimathi

5 May 1954

Dear Colonel Wamugunda,

I have received many of your letters concerning the British policy of land consolidation. I want to make it clear that no one should accept the consolidation of his land, or support this evil policy. If any of our compatriots supports this policy, you should not hesitate to cut him down. This is an order.

We are also not going to buy the land which was stolen from us. It is a crime for any of us to discuss the land question when we are still fighting for it.

I received the following items:

1. 2 pairs of trousers;
2. 2 tents;
3. 10 socks;
4. 27 tablets of tapeworm medicine.

The money has not arrived and we have not yet received the bars of soap.

The enclosed letter belongs to Muturi 5/5. Please give it to him.

There is a woman I would like to meet. She stays at Nyangarithi, near the pig camp beyond Ruringi. Her name is Miriamu Wanjiru wa Ndegwa. Tell your wife to fetch her and take her to Lea's house. I will meet her there. In the meantime, these are the directives I would like your wife to follow:

When she arrives at Thuita's place, she must leave the road which goes to Giakanja towards Nderi's homeguard camp, and follow the one which goes to Gacatha. When she passes the pigs' house, she will see Mariamu's place; if she doesn't see the house she can ask where it is. Once she finds Mariamu, she should tell her that I want to see her.

This woman is one of the prominent leaders of our struggle. I once stayed with her in the Rift Valley before the start of armed struggle, where she was responsible for politicizing the masses. She was carrying the struggle to every big town.

I would like her to come to the forest for two weeks for a serious discussion. I want her to start organizing our women.

In the meantime, I would like to have some new trousers; I gave the ones you sent me to a guerrilla who needed them more than I did. If you are buying corduroy, please get one yard for shillings 15. It is better to spend shillings 100 on good trousers than to buy one which cannot last even for one month.

I have not yet received the money orders which I asked for. I have enclosed shillings 60. Use shillings 50 to buy me a money order. I would like to send it to India; so send it immediately.

Ask Karumaindo whether he has received any magazines and newspapers from Nairobi. Also tell him to send the books he promised me. You should also tell him to stop opening my letters.

I have informed our guerrillas that you are in charge of that region and I have told them that they should consult you if they are in the area. I think they are aware of this now.

Finally, I would like to inform you that I have sent a letter to several individuals in England concerning the justness of our struggle.

In conclusion, please forward the money order as soon as you receive this letter.

Matemo

24 May 1954

Dear Colonel Wamugunda,

Greetings as usual.

In recognition of his good work, I have promoted Comrade Thiga to the rank of Corporal, with effect from 24 May 1954. He will be known as Corporal Thiga from now on.

Though Comrade Thiga is very young (not yet 19 years of age), his dedication to the liberation of our people is well-known to all of us. It is true that '*Njamba ti ikere*'.

You should work closely with him; advise him about all aspects of his work. Give him the enclosed five shillings on behalf of the Government of *Gikuyu na Mumbi*

Marshal D.K.

Dear Colonel Wamugunda,

I do not have flour, coffee, sugar, or maize. However, so long as Wamanga is leading her group, their work should continue even at night. She is the only woman you can rely on in that area.

Wanjuki has given orders that the books and letters in your possession and the ones in Ihururu should be hidden because the enemy is planning

a search in the area.

It is better to die than to surrender.

D.K.

20 May 1954

Army Commander Magu,

I was both surprised and delighted by the letter I received from you yesterday. I would say that '*Mwana wina mureri ndariaga mai,*' or '*Iri kuuma kimamo ndicokaga*'. Let us work hard for the liberation of our people. In working for our people, we are doing God's work.

I have been informed that reading my letters is prohibited in the great city of Nairobi. If one is caught doing so, he will be severely punished. I have also heard that after reading the letter I sent them, the Russian Government has decided to lock up the British Foreign Minister. Mau Mau has become part and parcel of the struggle against imperialism in the world. I also read that they are showing a film about our struggle entitled '*Simba*'.

You should wait for us on the night of 25 May 1954, or on 26 May 1954; we are not sure whether Major Vido will be ready by 25 May. He is the only one who may delay us.

We are desperately in need of ammunition, particularly for the .303 rifles. Try to get some for us. Also tell Major Jeriko to provide us with grenades. I understand he has more than five.

As far as security preparations are concerned, order Colonel Totha and Commander King'ori to destroy the bridges at Bama School and Kinaini before our arrival. The Kinaini bridge will be a little harder to destroy because it is made of stone, but it must be destroyed. Both bridges must be destroyed tonight. The job will be easier if the Ituma and Kimuri Units get together to discharge this important duty.

See to it that there is strict discipline when the task is carried out. In this regard, only those who have been hardened by the struggle should be assigned this task.

Marshal D. Kimathi

Dear Colonel Wambararia,

How are things over there? I have received several reports from our front commanders concerning the progress of our struggle, and I am proud to say that despite his sophisticated weaponry and the support he has received from his Kenyan allies, the enemy has failed to halt our offensive. There is no doubt that enemy forces are exhausted; I think this is one of the reasons why both Governor Baring and General Erskine have constantly

been urging me to attend peace negotiations. But I have consistently told the British rulers that there will be no peace talks until they accept the following demands:

1. disarm their forces;
2. release all political prisoners;
3. recognize our country's national independence.

We will never negotiate with them until they unconditionally accept these three demands. They should know that we are not ready to sell our country for crumbs.

Recently, I have been dreaming constantly—mainly about our struggle. The other day, for instance, I dreamt that we had won the war and we marched to Nairobi with guns in our hands, where we were given a tumultuous welcome by the people. On the following day, I declared our country free and ordered the arrest of the British Governor and all those Kenyans who had helped him murder our compatriots. But I woke up before I had the chance to order their execution.

Last night I again dreamt that I was talking with our God about the struggle. It was a fantastic dream: I felt someone take hold of my hand in my sleep. I woke up and heard *Mwene-Nyaga* saying to me: 'My son, come with me'. I stood up and followed Him. We walked together, discussing our glorious struggle. We passed through a very beautiful forest where there were many red and yellow flowers and hostile birds with red wings. When these birds saw us, they started shouting: 'Kimathi we are with you! Do not give up the struggle!' There were many big shining rocks around us, and clean springs were flowing from them. Across the valley, there were thousands of women from all Kenyan [nationalities] singing songs of praise of our heroic struggle. I was really moved. We walked to a *Mugumo* tree, which was bigger and taller than all the other trees in the forest; a tree that was like the king of all trees. I rested my hand upon it, then *Ngai* spoke to me again. 'Kimathi,' he said calmly, 'this is my dwelling place and here I will guard and protect you. I will make sure that your enemy is defeated and that peace will return to this beautiful land.' Then, suddenly, the tree came up out of the ground and ascended up into the clouds and disappeared. It rained very heavily after that. The morning call for breakfast interrupted my dream and I woke up.

This is just one of my many dreams. What do you make of it?

Have you heard from home? I understand that they have arrested our mother and taken her to the Kamiti detention camp. Since Mukami [Kimathi's wife] is already there, she will take care of her. Besides, she is a courageous woman, she will fight her way through. I was also informed that they confiscated our *shamba* [land] and gave it to the homeguards. There is no question that the detention of my wife, my mother, the confiscation of our land, and the harassment of relatives and in-laws is a desperate attempt to force me to surrender. But you know my stance. I would rather die than betray our people's struggle.

I would like to write you a long letter, but I have to prepare for a session

of the Kenya Parliament. So let these few lines be enough for now.

Greet all our comrades. Tell them to fight with vigour and determination. There is no doubt that we will win this war.

Marshal D.K.

24 May 1954

Dear Colonel Wambararia,

Many greetings. We should meet before 30 May 1954. Please inform Major Thia, Captain Baragu and Lt. Gateru about this.

I have talked to Commander Ndiritu wa Thuita, Nyaga, Abdullah and a few other comrades, and they have agreed that we should get together to review our situation.

Mwangi had also told me that there is a group within the movement which is plotting to kill you, Thunjira, Ndiritu wa Thuita and myself. In a situation as serious as this, we should unite all our forces and prepare for a bloody confrontation with these liquidationist elements.

Has your illness been cured? I gave Captain Baragu sh. 30 and a pair of shoes to bring to you. Did you receive them? I also gave Captain Baragu sh. 30 for himself.

I received a letter from Kanyinga the other day. He tells me that your men went to Karunaini and took a woman by force and brought her to the forest. Order these comrades to return that woman to her home. Our rules are clear: it is a serious crime to force individuals to join the guerrilla army without their consent.

I am planning to go to Chania and I would like you to join me there. Tell Lt. Gateru to inform the four guerrilla women from Kanjora to be present when we arrive there. On their arrival there, they should go to the house of Joyce, the wife of Gikonyo wa Mahinda, who will direct them to Leah Wambu wa Mutungi's house. Under no circumstances should they fail to come. I want to assign them a very important task.

Marshal D. Kimathi

24 May 1954

Major Thia,

We are alright here. If *Ngai* is willing I shall arrive there on 26th May 1954. I think you, Muruambararia, Ndiritu, Thuita and myself should get together to discuss the war situation: how to get more guns, and how to attack the enemy forces, particularly the '*thata cia bururi*'. Find out whether it is possible to attack the Kanyinga homeguard post.

We will surely win this struggle if we stand firm and united. Our problem is now those renegades within the armed movement who are determined to undermine the struggle by killing some of us.

You should begin to get ready to go to Chania for the KLFA General Conference on 31 May 1954. I think the new woman comrade in your unit should go to the village and inform the village KLFA leaders about this important conference which they should also attend. She knows the way to Chania.

Although the other women guerrillas are trying to resent her leadership because she is a new cadre, I think that she is more politically advanced and daring than most of them.

If she does not want to go for security reasons, don't send any other woman on this mission.

That is all.

Marshal D. Kimathi

28 May 1954

Dear Comrade Maribu,

You are invited, together with other members of the KLFA Village Committee, to attend the Heroes' Day celebrations which will take place here in Nyandarwa on 6 June 1954. All our supporters—men, women, and children—are also invited.

In order to make this day a success, I am asking the following compatriots to help us with the following items:

1. Macarubu: to provide 10 loaves of bread;
2. Waithaka wa Kibutu: to provide 2 tins of coffee and 5 lbs of sugar;
3. Kihara wa Gakuo: to provide 2 bags of white flour and 2 tins of coffee;
4. Gaciri wa Muita: to provide 5 lbs of cooking oil;
5. Muhoro wa Gitongo: to provide 3 bottles of milk;
6. Gitahi wa Gacoka: 5 lbs of sugar;
7. Ndungu wa Gathuma: 5 tins of coffee;
8. Karagu: 5 lbs of sugar.

These things will be collected on 31 May 1954.

We are also asking the women to bring supplies of potatoes, yams, maize, flour, beans, and bananas. The girls are required to provide handkerchiefs to wipe off perspiration, and threads and buttons.

We are also asking Waithaka wa Muraya, Gitonya wa Ihure, and all the elders, to provide *njohi* (beer) for the ceremony.

All these things will be collected on 5 June, by Comrade Wanjuki, the compatriot who sells snuff.

Make sure that you contact these compatriots before the deadline; explain to each and every one what they are supposed to do. Tell them that this is an

order. If you fail to contact them, you will have committed a serious crime for which you will be held responsible.

Marshal D. Kimathi

Dear Maingi wa Thuita,

Greetings. You will assume, with immediate effect, the post of a headman and KLFA Village Committee leader. Make sure that you do not sell the community for money. Any attempt, or even the thought, of betraying the people is an unforgiveable crime.

Your main tasks will be as follows:

1. To protect young boys from being killed or used as spies by our enemy.
2. To help women whose husbands are in the forest, have been detained, or have been killed by the enemy.
3. To collect clothing and food for guerrillas.
4. To collect KLFA subscriptions from the people. Men should pay shs. 62/50; young unmarried women, shs. 32/50; married women, shs. 11/50; and young girls and boys over three years old, shs. 2.
5. To organize the village against our enemy and opportunists.

That is all,

Marshal D. Kimathi.

Nyandarwa HQ

Dear *Bwana* (Mr) Muturi 5/5,

Many greetings. Why don't you reply to my letters? Does this mean you don't want to work for our country? If you have agreed to work for our people, as Colonel Wamugunda has told me, I would advise you to forward your full name, the name of your clan, location, sub-location, division, and district. This information must reach the Kenya Parliament in Nairobi before you start working for the movement.

Since Colonel Wamugunda has recommended you highly in terms of your commitment and dedication, I will attach you to him. In fact, I have already told him to work closely with you and to assist you in all your endeavours. The cadres who will be under your leadership must be well-guided politically, and hardened enough to be able to defend the struggle from being destroyed. Apart from that, your primary duty is to protect and defend Gikuyu *na* Mumbi – our men, women, and children – from the enemy's attacks. The loss of one of them is a great loss to our country. It is also your duty to see that the rules and regulations of the movement are followed. Furthermore, it is your responsibility to supply the guerrilla army with war materials and with information concerning the enemy's war efforts.

Work very hard for the people; work without the fear of death, for we will all die one day. Besides, to die for one's country is to live forever.

To conclude, I am looking forward to your support, after which I shall render you my services.

Supreme Commander of the Kenya Army

Chief of Staff Major Vido,

I am not happy because I haven't heard a word from you in the last two days. The war situation on our side is not bad, but my worry is that there are some units which have run out of food and clothing. My suggestion, therefore, is that we should try to help each other by sharing what we have. I have sent some field secretaries to see that this is accomplished before 18 July 1954.

Right now, the important thing is to get together and re-examine our war strategy. I feel that we should intensify our propaganda in the whole country and the world in general. In this connection our propaganda should be concentrated more on the Kenyan youths and children. By so doing, we will form an invincible national army.

In the meantime, try to see me so that we can arrange everything.

Marshal D. Kimathi

Land Freedom Army
HQ Nyandarwa

Dear 122 Kahiukogi,

Greetings. I was informed by Kamakoloni that you are working hard on the assignment given to you by the Kenya Parliament. I told him to tell you that you should put all your efforts into it because this work is very significant for the future generations. It should be done with care and dedication. Meanwhile, I would like to have the names of all the comrades you are working with. Also send me the names of their locations, clans and sub-locations for our records.

To come back to the subject of my letter, the work you are doing is significant because it will help the future Kenyan historians understand the heroism of the Mau Mau movement. In this case, our activities should be examined, documented and arranged as follows:

List all the names of those compatriots (men, women, and children) who have been murdered by the enemy since the beginning of the war. Their locations, clans and sub-locations should also be listed.

- List the names of our detained compatriots, their locations, clans and sub-locations.
- Record the names of the partisans who are supporting the struggle in a region.
- List the names, including their locations, sub-locations and clans, of those who have sided with the enemy against our people.

Make sure that everyone who has taken part, for and against this struggle, is included in this historical document.

As soon as you have documented everything, send the books to me for vetting. This should be done every month.

We need some books, pens and pencils. Please send them to us, together with anything else you think can help us up here.

I am looking forward to your reply.

Field Marshal D. Kimathi

Dear Colonel Wamugunda,

Greetings.

Try to put every effort in organizing food for the guerrillas. We need plenty of ammunition because I don't want to see the guerrillas walking around with empty rifles. The cadre who goes to Nyeri town for ammunition should go more regularly. . . .

. . . send me the following books:

1. *Napolean Book of Fate:* sh. 7.75
2. *Zadkiel's Book of Dreams:* sh. 7.75
3. *Universal Dream Book:* sh. 4.75
4. *Tricks with Cards:* sh. 3.75
5. *Fortune Teller Book:* sh. 5.00
6. *Complete Letter Writer:* sh. 7.75
7. *How to Live a 100 Years:* sh. 6.75
8. *Dreams and Omens:* sh. 3.75

total sh. 47.25

Other things I want are:

1. Corduroy trousers, size 30 x 44 x 17: sh. 35.00
2. Corduroy trousers, size 29 x 47 x 17: sh. 35.00
3. File covers: sh. 10.00
4. Large duplicate book: sh. 7.00
5. Typing paper: sh. 10.00
6. Carbon paper: sh. 2.50

. . . No General has any authority to come to the village and ask the people for money or food. He must tell the village KLFAs Commander what he

Demand Withdrawal of British Forces . . .

wants. Make sure that anything taken away by the guerrillas is recorded for future compensation. Tell our partisans not to offer any money to guerrillas without your authority. . .

D.K.

Guerrillas to Kimathi

Kirima Kia Igongona
P.O. Box 29
Nyandarwa
12 September 1953

To the leader of G.M. Land Freedom Army,

Many greetings. I am glad to have this opportunity to inform you that I am still alive.

I was delighted when I received your last letter. I was not able to attend the consultative meeting of 9 August 1953 because of reasons beyond my control. Please accept my sincere apologies.

In the meantime, I would like to let you know that the people you sent to brief me about the proceedings of the meeting were not able to give me a concrete report. Each gave a different version of what he heard and saw. Consequently, I still don't know what we agreed upon at the meeting, and what new line of organization my force should adopt. Please send us the minutes of the meeting immediately.

When are you coming to visit this front? I would like to have a serious discussion with you concerning the reorganization of our fighting forces and the drawing up of a new war strategy. From my own experience, I think there is a need to weed out harmful elements within the guerrilla army. In this connection, there is a great need to draw up a general code of discipline for our guerrilla army to follow. I have found out that there are some individual guerrillas in my own force who refuse to submit to our discipline, and there are others who don't understand the necessity of carrying out directives to the letter; serious errors are committed as a result.

It is clear that the lack of discipline among our men, the lack of unity in our forces, and the lack of a serious attitude toward the struggle will strengthen the enemy's position and isolate us from our principal supporters — the workers and peasants.

In short, lack of discipline and petty complaints among the guerrillas have dampened my fighting spirit; sometimes I am so disappointed that I can hardly eat. For this reason, I need your help and advice.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter. In the meantime, let me know when we can meet. All our troops and their leaders should come up to this side, if possible, so that we can hold a general conference.

Goodbye,
Kimbo Mutuku

EF1/3/3/601
Wanja wa Gitonga
c/o Ihwa
Tetu Location
Nyeri
18 November 1953

Dear D. Kimathi,

I understand that you want to know why I decided to join the armed struggle. This is exactly what happened: a homeguard called Muhindi sent his brother, Karangui wa Kariuki, to try and persuade me to marry him, but I refused because I didn't know him. I was also not in love with him.

After I rejected his marriage proposal, Muhindi wrote a letter to my father telling him that we had agreed to marry, which was a lie. When they finally met, my father agreed to receive dowry from Muhindi despite my strong objection. He was given shs. 2,000. I decided to come to the forest in protest. I had resolutely decided not to be married to my enemy, the enemy of my country. I entered the forest on 25 September 1953.

I would like to know whether you approve of my action.

Wanja

F. Marshal D. Kimathi,

I received your letter of 12 December 1953, safely. I agree with you that a leader's inefficiency is of great harm to the entire force. As a matter of fact, it was this kind of inefficiency that cost Comrade Musa his life.

I have already sent one of my best men to reorganize Musa's unit.

We have to set up camp at a place called 'Free State', but we have not established good contacts with the peasants; we need your advice on this. Please write to us this weekend.

I have some gifts for you: 15 cigarettes; 10 envelopes; a copy of *Kenya Weekly News*; 4 copies of *E.A. Standard*; a copy of *Kihoto*; a copy of *Jicho*; two copies of *Habari Za Dunia*; two boxes of matches.

In the meantime, pass my greetings to Mungai, Podo, Juma Abdullah and the rest of the fighters.

Tigwo na Wega (best regards)

Guthera wa Mwiria.

Dear D.K. *Matemo*,

Greetings as usual. I am sorry for not having written to you for such a long time. I have lately been very busy with my work.

In an attempt to force our people to surrender, the homeguards, armed with sophisticated weapons, have nightly been committing rape, torture and murder. Some of our weaker supporters have consequently been forced to collaborate secretly with our enemy; those who love money and good food have also joined the enemy army and are working against their people's interests. My greatest fear at the moment is that even some of our cadres have started vacillating. One such cadre is Mwangi wa Ngunga, whose home is not far from here. Since he knows many of our supporters and cadres, he would do irreparable damage to the movement if he were to cross over to the enemy's side. He would have all of us arrested and killed.

I have indirectly raised the subject with him, explaining how important it is to serve our people and country. Since we know how dangerous he would be if he were to surrender, I suggest that you write him a letter praising him for his revolutionary work and promote him to a higher rank for the sake of the struggle. I think your letter will definitely hold him on to our side until we are strong enough to cut him down.

I have sent all the things you had requested except the money orders. I could not buy the money orders because of a shortage of funds. As usual, our *rule* is that we should pay for everything we take from our supporters, otherwise they will withdraw their support.

There are strong rumours that the British authorities will try to make some political reforms in the country in their effort to weaken and paralyse our struggle. They will announce these new changes by 15 July 1954. Although they will not admit it, the strength of our argument and our fighting efforts have forced them to begin thinking seriously about the political future of this country. However, they should realize that we have sworn under oath, and in the name of our ancestors, that we shall never rest until we drive them out of our country, regain our land and independence.

What I am saying in short is that you should reject these bogus reforms categorically and demand the total withdrawal of the British forces from our country. You have the support of the majority of our people.

Goodbye,
Colonel Wamugunda

6 May 1954

Dear Marshal,

Greetings as usual.

I no longer maintain personal contacts with 'K' but I communicate with him through Reuben; I don't trust him, and I think he may betray me. However, I have tried to persuade him to support the struggle through our indirect contact, but it seems as if he is no longer sure of himself. He vacillates.

In the meantime, I think we should continue working underground in the village in separate cells instead of all of us working openly. Some of our comrades pose a great danger in the sense that they can betray us if they are arrested and tortured by the enemy.

Thai Thathaiya Ngai Thai
Colonel Wamugunda

17 May 1954

To D.K.,

This is just to say hello to our comrades. I am fine and well although I don't know whether I will be alive tomorrow. There is a Gikuyu proverb which says '*muthigani uri nja ndahonaga*'. What I mean is that one of our cadres, Karuga, has secretly sold out to the enemy. I received this information from his own son, Wangai. The information is reliable because I don't think Wangai is against his father.

Under these circumstances I am afraid that I may be arrested or killed. In their attempts to force me to give them the secrets of the movement, the enemies may torture me mercilessly. But they will soon realize that I am as hard as steel, that I would rather die than turn a traitor.

My advice is that you should try and come to my house as soon as I am arrested and remove any materials which connect me to the movement. But Karuga should not be killed soon after I have been picked up, otherwise the enemy will try to link his death with my arrest. He is certainly very dangerous to our struggle and he should be eliminated as soon as you know about my fate.

If I am not arrested, I'm thinking of going deeper underground for a while in the coming month to try and assess the situation. Comrade Makeru will take my place.

That is all. Because of the importance of this letter, please acknowledge receipt.

Goodbye,
Col. Wamugunda

EF1/3/3/103

1 June 1954

Dear Marshal D.K.,

Many greetings. How are you?

First I must inform you that Nyeri town is under a tight curfew and nobody, not even a woman, can go there without a road pass. So, as you can guess, the situation is very bad. It is now very difficult to get or purchase arms or ammunition in Nyeri town. But don't let this worry you. I will try to get into the town come what may.

At any rate, the piece of cloth you wanted is enclosed. It cost a hundred shillings. I had asked our contacts in Nyeri town to buy it, but they were slow in doing so; so I purchased it myself.

Also enclosed is the medicine for toothache which you had requested, plus seven rounds of ammunition. We have not received most of the ammunition and other war material from our contacts in Nyeri town; we are still waiting for them, and we will send them as soon as we receive them. Many of our cadres in Nyeri town are doing a wonderful job for the movement.

The last time I was in the town to pick up some ammunition I met a guerrilla fighter from your home area, and I was told he was a deputy to General Tanganyika. He frightened me at first because he wore the enemy's uniform.

There is something important I would like to share with you. I hope you won't mind. As the Supreme Commander of the KLFA armed forces and the leader of the movement, you should be very careful and more disciplined in what you do. Every step you take should be well calculated. In fact, you should always suspect those you meet, including your own relatives. I have noticed that you are very liberal when you are among the partisans, specifically the women. According to Gikuyu and Mumbi customs, we don't disclose our secrets to women, but since the Europeans came women know men's secrets. I would like you to know that since August 1952, I have never told my secrets to any woman in order to make her happy.

As I have already observed, you have a tendency to talk a lot when you are in the company of partisan women, and I think this is very dangerous. Of course, it is nice to be in the company of women, but we cannot afford that luxury until we have driven these foreign robbers out of our country. In short, what I am trying to say is that discipline and secrecy are our greatest weapons in this *unequal* war.

Needlessly to say you are the flesh and blood of this struggle; if something happens to you (arrest or death), this movement will definitely collapse.

We had a meeting with homeguard Muhoya who asked us to tell you to surrender to the British authorities, so that the war would end. He talked about the humanity of the British, and how they wanted this war to end, but we knew that all this talk was a ploy to get you arrested and

then killed, in order to weaken our people's determination.

By the way, did you get the letter discussing the Kanyugo affair? How about the money you promised me? When you get some please send it to me. Let me know whether you need a container to put it in.

Please send me the books belonging to William Muturi and Henia — I want to read them. I don't want you to trust the persons whose books I sent you; I am watching them carefully.

Before I conclude this letter, I would like to mention one more thing. The last time I was in Nyeri some compatriots did not want to be associated with me because they were afraid of the enemy. In fact, a few of them ran away when I asked them to help me to carry some war material. This really shocked me.

That is all for now.

Ni Thayu wa Ngai Witu
Colonel Wamugunda

Dear D.K.,

Do not worry if I am slow in sending you newspapers. I buy them daily, but I don't send you those that contain nothing of interest.

I am sending you only 19 rounds of ammunition because it is very difficult to obtain arms nowadays.

At any rate, my people are doing everything possible to get some more weapons, and we will send them up to you as soon as we acquire them. There is a European at Nyeri town who sells us rounds of ammunition and an Indian who helps us a lot. This has given us a lot of encouragement in our work.

This is all for now

Thayu wa Ngai,
Colonel Wamugunda
1954

Dear D. Kimathi,

Greetings.

This is a summary of the situation here in Nairobi:

1. The city of Nairobi is now like Gilgil: there is no corner where a person can hide without being seen by the enemy and the Kenyan traitors.
2. Every African location in Nairobi has been fenced in with barbed wire; each location has one entrance which is guarded for twenty-four hours by armed policemen. They search us every time we enter or leave a location. But despite these tough restrictions, we still get through with

our *pangas* and revolvers.

3. When the Legislative Council was being reopened on 16 February 1954, it was heavily guarded by armed policemen and soldiers because it had been reported in the *East African Standard* that you would bring 2,000 guerrillas to attack the place.
4. All the Gikuyu, Embu, and Meru people [in Nairobi] have been forcibly removed from the Kaloleni and Eastleigh areas, and have been taken to Bahati where they are guarded by the enemy for twenty-four hours. Both Kaloleni and Eastleigh have been declared out of bounds for the Gikuyu, Embu, and Meru. At the same time there is an attempt by the British occupiers to organize the non-Gikuyu Embu and Meru [nationalities] to fight against the Mau Mau. This is worrying us greatly; it will be a test of our strength.
5. Many countries of the world are convinced that if Africans in Kenya are not granted self-government and more responsibilities, the struggle will continue unabated.
6. The settlers in the Legislative Council wanted to introduce martial law in Kenya, but they were opposed by the six African members.¹
7. I have already sent the Central Province Committee a proposal that you be awarded the medal of a knight, so that you may have the title of 'Sir', but right now I do not know what the members will decide. If the proposal is adopted, you will be notified in due course. In this case, we will inform the newspaper men that your new title is 'Field Marshal Sir Dedan Kimathi, Matemo, KCGE'. KCGE means 'Knight Commander of Gikuyu Empire'.² The name *Matemo* is a code name which no one except yourself and those who are authorized to use it are allowed to know about.

I have much to write to you about, but I have many things on my mind at present. Ishmael Kungu is bringing this letter; he is a trusted comrade, so you need not have any secrets from him.

I almost forgot to tell you that your father-in-law is still alive and that I saw him today at 5.40 pm.

Thai Thathaiya Ngai Thai.

Kabugara wa Kirimu,
For the Nairobi War Council
February 1954

1. The names of three of the African members of the Legislative Council were: W.W.W. Awori, E. Mathu, Muchohi Gikonyo,
2. Kimathi insisted that since Mau Mau was a national movement the new title should be changed to Knight Commander of Africa Empire (KCAE).

Despite my instructions Ngiree has refused to come and explain his case to you. Yesterday I insisted that he should come to see you, but after bitter arguments I decided to drop the matter. I have also suggested to him that if he does not want to see you he should write and explain his case, but he has also rejected this proposal.

Under the circumstances, I suggest that you and other members of the Kenya Parliament should visit my camp so that we can discuss this affair together. However, let me know about the day of your arrival beforehand.

With many greetings,

Yours,

General Omera

P.S. If you have any sugar, please send me some. Mine is finished. I have enclosed the daily report of our unit's activities. If it meets your approval, please stamp it and send one copy back to me.

Many greetings. Thanks to *Mwene-Nyaga* for giving me this opportunity to write these few lines to inform you that I am well.

By the way, did you receive the air-mail envelopes which were sent to you by Ngari wa Thimba? They were given to General Kimbo to bring them to you. How about Mathenge wa Kiniu's letter concerning the sacrifice and the disagreement between you and Mungai? If you have received that letter, let me know at once.

We have two rams and a ewe which are ready for the sacrifice. We are waiting for you to tell us when it should be performed. We have been preparing people from Mathira for the sacrifice up in the bamboo forest.

All the people are well and nothing is wrong.

I am the leader of

W.G. No. 1 Ichagachiru

Witness No. 1 From Reserve

Ref. Case: MM/KT vs. Marshal

F.M. Sir Dedan Kimathi,

I was very delighted to see you and to hear your voice and that of Commander Ndiritu wa Thuita. Knowing how busy you are, we did not really think that you would take the time to visit us. Everyone here has been talking about you, and we are praying to God (*Mwene-Nyaga*) to give you courage and strength to drive these foreign robbers from our beloved country.

In the meantime, I have asked the village leaders who work with me whether they had sent you a letter or verbal message about the Kibuku

conspiracy, but they told me they had not done so, and that they knew absolutely nothing about these treacherous plans.

We think that the person who told you about the conspiracy should explain the whole affair to the Kenya Parliament. He should provide you with the following information:

1. the number of persons, besides Kibuku, who are involved in this conspiracy;
2. the reason why Kibuku wants to neutralize your leadership;
3. how many other KLFA leaders Kibuku wants to eliminate.

Since this is a serious matter, we urge the Kenya Parliament to work relentlessly to unearth this conspiracy. The ringleaders of this treacherous group, especially Kibuku, should be eliminated as a lesson to the others.

In conclusion, we want you to know that we support your leadership and we are ready and prepared to defend it.

We send you all our love.

Thayu wa Ngai Witu

W. G. No. 1

Ichagachiru Village

14 March 1954

Central Province
Nairobi Centre

Dear F.M. D.K. *Matemo*,

Warm greetings from your compatriots and from our beloved country which today is occupied by Europeans. We will fight to our last drop of blood to liberate it. This land is ours from the beginning – given to us by the God (*Ngai*) of *Gikuyu na Mumbi*. Those of our people who ignore this fact are as foolish as the Europeans who think that force will crush our determination; but we are going to fight against these robbers until we drive them out of this country. This war is just according to our *Ngai*, and therefore we will fight with vigilance and adversity.

We have received two of the letters you sent us. We received the first one on 20 February 1954 and the second arrived on 22 February. We studied them very carefully in order to understand the situation. We are shocked to learn that Kibuku wa Theuri and his accomplices are planning to get rid of you and take over the leadership of the movement. They should know that only the Mau Mau Central Committee can remove you from your position of leadership, and since you are already doing a good job, you will continue to lead the struggle. In this regard we consider Kibuku and his group as renegades and destructive elements. From *Ngong to Karimatura*, we consider them traitors and enemies of our struggle.

Since the line Kibuku and his group have taken is obviously one of

treachery, we have authorized you to deal with them as you see fit; they are no longer members of *Gikuyu na Mumbi*. They have proved to be the enemies of our people, and they should be exterminated and their bodies thrown to the lions.

We want to emphasize that we have confidence in your leadership; the Kenyan people depend on you for their victory.

Finally, the comrade we have sent with this letter is trustworthy; you can give him any information you want to send back to us.

The war situation is going well on our side, we are sure we will be victorious.

I am,

J.K. Kimaigwa

For the African Freedom Army, Headquarters, Nairobi

P.S. Mwangi's mother is still alive and has sent you the enclosed jersey.

M.K. Captain Gatemi

Kimuri Section A

29 May 1954

Dear Marshal D.K.,

Many greetings.

I am sorry that I haven't written to you since I came here from Murang'a. I hope you don't mind.

I am writing to request a transfer from Kimuri Section A to another unit. I find it difficult to work with my superior. Since this is my first request for a transfer from one unit to another, I hope the Kenya Parliament will have no objections. I intend to leave this unit as soon as I hear from you.

This is all for now. Please remember me to all our comrades.

Your Compatriot,

M.K. Captain Gatemi

23 June 1954

Dear Marshal,

Greetings. Wamuyu is going to Mathira en route to Mount Kenya. I got this information yesterday at 2 pm.

I tried to persuade her not to go until she had received permission from the Parliament, but she said she must go because she is expected on 10 July 1954. In this connection, I would like to know whether you would like to prepare a letter to be taken to the Mt. Kenya KLFA leaders. She is leaving

today at 3 pm. If you are going to write, the letter should reach me before this time.

By the way, will it be alright for me to write to General Kariba (Gititi) and other comrades there?

Devotedly yours,
Commander Magu

John Kameme
Nyeri
7 July 1954

Dear Marshal D.K.,

I have received letters from you twice, but please don't ask me why I didn't reply sooner. Things are tight here.

I am writing this letter on behalf of myself and Comrades Karumaindo and Muturi 5/5. First, we are sad to report that a faithful and dedicated comrade, Kahiu wa Kagoni, was arrested by the enemy the other day. He was of great importance to us and to the struggle in general. He used to supply us with ammunition and guns from Nanyuki. He has the kind of courage that many of our compatriots don't have. Try and see whether force can be used to release him.

We have received a telegram from Nanyuki informing us that war materials like ammunitions and guns are available in plenty there. Our problem is that we don't have the cash to buy these precious things. We also have the problem of transporting this material down here now that Comrade Kahiu is in the enemy's hands. What are your suggestions?

In your letter of 5 June 1954, you had asked for some sugar. We had some problems getting sugar in this town. I had 4 lbs which I gave to Col. Wamugunda when he was here recently.

Since Muria Runene has not yet brought the ammunition which he promised, we are sending you the twelve bullets we have. When Muria brings the rest, they will be sent to you immediately.

In conclusion, things are alright with us except that no Africans, except the homeguards, are allowed to enter or leave the town. This is part of the enemy's attempt to isolate us from the peasant masses.

Remember me to the heroes of the struggle. As you can see, I have changed my signature.

Thai Thathaiya Ngai Thai

Yours, Murui
John Kameme
J.M.J. Kameme

16 October 1954

To Sir Field Marshal Kimathi,

Many greetings.

I would like to inform you that I moved my whole force from Mutangariru to Ruthaithi for tactical reasons. In case you want to contact me, I am based at Ruthaithi.

I received information about the last General Conference, but I was not able to attend because I was not feeling well. I will definitely attend the next one. When and where will it take place this time?

How are Mbaria wa Kahu, Mathenge wa Mirugi and the rest of our comrades? Greetings from Nyaga.

Stand firm, the whole struggle depends on your strong leadership.

Yours,

General Kahu-Itina

Major Gen. Vido
Kimuri Section A
July 1954

Dear Sir Marshal,

When I arrived here at about half past twelve, I found that my force had come back from the battlefield where it had done an excellent job. General Kimbo and I had jointly organized an attack on the enemy forces in the Kinunga area. The two forces fought heroically, destroying the enemy's post, shops and other property. Several numbers of the enemy were wiped out. In addition, they seized a full bag of sugar, several tins of milk cream, ghee, two big mirrors and quantities of writing material.

Another important piece of news is that the Battle of Kiringa ended in the complete defeat of the enemy. We captured two enemy soldiers. Our losses were light.

The sad news concerns Kanyinya's small unit. Most of his men were captured and the rest were slaughtered when the enemy made a surprise attack on their camp. The enemy is still occupying Kanyinya's *mbuci*. Thousands of enemy troops have also gone to Kiandongoro. Consequently, there is a bitter battle going on there between our forces and those of the enemy.

Ni Thayu wa Ngai
Major General Vido

27 October 1954

Dear Field Marshal Kimathi,

Thanks to *Mwene-Nyaga* for giving me this opportunity to inform you that I arrived safely and well.

I started working for the people with dedication, but we have had many problems. For instance, we have spent nine days without food or fire. I have also had a quarrel with the leader of the unit regarding the new rank you gave me. In this connection, I would be very glad if you could write to him and explain about my promotion. I would like your letter to reach him before I go to Gilgil on a mission.

I think I should come and consult you personally before I make any major decision. In fact, talking to you personally is better than writing letters.

In the meantime, I have decided to stay on the farm in order to have an opportunity to assess the leadership of the unit.

Many greetings from Mwangi wa Ng'ang'a from L/2 Unit. You should remember him; he is the Unit Secretary.

I remain,
M.C.W. Kahugi

13 November 1954

D.K. Wachiuri,

Greetings as usual. I am well. Basically, our situation is not too bad; we are fearlessly working for the movement.

My mission to Nakuru was not successful. I was not able to meet our troops and, under these circumstances, I was forced to come back.

The important thing I learned when I was there is that the enemy is forcing the people to take an anti-Mau Mau oath. This new anti-Mau Mau oath is called 'Ekinni'. The enemy's aim is to break our people's resistance, and hence weaken our struggle.

My suggestion is that we should use all means possible to crush this evil propaganda, otherwise it will destroy all our efforts.

We have collected some money and we will send it to you shortly.

Best regards,
Wanjau wa Kibiri

Dear Marshal D.K.,

I hereby accuse Mathenge wa Kihuni of a criminal act against my Unit. I hope you and the War Council will take this matter seriously.

At about 6 pm yesterday, Mathenge and his men came to my camp and stopped us from carrying on with our duties. He said that you had given him power to do whatever he wanted in the whole of Kenya. He accused us of being ineffective in our revolutionary work. When I insisted that he should move out of my camp, he gave an order to his men and within a few seconds 45 armed guerrillas surrounded me and disarmed me. They treated me as if I were an enemy. To avoid a bloody confrontation, I ordered my men not to interfere.

If I try to explain in detail what really happened you may think I am exaggerating. In short, Mathenge and his men told us that you had authorized him to discipline us because they were the only active and brave group in this region, and that the rest of us thought of nothing else but food. Before I react, I would like to hear from you as to whether you have given them such powers.

Another thing I would like you to know is that Mathenge and his men are insisting on taking away our guns. They said they would kill us if we refused to hand all our guns to them. They also said that in future we would not leave Nyandarwa without their permission.

Meanwhile we have a considerable number of sick comrades and we would like to know where we can take them for treatment. At the same time, we would like to know whether you would approve of a bloody confrontation between us and General Kariba's men. They took away one of our guns by force.

Please reply to this letter immediately; if possible, try to visit us. We are very much worried about what will happen when Mathenge returns from Ruthaithi. We will definitely not allow them to push us around this time.

Yours,
Major M. Vido

Dear Marshal,

Hello! How are you? I hope you are alright. In brief, did Commander Abdullah inform you that I would like to see you today? The reason I am asking you this is because this morning I tried to see you but I was told that you could not possibly see me until tomorrow. This is fine with me, but what time can I see you tomorrow? It is important that I see you early tomorrow because I will be leaving for Ruthaithi the following day. A lot of work is awaiting me there.

I haven't written to the Mt. Kenya forces yet, but I will do so as soon as I reach Ruthaithi.

The principal reason why I want to talk to you confidentially is because I am very much worried about the war situation. We do not seem to be making much progress in the field, while the enemy continues to intensify its offensive. I think if we don't take a firm stand, vacillation, rivalry, opportun-

ism and a misunderstanding of war strategy will weaken our position and demoralize our fighting forces. Let us meet and discuss this in depth.

May *Ngai* guard and guide you all the time and keep your eyes open eternally.

Devotedly yours,
Brigadier General Karari Njama

Dear D.K.,

Thanks to our *Ngai* that you are alive. We were very worried when we heard that you were sick.

I am still carrying on with my work. There is a great demand for guns – that is why I haven't sent you one yet – and I am trying to make as many as I can; I will send you one soon.

Since you left here I have made 8 guns. Besides, large quantities of material for making more guns are still coming. You can see how busy I am, but I don't mind since I am working for my country.

Goodbye,
Yours, Major Nguku (Puno)
Nyandarwa 1954

D.K.,

Many greetings.

We are doing fine down here. The other day we were attacked by enemy forces backed by warplanes, but we were able to chase them out of the area. We killed twelve of the enemy soldiers and seized several of their rifles plus one machine-gun. We lost three of our comrades and two were slightly wounded.

We are short of food. If there is some in the store, please send us. We need things like maize, wheat flour, cabbages, potatoes and beans.

In the meantime, I will try to contact the woman leader in this region; I am sure she will do her best to see that we don't die of starvation.

The report I have enclosed is a record of our activities for this month, please stamp it and send us a copy.

Greetings to other comrades—Macharia wa Kimemia, Abdullah, and the rest.

Yours,
General Ihuura
Irati Mbuci

Dear Marshal,

How are you?

Here is a gift for you—a song!

1. How are you Gikuyu na Muumbi?

We greet you with much pleasure and enthusiasm

For we have won the war,

The white man is packing.

Chorus:

Fight, fight everywhere

You sons of the soil.

Let us increase our strength.

They are our enemy,

They hate us Africans.

2. Cover yourself with bamboo leaves

So that they may not see you.

They are evil and brutal.

Beyond Kabage there are many mountains and forests

Where General Muhimu is the Commander

And has ordered his army to fight with vigilance.

3. Chania is a big river

Which we cross with bamboo

Each time we try to cross it

There is always a big argument.

4. Their warplanes came to Nyandarwa

To fight Kimathi's forces.

Hika, Hika Ndung'u wa Gaceru shot most of them.

5. After the planes had gone

Marshal called a meeting.

He said to us:

'We shall fight them and win this war,

Despite their sophisticated weaponry.'

6. What makes me sad and angry

Is the ignorance of the homeguards and the chiefs

Who have denounced this glorious struggle

Who said they didn't want Self-Government.

They wanted the white man to continue ruling us.

7. You compatriot who sing this song

You must praise our fighting men

For their courage and patriotism.

But try to improve this song,

It was composed in the heat of the battle.

8. You should return it to us

When it is a better song

**Because it was written with the blood,
The blood of many of us
Who have heroically fallen in the battlefields.**

I suggest that you improve this song and then circulate it to the fighting forces. Patriotic songs like this always strengthen the morale of the fighters.

**Yours,
Comrade Puda**

Homage to Our Immortal Heroes

Wherever death may surprise us, it will be welcome, provided that this, our battle cry, reach some receptive ear, that another hand stretch out to take up weapons and that other men come forward to intone our funeral dirge with the staccato of machine guns and new cries of battle and victory.

Che Guevara

We Mourn for Our Fallen Hero

Editor's note: General Gitau Matenjagwo, one of the Murang'a Frontline Commanders, was killed by the enemy in December 1953. When the news of his death reached Dedan Kimathi, he wrote the following eulogy and circulated it among the KLFA forces.

Dear Compatriots,

I am sure you already know that the enemy has managed to murder our comrade, General Matenjagwo, while he was on his way to Thika town for an important mission. By killing him, the enemy has robbed us of one of the greatest freedom fighters; however, the enemy should know that Gitau's death will only heighten our determination to fight until this country is free. His courage and dedication will be a lesson for the coming generations.

To avenge him and other compatriots who have fallen before him, let us intensify the struggle; let us sacrifice our lives. Let us liberate our motherland.

Field Marshal D.K.

In Memory of Comrade Gathitu wa Waithaka

Comrade Gathitu wa Waithaka was a first class guerrilla fighter who asserted himself through his fighting skills and courage. For this reason, he deserves the highest honour our struggle can give him.

Comrade Gathitu's ability to get along with people, and his love and

faith in his comrades were part of his personality. His strength and commitment bore witness to his high sense of patriotism. In short, his contributions to the development of our guerrilla army were second to *none*. His main goal was the liberation of Kenya and the rest of Africa. And it was for this that he sacrificed his own life.

Comrade Gathitu was from Central Kenya: *District*: Nyeri; *Location*: Tetu; *Sub-location*: Karaihu; *Village*: Gathanji; *Clan*: Muithirandu.

He had worked in Egerton College, Njoro, and other places in the province before joining the Kenya Land Freedom Army.

He was over 5ft tall, with eyes that shone like those of a leopard. When he left his job in Subukia in order to join the guerrilla army, he passed through Nakuru town, the city of Nairobi, and then continued on foot to Rwathia Location in Murang'a. There he joined a guerrilla group.

During his stay in Rwathia he taught other fighters methods of guerrilla warfare. It was through his leadership that a strong and formidable guerrilla army was organized in Rwathia. He was assisted by Mathenge wa Gatheru, Njenga wa Muniu and Ndungu wa Gatheri. The last two comrades are from Kiambu. Mathenge died heroically in January 1954, during the Ndaragwa Battle.

I met Brigadier Gathitu for the first time in Rwathia on 5 June 1953, when I visited the Murang'a front. I was pleased with his intelligence, devotion, and commitment.

On 19 August 1953, during our General Conference which took place at Nguthiru, I assigned Brigadier Gathitu, together with Colonel Kibiru wa Kanoe, the task of documenting all damages which the enemy had inflicted on our people since the beginning of the war. They were to list the number of cattle, goats, sheep and chickens confiscated; the names of the people killed by the enemy; the names of our supporters; as well as the names of all traitors. I had divided this work into two parts: first they were to complete their assignments in Central Kenya and then move on to the Rift Valley.

The two men carried out their work efficiently and with a lot of vigour. Others whom I had sent to different parts of the country failed to complete their assignments as well as Gathitu and Kibiru.

Because of his untiring efforts and extraordinary zeal, Comrade Gathitu got his rank of Colonel in September 1953 after coming back from a mission in Kararia, Murang'a. He earned the rank of a Brigadier in December 1953. These two promotions are clear proof that Comrade Gathitu was an invincible guerrilla fighter and a patriot who loved his country and Africa.

As the KLFA Defence Secretary, Brigadier Gathitu was popular among his guerrilla comrades; his love for people and his unyielding determination in the liberation struggle were his main strengths. Furthermore, as a KLFA Defence Council Secretary, he was a devoted worker who served the Defence Council with vigour and extraordinary loyalty. He never failed to do his assignment because of hunger, cold, rain or petty disagreements.

His untimely death has robbed us of one of our greatest fighters, but

Demand Withdrawal of British Forces . . .

because of his unshakeable patriotism, he will be immortalized by our people. He will live forever; his exemplary heroism and devotion will become the index of our people's vigilance against foreign domination.

Let us always remember Comrade Gathitu in our struggle and daily prayers. And may God (*Mwene-Nyaga*) remember Brigadier Gathitu wa Waitthaka forever and ever.

Dedan Kimathi
President, Kenya Defence Council,
Nyandarwa
2 February 1954

Part 4: Our History Should Not Be Distorted

As a former Mau Mau General, I knew Marshal Dedan Kimathi well, since we used to meet in the Nyandarwa mountains to discuss the progress of the war. Kimathi had great charisma and extraordinary qualities of leadership. He organized and coordinated the entire struggle despite the hardships we faced in the forest. He was fair and democratic in all his duties.

Interview: General Mbaria wa Kaniu

Kimathi was a great patriot, a great leader. In fact, I cried bitter tears when he was shot and captured. We always think that if he had not been killed, he would have stood with us against those who betrayed our struggle.

Interview: Wairimu wa Maina

Kimathi [is] still buried at Kamiti Prison. But he will forever live in the collective memory of the Kenyan people. Like Waiyaki before him. Like Koitalel before him. Like Me Kitilili and Otengo and Nyanjiru and many other patriots before him.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o

Notes from Kimathi's Diary

On Struggle

It is better to be hungry and continue to fight for justice. If the line I have taken is correct, follow me, but always remember that only radical change can alter the nature of man.

Lincoln bombers attacked Uthaya and Chinga for the whole day. But they failed to shake the determination of the people. It is about time that the British realized that a determined people cannot be defeated.

A large area in Nguthiru has been destroyed by fire started by the enemy. This cowardly act is meant to weaken our position, but we have already made it clear that we shall never surrender.

The white settlers are like a drop in the ocean among the masses of the Kenyan people, and no matter what they do they will never govern this country without our consent. Our primary aim is to dismantle their evil machinery whatever the cost.

What we have to do is to unite and organize ourselves for a long struggle until we drive them from our country.

The [Colonial] Government has spent shs. 3,250,000 from October 1952 to 10 December 1953, to try to suppress our struggle. We shall never give up without our land and freedom.

3 December 1953: A people who can hold secret political meetings, organize a political army, and conduct guerrilla warfare are not ignorant.

My grandfather would have definitely hated and opposed this slave system; my father would have bitterly hated, but tolerated, it. But I march with the times, and I have decided to use violence to crush it.

Everything has a cause and the cause of everything is a concrete situation. I am the light of Kenya, and our torch is my life and blood, which I have given in order that our people, our country, may be released from slavery and oppression.

I have chosen Captain Kagiri wa Ngumo to be the leader of my bodyguards because of his commitment and dedication.

Personal

The Chania river was in flood, so we crossed it by the bamboo bridge constructed by comrade Wanjau.

Gura - a cold, strong and swift river. It has four waterfalls. I tried to catch fish but I could not. It was a terrible day.

Coffee mixed with honey is delicious in a cold place like this.

Pledge

On my honour, and before *Ngai* and many witnesses—some of whom are now dead—I stood naked, held soil in my right hand, and bit the chest of a ram seven times. I swore by Githathi, and by the names of our ancestors, Gikuyu *na* Mumbi, that I would be in the service of my compatriots and country until I die.

Code

Say 'Thumbi', reply 'Ngo', if you are a member of Gikuyu *na* Mumbi.

On Promotion

Colonel Mathenge to Brigadier, Major Wachiira to Colonel. Corporal to lieutenant.

New Army Formed in Kiambu

With this support of Major Gateri, a new army called the Kenya Inoora Army (KIA) has been formed for Kiambu; it has 97 fighters and will strengthen our position in the region.

On War

The world is round but human beings are not. Better war than peace in poverty and chains.

War comes but seldom, and when it comes, it brings with it good cheer to those who have won victory.

War is a natural game for nations of the world and death is a true friend who will never fail you.

He who fights for the best of his country dies for the best, but he inherits the best he fought for.

This war has robbed us of our best compatriots, but we shall never forget them. They are our immortal heroes.

Ngai of Mount Kirinyaga

Only *Ngai* can guide me. *Ngai* is my strongest shelter.

I lay my trust upon *Ngai* of Mt. Kirinyaga. I will make him my shelter during war and peace.

Life comes from *Ngai*, and only *Ngai* receives it at the end. So we should not be afraid of death.

Ngai does not tie a heavy bundle to the one who cannot carry it.

Dream

At the beginning of November 1953, I dreamt three times. One of the dreams went like this: I was circumcised on 8 December 1953. On the same night I was captured by homeguards, and then I escaped followed by men, women, and children who came to demand my release. I flew as though I had wings, singing the great songs of our struggle. I rested under the tree in my home-stead. When I entered my house, I found two British soldiers, who had savagely killed my wife and children, sitting in the living room. I shot one dead and the other one dropped his gun and surrendered. There was great rejoicing in the whole village. Before I got a chance to address the people, I woke up. What a disappointment!

On Mathenge and his Liquidationist Clique

Let it be known that some of our former Generals are backward and that they are individuals who seek fame, not commitment and responsibility. They only seek the freedom of their region, not the total liberation of Kenya and Africa. They do not know where Mombasa or Rudolf is, nor do they know the way from the Cape to Cairo. They love chieftainship but not work. Let us not be misled by primitive people who hide under trees because they are afraid of fighting.

We have tried to convince General Mathenge that the position he has taken is incorrect, but he has refused to be self-critical and to join us. As a result, we have no alternative but to use force in order to bring Mathenge and his followers back to the Kenya Parliament. We can no longer allow them to sabotage our glorious struggle.

Assignments

Between 21 April 1954 and 5 June 1954, I wrote to the following comrades:

1. The Hon. Secretary of State and the Minister for War, General Karari wa Njama. He is from Mahiga Location, Uthaya Division, Nyeri.
2. General Commander Muraya wa Mbuthia, one of the leaders of Mburu Ngebo Army. He is from Kiru Location, Kangima Division, Muranga.
3. Commander Gitonga wa Muthi, sub-division leader of Ituma Army Section No. 1, which operates in North Tetu.
4. I have also toured the KLFA's major bases and dealt with the problems of disunity in the army, food shortages, and political and social strife among the guerrillas. I addressed guerrilla meetings and

explained the war situation.

5. We have told the British a thousand and one times that we do not recognize the leadership of the African members of the Legislative Council. The genuine leadership of the African people is the Kenya Parliament.

Population of Tribes

According to the 1948 census:

Kipsigis - 159,692

Taita - 56,912

Gikuyu - 3,000,000

[**Editor's note:** we are missing a complete list as it was drafted by Dedan Kimathi.]

Generals from North Tetu

1. Ndungu)
2. Roy) Augthi Location
3. Murithi wa Mukinia)
4. Kimbo Thiuri
5. Ndiritu Thuita
6. Colonel Wagura Waciuri

Tetu has 14 Generals. Thिंगи Location has only one. I would also like to know the names of the leaders of these Divisions: 1. Mathira; 2. South Tetu; 3. Uthaya; 4. Kangima.

Eight Sub-Locations of North Tetu with their Headmen and Guerrilla Officers

<i>Location</i>	<i>Headmen</i>	<i>Guerrilla Officers</i>
1. Ihururu	Kimburi	Karindi Toka
2. Thathe	Mumbui	Kingora Mutunga
3. Gakonga	Joshua	Kobi Wanderi
4. Ichagachiru	Gitahi	
5. Kiriti	Gathitu	Kiguongo
6. Unjiru	Maconi	Kabaka I
7. Karaihu	Mbuthia	Mutombacini
8. Muthuaini	Gitahi	Kabaka II

Names of Famous Patriotic Fighters

1. Ngambi wa Murathimi
2. Kiama wa Maingi
3. Gakere wa Nyingi
4. Ihaqua wa Maingi
5. Thiuri wa Wanjuki
6. Thiuri wa Maingi
7. Mathi wa Gakere
8. Wang'ombe wa Ihura
9. Ngararu wa Ndungu
10. Muthua wa Mureria

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 11. Wahome wa Gakumbi | 18. Waruta wa Kariithi |
| 12. Ndungu wa Kibi | 19. Marige wa Kiiru |
| 13. Mutungi wa Karige | 20. Mutegi wa Njuri (Kirimukuyu) |
| 14. Ndurini wa Murathimi | 21. Kabugia wa Thuku |
| 15. Muregu wa Irimu-Itiati | 22. Karui wa Gakure |
| 16. Kareithi wa Kamweti Hinga | and many others |
| 17. Kanyokora wa Thig (sic) | |

Names of Famous National Seers

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Chege wa Kibiru | 4. Mangururia |
| 2. Mugo wa Kibiru | 5. Miura wa Thururu |
| 3. Nguni | 6. Gichohi wa Ngai |

Famous Hunters and Beekeepers

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Nyanderi | 4. Kimaru Muchiri |
| 2. Njioro | 5. Murage Conjo |
| 3. Gichuru wa Maguta | |

KENYA PARLIAMENT

**Income and Expenditure Record
Year 1953**

<i>Income</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Balance</i>
shs. 47,662.51	shs. 42,906.39	shs. 4,756.12

The following income and expenditure account was sent by Commander Ndiritu, one of the KLFA unit leaders, to the Kenya Parliament for auditing.

Year 1953

<i>Month</i>	<i>Income</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Balance</i>
February	shs. 4,096.71	shs. 3,293.00	shs. 802.71
May	shs. 20,460.46	shs. 20,149.85	shs. 310.61
August	shs. 6,665.06	shs. 6,452.00	shs. 213.06
October	shs. 275.56	shs. 197.00	shs. 78.56
November	shs. 658.00	shs. 580.00	shs. 78.56
<i>Total</i>	<i>shs. 32,155.79</i>	<i>shs. 30,671.83</i>	<i>shs. 1,483.50</i>

Year 1954

Kenya Parliament Income and Expenditure Record:

<i>Income</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Balance</i>
shs. 6,637.66	shs. 6,313.92	shs. 323.74

Money contributed by the peasants to the movement from May 1954 to November 1954.

May:	shs. 1,388.60
June:	shs. 155.80
July:	shs. 2,410.56
August:	shs. 200.00
September:	shs. 500.00
October:	shs. 600.00
November:	shs. 45.00
<i>Total Contributions:</i>	<i>shs. 5,309.96</i>

Money Distributed to the KLFA Leaders

On 22 April 1954, the Kenya Parliament distributed the following amount of money to the leaders of the army and the Chania guerrillas' hospital:

1. Karari wa Njama:	shs. 100.00
2. Major Ndururi:	shs. 20.00
3. Commander Abdullah:	shs. 30.00
4. General Roy:	shs. 30.00
5. Commander Nyaga:	shs. 20.00
6. Colonel Ruanjane:	shs. 30.00
7. Commander N. Thuita:	shs. 20.00
8. Colonel Wangura:	shs. 30.00
9. Chania Hospital:	shs. 40.00
<i>Total:</i>	<i>shs. 320.00</i>

Part 5: We Were Betrayed

Time for Reflection

The interviews published here were conducted in Nyeri, Murang'a, Nairobi and Nakuru regions between July and September 1978. Most of the people I talked to, former KLFA guerrillas, workers and peasants (about 50 persons) praised Dedan Kimathi as a great patriotic leader. They were also proud that they had participated in the armed struggle against the British occupiers and their Kenyan allies. At the same time, however, they admitted that they were bitter because they had received nothing but humiliation and insults after independence, despite their great sacrifice during the Mau Mau War. They accused Kenyatta and KANU of having betrayed them. They were also consistent in their rejection of Kenyatta's call to them to 'forgive and forget'. Most of them strongly felt that those Kenyans who had fought against Mau Mau should have been mercilessly punished.

Because they feared they might be victimized, the people I interviewed requested that their names should not be disclosed. I will therefore use initials in the following transcripts.

Person Interviewed: GWK. He was a freedom fighter with the rank of brigadier.

Social Status: A worker.

Q. *Why did you join the Mau Mau guerrilla army?*

Brig. GWK: To fight for our country's independence.

When did you go to the forest, and to which KLFA unit did you belong?

I went to the forest in May 1953. I belonged to Gen. Kago's Battalion.

Did you know Kimathi personally and, if so, how could you characterize him as a leader?

Yes, I knew Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi personally. He was an able and intelligent leader and displayed rare qualities of organization. This is why we accepted him as our undisputed leader and the overall commander of the Mau Mau forces.

What about the organization of the battles?

We used guerrilla tactics to fight the sophisticated British army. Our principal strategy was to conduct 'hit and run' battles, and we were very successful.

How many battles were you involved in? Did you shoot any enemy warplanes?

I was involved in the Ndakani, Kayahee and Kandara battles. I never personally shot an enemy warplane, but people like General Kago shot several of them.

How was life in the forest and how did you manage to get food?

Generally speaking, life in the forest was very hard and difficult. Rain and cold caused us untold suffering. Food was also difficult to get, and we usually had to do with one meal a day when it was available. Some of our weak comrades surrendered because of hunger.

How did you get weapons?

We seized them from the enemy. We also made our own guns. Each KLFA unit had its own gun factory.

What role do you think the peasant women played in the struggle?

A very crucial one. Since they were aware that we were fighting for the liberation of our homeland, they gave us all their support. Most importantly, they supplied us with food and strategic information. Some acted as Mau Mau spies while others joined the guerrilla army in the forest. They formed Mau Mau war committees to coordinate and streamline the activities of the movement in the villages. In short, I would say that the women were the 'mothers' and spirit of the Mau Mau movement; we could not have done without their support.

Did General China betray the movement after his capture?

People say he did.

You fought hard for independence and many of your comrades lost their lives and others were maimed for life – are you satisfied with the results?

My only dissatisfaction and disappointment is that our own government refused to recognize our contributions to national independence. We, the freedom fighters, as well as the widows left by the guerrillas who died, expected a reward – land – for the great sacrifice we made in the struggle; but we got nothing but humiliation.

Why did General Bamuingi order his force to return to the forest after independence?

His demands had been totally rejected by the KANU government. He had demanded that the Mau Mau army should be recognized as a national army, and that all the homeguard traitors should be arrested and charged for their anti-Mau Mau activities.

What do you personally feel about the policy of 'forgive and forget'?

I think we should rather forgive but not forget. How can we forget our glorious struggle in which so many of our compatriots died?

What do you see the future of this country given the fact that the majority of the people are getting poorer and poorer while a few are getting richer and richer?

Well, I would rather not comment about that.

Why?

We don't trust you educated Kenyans. You vacillate too much.

Murang'a District

8 July 1978

Person Interviewed: WWG. He was a Mau Mau guerrilla.

Social Status: A farm worker.

Q. Why did you join the Mau Mau guerrilla army?

WWG: To fight for our stolen land and freedom. In fact, our aim was to drive the white man out of our country so that we could rule ourselves.

When did you actually go to the forest and to which unit did you belong?

I went to the forest in October 1953 and was placed in the Gikuyu Iregi Army under General Ihuura. We operated from the Nyandarwa mountains.

What do you think of Dedan Kimathi as a guerrilla leader? Were you close to him?

Well, I never had the chance of being close to Field Marshal Kimathi. He was a big man, you know. We respected and honoured him as our overall leader. His organizational skills and capabilities were excellent; he knew his job thoroughly well. In fact, we regarded him as a person with super-natural powers—our messiah sent by *Mwene-Nyaga* [God] to deliver us from the yoke of colonialism and imperialist domination.

How was life in the forest?

It was hard, difficult and painful, especially in the beginning. We had to adjust to an environment which was harsh, with wild animals and adverse weather conditions. Later on we adjusted well, and made friends with the animals and birds. They joined us to fight the British occupiers.

How did you get your food?

We used to get food from the people and we also stole cattle from white settlers. But this became increasingly difficult when villages were set up and pressure from our enemy was increased. During the final years of the struggle, those of my comrades who were still in the forest fighting had to rely more on wild game, wild honey, wild fruits and the like for food. They became more self-reliant. It was a difficult life, but since we had made a pledge to our people that we would never leave the forest without land and freedom, we made the best of it.

How did you get weapons?

Mainly from our enemy. We had our men in every section of the colonial

machinery. It was therefore the responsibility of our men to steal guns and ammunition. Besides, we made our own guns. Also, don't forget that each one of us had a *panga* which proved to be an indispensable weapon in this struggle.

What were your personal contributions in the war for land and freedom?

Not much. After only nine months I was captured during a bloody confrontation between my battalion and the enemy forces. In this encounter, I personally killed three enemy soldiers before I was captured.

Were you fighting for the liberation of the Gikuyu, Embu and Meru or Kenyans in general?

We fought for Kenya's liberation. As I have already mentioned, we wanted the white man to leave our country. Many Kenyan nationalities did not, of course, join us in the forest, but all the same they supported us. Some helped us with food, firearms, etc.

Some of the freedom fighters like General Bamuingi decided to go back to the forest after uhuru, why was this?

The fundamental reason is that they were not satisfied with the outcome of their long, painful struggle. They saw no differences between the colonial government and the *uhuru* government. They were disgusted to discover that the traitors of the movement had been given big posts in the KANU government and large tracts of land. General Bamuingi's demands were that all the traitors should be arrested and charged for the atrocities they had committed against the people, and that the Mau Mau army should be recognized as a national army. Our government was not ready to accept these demands.

Are you personally satisfied with the outcome of this heroic struggle?

Not at all. We thought and expected that the land occupied by European settlers would be distributed freely to us as a reward for our contribution to the liberation of Kenya. But to our dismay, our contributions were neither recognized, nor were we given the land. Instead, we were required by law to buy our own land from the same thieves who had stolen it from us, as if the price of blood we had paid was not enough. As you can see, we are still very poor; if anything, our situation has worsened. I lost my entire family, my small piece of land and now, after independence, I have to be contented with being a farm labourer—earning Sh. 120.00 a month! The person who owns this farm was a homeguard, a killer of our people. So I am not satisfied at all. To be more frank, I am very bitter.

What future do you see for this country? You don't have to answer this question, if you don't want to.

The present political system definitely leaves a lot to be desired. As long as we remain poor despite our brave role in the Mau Mau struggle and as long as these very enemies (homeguards, chiefs, white settlers) we fought against continue to harvest the fruits of the independence we fought and died for, We will remain vigilant. *Gutiri yuuraga na ndikie!*

Murang'a District

8 July 1978

Person Interviewed: WWN. She was a firm supporter of Mau Mau.

Social Status: Ordinary peasant.

Q. How many Mau Mau oaths did you take?

WWN: Two: the Oath of Unity and the Mbatuni Oath.

Did the peasant women understand the aims of the Mau Mau movement?

Yes, the movement was formed to fight for the liberation of our country. Our country was subjected to brutality by the British, and that was the main reason we decided to take up arms to fight against this inhumanity and barbarism.

How did you supply the guerrilla fighters with food and other necessities?

Food was the most important item the guerrillas needed, and we were committed to provide it despite the risks involved. First, we had to cook it at night after our forced communal work. You know we were working from 6 am to 6 pm. When the food was being prepared, we had to position the village KLFAs in strategic positions in order to check the approach of the enemy. After the food was cooked, it was packed in bags and given to the village committee leader to take to the forest. Those women—mainly unmarried young women—who were involved in transporting the food to the front had to travel under cover of darkness, accompanied by a detachment of armed peasants. After reaching the strategic point, they would pass the food to another women's group. This process would continue until the food finally reached the front.

We also had to transport ammunition from one village to another until they reached the guerrillas in the forest. We used clever methods: we put them in a *kiondo* (a Gikuyu traditional basket) and covered them with flour. If we happened to meet the enemy—homeguards—we would pretend we were coming from a maize mill and the homeguards could hardly suspect us; you know they were dumb and stupid. Actually, we were not afraid of the homeguard traitors and their British masters; we knew that although they were vicious and could make our revolutionary work difficult, we were too clever for them; in addition to that, we were convinced that we would eventually triumph, despite their ruthlessness and brutality. Those gallant women who happened to be killed in this noble mission were regarded as martyrs. In fact, their deaths strengthened and hardened our determination to fight. Besides, we were very much encouraged by the fact that in the struggle for liberation some would sacrifice their dear lives for our eventual triumph.

How was coordination ensured in the villages in times of need? I mean how could you contact the guerrilla commander in an emergency?

There was a Mau Mau Committee in every village, organized by the leaders

of the movement in that ridge to work in conjunction with the army commander. It was composed of both women and men. Its main duty was: to organize transportation of supplies to the front; to ensure the security of fighters in the ridge by organizing an elaborate system of spying; to contact the guerrillas in the forest for vital information; especially about the movement of the enemy troops; to eliminate spies, informers and traitors in the village; to recruit youths for armed combat.

How many members of your family died in the struggle for land and freedom; and how do you feel about the homeguard traitors, and other elements who sided with the British occupiers during this struggle?

No member of my family was killed by the homeguards. However, the atrocities and other brutalities these 'thata cia bururi' subjected us to will never be forgotten – they beat us, raped our daughters in front of their parents, put bottles in our vaginas, and castrated men – they caused us untold suffering. Besides, they killed tens of hundreds of our compatriots.

What punishment do you think these traitors should have received after independence?

Some of them should have been hanged outright, and others should have been detained for a long time to pay for their unpatriotic activities.

Don't you think we should forgive them now?

No, they are murderers and thieves who now thrive on the fruits which should have been bestowed on those who died fighting for the liberation of this country.

Murang'a District

21 July 1978

Person Interviewed: KWK: He was a member of Mau Mau.

Social Status: A worker.

Q. Why do you think the people of Kenya organized Mau Mau?

KWK: To dislodge the British imperialists from our country. They had taken our best land and reduced us to slaves.

Some people in Kenya say that the Mau Mau struggle delayed uhuru. What is your opinion on this?

This is a ridiculous and outrageous contention. I strongly feel that without the Mau Mau war of national independence, no uhuru (independence) could have been achieved in Kenya in 1963. The British wanted to make our country 'a white man country', and they were determined to do so. Our armed struggle dismantled this evil plan. Those who say that Mau Mau delayed *wiyaathi* (independence) are wrong.

We have now our land and uhuru are you personally happy about these accomplishments?

I am definitely not happy. The land question has not been solved and that is why the great majority of our people are still poor and landless. We thought that after *uhuru*, our government would freely distribute the land formerly owned by white settlers to the poor and the landless, but instead it insisted that we would have to buy this land from the same robbers who had stolen it from us. We really could not understand this policy.

As for *uhuru*, I think I can say that I can now walk in the streets without fear of police harassment as was the case during the colonial days. However, our present rulers must rule in fairness: justice and democracy must prevail if they expect peace and stability. The silencing and brutal murder of some popular Kenyan leaders cannot be tolerated by our people for long. For instance, the savage killing of J. M. Kariuki eroded our confidence in the present regime. How many more have to die like this, I wonder.

Are you saying that the Mau Mau movement was betrayed?

Yes, the people who are enjoying the benefits of the Mau Mau war are either those who betrayed the movement outright, or those who did not support it in any way. Some of them are children of the former colonial chiefs; others are those politicians who built their political careers on anti-Mau Mau crusades. Seriously, something should have been done to relieve the suffering of the hundreds of widows and children whose husbands and fathers died fighting for the liberation of this land.

Do you believe in the concept of 'forgive and forget'?

No! In fact, I don't see how we can be able to erase the atrocities and barbarities committed by the homeguard traitors from our minds. It is not human to forgive those who killed your children, your brother, your mother, your wife, your sister.

What is your last comment?

Well, sometime when I walk in the streets of Nairobi and I see all these foreign companies—Hilton, Intercontinental and many, many others, I always wonder whether we are really free.

Nairobi

23 July 1978

Person Interviewed: WWM. She was a firm supporter of Mau Mau.

Social Status: Ordinary peasant.

Q. Could you please assess the role the women played in the Mau Mau movement?

WWM: Yes, the entire success of the Mau Mau struggle depended heavily on the peasant women. They provided food, strategic information, as well as guns and ammunition (which they stole from the enemy soldiers) to the guerrilla fighters. It was also their main duty and responsibility to transport all supplies to the front.

Do you think women really knew the aims of the movement?

Obviously we knew that our compatriots were fighting for land and freedom. The white man had brought a lot of suffering among our people, and we wanted him to relinquish his rule over our country. As would be expected in any patriotic struggle, there were a few traitors among women, but all in all, the majority of peasant women wholly supported the movement. As a result, many of us were subjected to all kinds of atrocities by the home-guard traitors and their British allies.

How did supplies (food, medicine, clothing, etc) reach the guerrillas in the forest?

There was a Mau Mau Committee in every village which coordinated this activity. After the food was prepared, a few trusted women, usually unmarried young women who had taken the Batuni Oath, were selected to carry the supplies to a strategic point where other women would be waiting. They would give these items to the new group of women, and then return to their village. The other group would transport these items to another strategic point where they would be relieved by another group, until the items reached the front. It was a risky task, but it was our duty to support the movement.

Why was there no fear of the enemy in this operation?

Because of our commitment and undying love for our country.

What actually happened when you were arrested? How were you punished by the colonial authorities?

The most common punishment was to be put in detention, where we were subjected to all sorts of brutalities. For instance, bottles full of hot water were forced into our vaginas and our men were castrated in front of us. Oh, I can't really explain what I saw and experienced. I feel so bitter about it.

You have mentioned the existence of a Mau Mau village committee. Tell me more about it.

In every ridge or village, a prominent, able, committed and trustworthy woman or man was appointed to be the KLFA representative in the village. She would be authorized to organize a Mau Mau village committee to help her coordinate the activities of the movement in that ridge. In particular, the committee was responsible for supplying guerrillas with food, clothing, medicine, weapons, ammunition and strategic information.

How many members of your family were killed?

None. But I lost my friends in this war. A lot of innocent people, including children, were also killed, and it makes my blood boil when I remember them; especially when I remember that those who killed them now occupy the highest posts in our government.

You mean you don't believe in the philosophy of 'forgive and forget'?

Yes, we have been told to 'forgive and forget', but it is really difficult to forget the atrocities these traitors subjected us to during the war. How

can we forgive those who tortured and killed us; those who sold us out to the British imperialists? No, I will never forgive or forget! However, we have a nation to build, and it would be unwise to allow the past to hinder us from a better future. Our last experience should be used to improve the social conditions of many of us.

Does this mean that you still perceive a future for this country, and if so, under what political and economic system?

Well, certainly not under the present political and economic conditions. I feel that our government must do something to alleviate poverty among the great majority of Kenyans. We expected that the coming of *uhuru* would improve our lot, but it has been a great disappointment.

What do you think of Dedan Kimathi?

He was a great patriot, a great leader. In fact, I cried bitter tears when he was shot and captured. We always think that if he was not killed, he would have stood with us against the betrayers of our struggle.

Nyeri District
13 August 1978

Person Interviewed: NWK. He was a member of Mau Mau.

Social Status: Ordinary peasant.

Q. What was the main aim of Mau Mau?

NWK: To fight for our stolen land and independence.

Were you fighting for the liberation of Kenya or for the Gikuyu, Embu and Meru?

What we had in our minds was a fight to get rid of the British imperialist rule of exploitation and domination. We were not thinking of ourselves; that would have been too narrow, selfish and unpatriotic. We fought and died for Kenyan independence.

Was this war only fought by the people of Central Kenya?

No, many others were involved, notably the Kamba and Maasai. In fact, even among the people of central Kenya, not every one participated in this great struggle. There were homeguards who sided with the British against us. The majority of educated people in central Kenya did not even support the movement. We used to call them *taikai*.

Now that we have 'expelled' the Mzungu (European), 'regained our stolen land' and 'acquired our freedom', are you satisfied?

No! first, the *Mzungu* is still here; many of them are still occupying the land they stole from us. Secondly, no land was distributed to the poor, dispossessed and suffering masses after independence; instead, the land was given to the former homeguards and big politicians.

So the people who are enjoying the fruits of uhuru are former traitors and

politicians?

Yes. They are now our new rulers.

What punishment do you think those former homeguards should have received after independence?

They should all have been killed, detained, or expelled from Kenya.

Does this mean that you don't believe in the policy of 'forgive and forget'?

Precisely! How are we expected to forgive—leave alone forget—such traitors who were responsible for the killing and suffering of so many Kenyans? My son died during this struggle—killed by one of these traitors. I will not forget this as long as I live nor will I ever forgive the killer.

Do you think that we could have attained our uhuru without the armed struggle?

No. The argument and strength of Mau Mau dismantled the colonial myth of a white man's country. In fact, the Mau Mau struggle forced the British to relinquish their role over our country.

Nyeri District
20 August 1978

Person Interviewed: MWK. He was a key homeguard and a vicious killer.
Social Status: A prosperous peasant farmer. By rural standards, he is very rich.

I approached MWK hoping to get his own views on the Mau Mau struggle as a former collaborator and killer of our people. However, he made it quite clear to me that he was not prepared to talk about the subject. He personally felt that this whole affair should be forgotten now that we had become independent. After my insistence, however, he agreed to answer a few of my questions.

Q. Does it mean that you still think that people still consider you and the others who supported the British during the Mau Mau struggle their enemy, in spite of the fact that Mzee Kenyatta has consistently told us to forgive and forget?

Oh yes. As far as I know, they have not forgotten or forgiven us. That is why I even don't feel secure mixing freely with them, especially in drinking places. This is why I stopped drinking.

Do you think there were genuine reasons why the people went to the forest?

As I told you from the beginning, I am not prepared to answer anything concerning that subject. After all, why bother about distant events like Mau Mau? We now have *uhuru* and the white man has sold his land to us, Black people; I think we should be more concerned with national development rather than spending our time discussing politics. Don't you think I have a point there?

You were supporting the British during the Mau Mau struggle, what was the reason for doing so? Didn't you want land and freedom?

I am not prepared to answer that question either, and if you don't mind, I have a lot of work to do.

What do you think of Dedan Kimathi? Wasn't he a great patriot?

No comment.

Nyeri District

24 August 1978

Person Interviewed: WK. He was a Mau Mau General.

Social Status: A peasant-worker.

Q. When did you join the Mau Mau struggle and why?

WK: I joined in 1952 to fight against British oppression, exploitation and tyranny.

Which camp were you operating from?

Nyandarwa.

Did you know Kimathi personally, and if so, how can you characterize him as a leader of the movement?

As a Mau Mau General, I knew Marshal Dedan Kimathi well, since we used to meet in the Nyandarwa mountains to discuss the progress of the war. Kimathi had great charisma and extraordinary qualities of leadership. He organized and coordinated the entire struggle, despite the hardships we faced in the forest, mainly communication problems. He was fair and democratic in all his revolutionary duties.

How was the fighting organized?

First, discipline was a crucial factor in our success. Those who proved disloyal, cowardly, bandit-like, or failed in the execution of their duties were tried before the KLFA military tribunal. If they were found guilty, they were severely punished. At the same time, all the guerrillas were required to obey their army commanders without any hesitation. We also discussed our war strategy collectively before we launched an attack. Because the British army was equipped with sophisticated weapons, we used hit and run tactics to fight it.

How did you get food in the forest?

It was brought to us by peasant women, otherwise we fed on European cattle and sheep.

Are you saying that the women were the backbone of the movement?

Yes, the struggle could not have succeeded without the women who provided us with food, medicine, clothing and strategic information. Some of the war committees, which were the material base for the struggle in the

We Were Betrayed

villages, were run by women. Women spied on the activities of homeguard traitors and were also used as baits to induce a homeguard wanted for murder to go to a strategic place. Because of their patriotism, many women were subjected to all sorts of atrocities by our enemy.

How did you get weapons?

The main source of our weapons was the enemy himself. We also made our own guns. But we also had our *pangas* which proved to be very important weapons.

How did you treat the traitors, spies and informers?

Mercilessly! Most of them were hacked to death with *pangas*. I personally cut off the head of one of the homeguard traitors, cut off his penis, and put it into his mouth like a cigar. We had to be ruthless with our enemies to strengthen our position.

Were you fighting for the liberation of Kenya or Central Province?

In organizing our struggle, we had in mind the freedom and good living conditions for all Kenyan Africans.

You fought hard for the liberation of this country. Are you satisfied with the results?

I am not prepared to comment on that.

Why?

I am afraid of the consequences. Maybe I will speak on this subject in the future, but not now.

Why did General Bamuingi decide to return to the forest with his force after his meeting with KANU government officials?

Well, I don't really want to talk about that either. [After I insisted that he should answer this question, he told me:] General Bamuingi disagreed with the government's policy, particularly about the land question. He also wanted the KANU government to recognize the Mau Mau army as a national army. All his demands were rejected. As a result, he decided to go back to the forest to fight for these demands.

What about you? Why didn't you follow General Bamuingi back to the forest? Does it mean you supported the government's land policy?

This is the same question which I said I will not answer for the time being.

Nakuru District

3 September 1978

Person Interviewed: NK. He was a firm supporter of the movement.

Social Status: Ordinary peasant.

Q. *What was the main cause of the Mau Mau struggle? and was Mau Mau a terrorist organization?*

NK: Mau Mau was organized to fight for our stolen land and our country's independence. It was a patriotic, anti-imperialist movement.

Did the Mau Mau struggle delay uhuru?

No! without Mau Mau, Kenya would not have attained her *uhuru* in 1963. The *Kabuuru* had entrenched themselves and were here to stay. They had taken large tracts of our land, built permanent houses and a strong military machinery. Without armed struggle, they would not have listened to our demands.

Now that we have the 'land and uhuru', are you happy about these 'achievements'?

Not at all. My main disappointment is that the people who fought got no land, and their contribution to the fight for independence was not recognized. The land, which we expected to be distributed free to the poor and landless, was grabbed by the former homeguards and the big politicians. I feel that our government should have at least helped the widows and children whose husbands and fathers died in the forest.

Was the Mau Mau movement betrayed then?

Yes. First, those who fought and died for *uhuru* were not given national recognition. Secondly, most of the beneficiaries from our glorious struggle are the former collaborators, and not the legitimate freedom fighters. Who runs the government body? Isn't it the sons of former colonial chiefs and white settlers?

Do you agree with the philosophy of 'forgive and forget'?

How can we forget our glorious struggle? We cannot forget that we fought and died for this land. We cannot forget our history. It is not human to forgive those who killed us, those who opposed our struggle for national independence with blood and fire. In fact, we hoped that these traitors would be punished for their treacherous acts by our government, but instead they were rewarded; they are now our rulers.

What future do you see for the majority of Kenyans?

As things stand now, the future for them, for us rather, is grim and unpromising. The political system in our country must be re-adjusted, since too few have too much, otherwise. . .

What do you mean by 'otherwise'?

You know, if the situation continues to worsen, our children will be forced to fight—to fight for the same things we fought for. I don't know whether I am making myself clear, but I really get myself disturbed when I see poverty and starvation anywhere in this republic.

Nakuru District
5 September 1978

Person Interviewed: GWK. He was a guerrilla fighter.

Social Status: A prosperous farmer in the former White Highlands.

Q. *Why did you join the Mau Mau guerrilla army? Where were you in the forest?*

GWK: I was in Nyandarwa. I joined the guerrilla army to fight for our country's independence.

Did you know Kimathi in person? What do you think of him as a leader?

I did not know him personally; I only knew he was our undisputable leader and the supreme commander of all KLFA forces. He had good organizational skills. In fact, the success of the movement depended on his firm leadership.

When did you join the guerrillas in the forest?

Early 1954.

How many battles were you engaged in during your stay in the forest?

Many, but the main one I was involved in was the Battle of Othaya. Under General Mathenge's command, we attacked the Othaya Police Station. We fought hard, but we lost the battle.

How was life in the forest, and how did you get your food?

Life in the forest was very difficult, and hadn't it been for our commitment to the struggle, we would not have persevered. The rain and cold were devastating. Food was another problem. Without the support of the peasants, we would have died of starvation or given up the struggle.

Do you know what role General China (Waruhiu Itote) played after his capture?

No.

The whole struggle was difficult and bloody, are you really satisfied with its results?

To a great extent yes, I am satisfied. There is no more forced labour, no more colour bar, and we don't carry *kipandes* any more. In addition, the white man has no power any more, we have our own government. Above everything else, we have regained our stolen land. These are the things we fought and died for.

Some of your comrades (General Bamuingi and others) decided to go back to the forest after uhuru. Why do you think they made such a serious decision?

They were misguided and I don't support them at all.

By the way, how did you get this farm, and what do you think about the majority of freedom fighters who were not as lucky as you were?

I bought it; but how and where I got the money is my own business. As for the others you talked about, they could have tried to raise money and buy their own land. As our leaders have been consistently telling us, they should not expect free things.

Nakuru District
15 September 1978

Epilogue

The Mau Mau Anti-Imperialist Oaths

To reinforce their revolutionary commitment, secrecy and discipline, all members of the Mau Mau movement were obliged to take several oaths. There were, however, three principal oaths: (1) the Oath of Unity; (2) the Batuni Oath; (3) the Leadership Oath.

Oath administrators were selected by the Mau Mau Central Committee from only those members who were known to be intense in their patriotism and hatred of British imperialism; those who believed in a violent overthrow of the foreign regime of exploitation and oppression. In a nutshell, it was a serious crime for any person to administer the Mau Mau oath without being authorized by the Central Committee. Anyone caught doing so was sentenced to death.

The Oath of Unity

This oath was conceived of around 1940, when it was only administered to selected patriots. It became a mass oath in 1950, and was administered to any Kenyan patriot before he joined the Mau Mau movement. Its main purpose was to rally the Kenyan masses around the movement. In other words, it was used as an instrument for unifying and mobilizing the Kenyan masses against the British occupiers.

In Central Kenya, which was the citadel of the Mau Mau movement, force was used to administer this oath; those who refused to take it were eliminated outright. There was no room for dissenters.

The Oath of Unity went like this:

I

I speak the truth and swear before *Ngai* and before the compatriots present that:

1. I will fight for the African soil which the European has stolen from us until we get it back. I will never reveal the secrets of this organization or anything concerning it to the colonial authorities, or to any other person

- who is not a member. I will never betray a member of this organization in any way; I will always try to strengthen the unity and leadership of this glorious organization.
2. If I am called upon, at any time of the day or night, by members of this organization, to assist in any work, I will respond without question. I will offer all my strength and energy to further the cause of this organization. I will never fail to help a member of this organization, even if this leads to my death.
 3. If I am required to raise funds for this organization, I will do so without hesitation. I shall pay shs. 62/50 and a ram, as assessed by this organization, as soon as I am able to do so.
 4. If I am ordered by my leader to kill anybody who opposes this organization, I will not hesitate to do so. I will always try to trick or manipulate a white man, or any of our enemies, to accompany me; then I will crush him, and take away his guns and any other material he may be carrying. I will make sure that he is dead before I leave him.
 5. If guns or ammunition are brought to be hidden in my house, I will take them, and I will never reveal this to the colonialists and their Kenyan supporters. I shall never steal any property belonging to a member of this organization, nor shall I spy on or sell my people to the colonial occupiers.
 6. I shall never help the European missionaries and their African converts to ruin our cultures and customs by their Christian activities; I will always support the independent church and school movement. I will never accept the Beecher Report.

II

I solemnly swear before this movement, and those of its members who are present, that:

1. I am taking this oath to unite the African people of Kenya in the struggle for freedom and land. I will never sell or dispose of any African land to foreigners, particularly to Europeans or Asians.
2. Should I ever be called out at night, in the darkness or in the rain, by members of this movement, I shall come out without any question. I have committed myself to fighting for my country, and I will never retreat even if blood, suffering and death pour down on me like torrential rain.
3. I shall never inform on any member of this movement, or against any Mau Mau cadre who steals from Europeans; I will never sell this movement either for money or for my life. I will obey without question all the rules and regulations of this movement, and should I ever transgress against them, and I am asked for my life, for doing so, I will never refuse to give it up.
4. I shall always obey any strike called by the leaders of the trade union

movement, and will always remember compatriots Chege wa Kibachia and Makhan Singh. I will strongly support the leadership of KAU and the trade union movement until our country is liberated.

5. If I am ever given firearms to hide by my leader, I shall do so fearlessly. It is my duty to help any member of this movement who is in difficulties or needs my assistance.

III

I swear before this movement, the movement of unity, the unity which is cemented with our blood and the love of our country that:

1. I shall fiercely fight for the land, the land of Kirinyaga, the land which was seized by the Europeans. I will never compromise with a European; I will always consider him to be my enemy and the enemy of my country.
2. I shall never prevent any member of my family to be a member of this movement. If any member of my family turns traitor, I will report him to my leaders and have him eliminated. I shall never disobey the leaders of this movement under any circumstances.
3. I shall always oppose intermarriage between Africans and the white community; nor shall I ever go out with prostitutes. Furthermore, I shall never cause a girl to become pregnant and leave her unmarried; I will never marry and then seek a divorce.
4. I shall never drink European-made beer nor smoke European-made cigarettes.
5. It is my duty as a member of this movement to organize our people against Europeans and their local supporters. I am determined to sacrifice my blood and the blood of compatriots for our land and freedom.
6. I shall never take orders from European colonialists, nor shall I ever cooperate with the colonial authorities and their Kenyan supporters, even if it means my death.
7. I must recruit all my relatives and friends into this movement, in spite of the risks involved. If one of my relatives refuses to join this movement, I will have him eliminated.

SHOULD I EVER BETRAY ANY OF THE ABOVE PLEDGES:

MAY THIS OATH KILL ME

MAY THIS *THENGE* KILL ME

MAY THIS SEVEN NDONGU KILL ME

MAY *NGAI* KILL ME.

The Batuni Oath

The Batuni Oath was taken only by those who were reliable and were renowned for their militancy and for their ability to observe discipline and

secrecy. It was taken by those youths who were being recruited into the Kenya Land Freedom Army. Nobody could join the guerrilla army without having taken this oath, which demanded absolute devotion, commitment and sacrifice:

I

I speak the truth and swear by this Batuni Oath, which is the oath of violence, and before the peoples of Kenya and Africa, that:

1. If I am ordered to burn a European plantation, and to kill the European and his family, I will do it without hesitation. From now on, I regard those who haven't taken the Mau Mau oath, including my own family and relatives, to be the enemies of this movement, and I am determined to fight them mercilessly.
2. If I am ordered to kill enemies of the movement, I will do so, even if they include my own father, mother, wife, sister or brother, daughter or son. When I go out to kill an enemy of the movement, I will take a strangling rope, a *panga*, a small knife, a pistol, and a piece of cloth to cover my fingerprints, with me. After killing him, I will cut his head off to make sure that he/she is completely dead, before I leave.
3. If the movement wants my wife/husband for any task concerning the struggle, or to go out on a mission, I will allow her/him to go without any hesitation. I will always obey the orders of my leaders.
4. Should a guerrilla fighter come to me with bloodstained clothing, I must take them away and burn them, and, at the same time, I will provide him with new ones. I will never betray the members of this movement.
5. I will never have any sympathy for any Europeans, be they missionaries or settlers, since they are our main enemies. I will kill them as I kill a wild beast.
6. As a guerrilla fighter, it is my duty and responsibility to steal firearms, to protect our people from the British enemy, for the movement. I will do everything to protect the secrets of this movement.

II

I solemnly swear before this movement, and in the name of our ancestors (Gikuyu *na* Mumbi), that:

1. If either my wife, child, or any other member of my family, becomes the enemy of this movement, I shall assist in his/her elimination. I shall never commit a crime against my people, nor shall I ever tell lies to my leaders or any other members of this movement.
2. I will never desert the Kenya Land Freedom Army, nor take a leave without the permission of my unit commanders. I shall never abandon a guerrilla comrade in difficulties without trying to assist him/her, even if it costs me my death.

3. I will always obey the leader of my unit without an argument or complaint, and I will give him any money or materials seized during a battle. I will never hide anything from him.
4. If I am called to accompany guerrilla fighters to a battlefield, I shall obey; I will never give lame excuses. I will never violate the rules and regulations of this movement.
5. I will never take the Moscow Oath, even if I am tortured or killed. If the members of this movement kill me because of my treacherous acts, I shall never curse them with my blood.
6. I will never expose my gun to those who have not taken the Batuni Oath. If by any chance a person who has not taken the Batuni Oath sees me with a gun, it will be my responsibility to report this to my unit leader. I will never call a gun and ammunition by its proper name but will always refer to them as *Muti* (stick) and *makara* (charcoal).
7. I shall never seduce the woman (man) of another man (woman), keep prostitutes, or steal the belongings of a member of this movement; I shall not hate or speak ill of another comrade.
8. If the members of this movement come to me, by day or night, and ask me to hide them, I shall do so without fear. I shall never spy on my people, but if I am sent to spy on the enemy, I shall never refuse to do so. And if I am ordered to eliminate an enemy of this movement, I will never allow myself to sympathize with the enemy.
9. If I am called at night, during thunder storms and lightning, to fight for our land, to shed my blood for my country, I shall go and never surrender.
10. I shall remain a faithful follower of Dedan Kimathi, respect the KAU leaders, and remember our old commanders, Jesse Kariuki and Dedan Mugo, until the day we win our independence. I will never serve any government except an all-African government under Mau Mau leadership.

IF I VIOLATE ANY OF THE ABOVE VOWS,
MAY THIS SOIL AND ALL ITS PRODUCTS
BE A CURSE UPON ME AND MY ENTIRE FAMILY.

Leadership Oath

This oath was only taken by the top leaders of the movement: the members of the Mau Mau Central Committee, the KLFA generals, the village and district Mau Mau leaders, and the leaders of peasant detachments. It was highly secret:

I solemnly swear before this movement, the movement of armed struggle, a struggle for land and freedom, that:

1. Today I have committed my life to the liberation of our people, and I

will never retreat. I have given myself to be a fighter for my country, a fighter who will never retreat, even if blood runs like water.

2. I will never criticize the leadership of this movement in the presence of persons who are not members of the Central Committee. I will never plan the injury or death of another comrade. I shall always be loyal to the leadership of this movement, obey its rules and regulations without hesitation.
4. Should I ever be asked, at any time, to go out and kill an enemy of this movement, I will arm myself and proceed fearlessly to fulfil the orders thus given to me by this movement. I will never abandon the leadership of my people, but I will go wherever my compatriots send me, to do whatever they ask me to do, even if it means my death. I will never run away from the battlefield and leave my comrades fighting. I shall continue fighting until the enemy is defeated.
5. I will work for the liberation of our country until my last drop of blood. I will never surrender or betray my comrades-in-arms to the enemy.
6. I will always work for the unity and strength of this movement. I will see to it that those under my command are disciplined, and that they follow the rules and regulations of this movement.
7. I will never collaborate with our enemy, or sell our people and country for money. I will continue fighting for the release of all political prisoners, including the KAU leaders. I will never support the leadership of the African members of the Legislative Council. I consider each of them to be my enemy.
8. I will never negotiate with the British for a peaceful settlement until they withdraw their armed forces from our country unconditionally.
9. I shall believe in this movement, in our people, and in their determination until my death, and I shall keep all the vows and commitments I have made here today until death. If I betray any of them, I will accept any punishment which my people decide to give me, even if it is a death penalty.