

THE ENEMY WITHIN: LOYALISTS AND THE WAR AGAINST MAU MAU IN KENYA*

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ABSTRACT: Between 1952 and 1960, the British colonial government of Kenya waged a violent counter-insurgency campaign against the Mau Mau rebels. In this effort the regime was assisted by collaborators, known as loyalists, drawn from the same communities as the insurgents. Based primarily on new archival sources, this article sets out the history of loyalism, stresses the ambiguity of allegiances during the conflict and argues that loyalism was a product of the same intellectual debates that had spawned the Mau Mau insurgency. The article concludes by stressing the significance for postcolonial Kenya of this history.

KEY WORDS: Kenya, Mau Mau, conflict, decolonization.

INTRODUCTION

WRITING to a local newspaper in November 1954, Francis Gatheru explained his opposition to the Mau Mau rebellion. During the Emergency of 1952–60, loyalists such as Gatheru supported the colonial military campaign against fellow Gikuyu, Embu and Meru amongst Mau Mau's insurgents.¹ Gatheru understood his loyalism with reference to the oath promising to support Mau Mau that perhaps up to 90 per cent of the local population had taken.² Unlike missionaries, colonial officials and some Christian converts, Gatheru was not greatly concerned with the ritual aspects of oathing. He believed that it was neither force nor threat of supernatural punishment that

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¹ This paper concentrates on the Kiambu, Fort Hall, Nyeri, Embu and Meru districts that made up the Native Reserves of Central Province. For discussions of loyalism in the White Highlands, see F. Furedi, 'The social composition of the Mau Mau movement in the White Highlands', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 1 (1974), 497–8; F. Furedi, *The Mau Mau War in Perspective* (London, 1989), 93–8; T. Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau* (London, 1987), 130–5; M. Tamarkin, 'Mau Mau in Nakuru', *Journal of African History*, 17 (1976), 119–34; M. Tamarkin, 'The loyalists in Nakuru during the Mau Mau revolt and its aftermath, 1953–1963', *Asian and African Studies*, 12 (1978), 247–61.

² Kenya National Archive (KNA) DC/MUR/3/4/21, N. Langford-Smith, 'Judgement must begin: an interim report on the African Anglican church in the Northern Highlands', Jan. 1953, 1. A similar figure is given in C. Elkins, 'Reckoning with the past: the contrast between the Kenyan and South African experiences', *Social Dynamics*, 26 (2000), 18. Widespread use of coercion and force during oathing means that this figure must not be used as an indicator of support for Mau Mau.

compelled most to pledge their support to the insurgents, although both were troubling for many initiates.³ Instead it was the Mau Mau's promise to deliver 'freedom, land and every good thing we wished to have' that won it the popular support of a deeply divided society. 'By that', Gatheru wrote, 'and that only, very many people were oathed voluntarily'.⁴ Mau Mau promised 'ithaka na wiathi', literally translated as 'land and freedom', but better understood as 'self-mastery through land'.⁵ With that battle cry, radical politicians had mobilized a large cross-section of the population by late 1952.

Over the following four years of armed struggle, more than 90 per cent of the 13,000 officially acknowledged casualties of the anti-colonial and internecine violence were Gikuyu, Embu or Meru. Most were killed by their fellow inhabitants of Kenya's central highlands.⁶ By November 1954, Mau Mau appeared to Gatheru unable to deliver self-mastery. 'Look at the results of the oath', he implored, 'Surely it is contrary to what we expected'. Mau Mau's foot-soldiers in the mountain forests were on the defensive, the population of much of Central Province forced into fortified villages, and tens of thousands of the insurgency's real or imagined sympathizers detained. In contrast, loyalists were able to continue their lives, expand their landholdings and grow cash-crops. For Gatheru, the choice between Mau Mau and loyalism appeared simple. 'If we are getting the opposite of what Mau Mau promised us when we were taking the oath, why then', he rhetorically enquired, 'shouldn't we do the contrary of what we promised?' He continued, 'If we were to give them help of all kinds, it should now mean that we must give them all kinds of hardships and give them nothing like assistance'. 'Surely', Gatheru concluded, 'we are not to get anywhere by prolonging the situation'.⁷

Many Gikuyu, Embu and Meru came to share Gatheru's opinion. At one time or another during the Emergency, most were both Mau Mau and

³ For tensions within Mau Mau over methods of oathing, the use of violence, indiscipline more generally and the failure of the government to successfully mobilize this unease in the first months of the war, see G. Kershaw, *Mau Mau From Below* (Oxford, 1998), 231 and 237–8.

⁴ KNA AHC/9/23, Gatheru to Editor.

⁵ J. Lonsdale, 'The moral economy of Mau Mau: the problem', in B. Berman and J. Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa* (Oxford, 1992), 1, 326. See for more detailed discussion, J. Lonsdale, 'The moral economy of Mau Mau: wealth, poverty and civic virtue in Kikuyu political thought', in Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, II, 315–504. Although a Gikuyu term, *wiathi* was common to Embu and Meru peoples. See Lonsdale, 'Wealth', 347–8.

⁶ E. S. Atieno Odhiambo and J. Lonsdale, 'Introduction', in E. S. Atieno Odhiambo and J. Lonsdale (eds.), *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration* (Oxford, 2003), 3. Colonial statistics recorded 11,500 Mau Mau fighters, 170 African members of the official armed forces and 1,800 loyalists killed. In contrast, 32 settlers and 63 European combatants lost their lives. Less commonly noted are the 77 Asian fatalities. See Colony & Protectorate of Kenya, *The Origins and Growth of Mau Mau: An Historical Survey* (Nairobi, 1960), 316. Anderson estimates the fatalities to be likely closer to 20,000: see D. M. Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain's Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (London, 2005), 4. Elkins believes the casualties of the war could be 'tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands', in C. Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (New York, 2005) (published in the UK as *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* [London, 2005], xvi).

⁷ KNA AHC/9/23, Gatheru to Editor.

loyalist, sometimes even simultaneously in response to the changing balance of power in localities. For that same reason, greater numbers of loyalists emerged as the tide of the conflict turned against Mau Mau from late 1954 onwards. Many certainly had little choice in the matter. Press-ganging was far from unknown. The authorities in some locations forced known supporters of Mau Mau into the loyalist Home Guard in order to keep them under observation.⁸ In Kangema, Fort Hall district, up to 30 per cent of the Home Guard was compulsorily enlisted. Conscripts became 'so thoroughly implicated' with the government that leaving the Home Guard was not a practicable option.⁹ For others, revenge was a decisive factor. Kariuki Kiruma joined the Home Guard in Ihururu, Nyeri after his brother was killed by Mau Mau.¹⁰ Others were discomfited by the radical militancy of the insurgents. Elisha Munene Mweya, a senior member of the Kenyan African Union (KAU) in Embu, became a loyalist after becoming uncomfortable with 'the nasty words and leadership which were performed by the group which came from Nairobi and reached Kyeni Location'.¹¹ Religious faith could be a significant factor. Jeremiah Nyagah, a devout Christian, wrote he 'would rather die than take the oath'.¹² The reasons why individuals became loyalists were, as in any civil war, varied. Undoubtedly, the morass of petty quarrels and disputes within households and between neighbours that typify the local contexts of so many conflicts were important in determining allegiances.¹³

Whatever motivations lay behind the decision to resist, collaborate or steer a course through the middle, little room for agency actually existed. Regardless of the often temporary nature of the decision, it was understood in the terminology of moral ethnicity. The desire for self-mastery was placed at the centre of deliberations.¹⁴ Loyalists condemned the rebellion's supporters for their apparent refusal to labour virtuously and their failure to obtain land, freedom or self-mastery. Mau Mau came to be portrayed by loyalists as criminal delinquents. The attribution of loyalism, a term rooted in British imperial history but nevertheless widely adopted by those to whom it was applied in Kenya, is therefore somewhat misleading.¹⁵ Opposition to Mau Mau was not solely imposed by colonial masters, but also an intellectual position embedded in local culture and social relations. Much of the debate produced by the recent publication of works by Anderson and Elkins has

⁸ The National Archives, Kew (TNA: PRO) WO 276/392, Meru District Intelligence Summary for week ending 22 Oct. 1953, 2; Richard Kanampiu Githae and Stephen Murocha, interviews with the author, Chogoria, Meru South, 15 Sept. 2003; Celestino Kirengeni, interview with the author, Chogoria, Meru South, 18 Sept. 2003.

⁹ KNA ARC(MAA) 2/5/307 11, District Officer (DO) Kangema to District Commissioner (DC) Fort Hall, 23 Aug. 1953.

¹⁰ Kariuki Kiruma, interview with the author, Ihururu, Nyeri, 7 Feb. 2004.

¹¹ KNA AHC/9/24, Elisha Munene Mweya to Editor, *Kayu ka Embu*, 30 Jan. 1954, 1.

¹² Rhodes House Library, Oxford (RHL) Mss Afr s 1727, J. J. Nyagah to M. Foote, 16 Oct. 1954.

¹³ See, for comparative and theoretical discussion, S. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge, 2006).

¹⁴ Lonsdale, 'The problem', 266.

¹⁵ The term is still widely used both in Kenya and in the secondary literature to denote opposition to Mau Mau. It is for this reason that I continue to use 'loyalism' to describe the activities detailed below.

focused on the conflict between the many branches of the colonial regime and the insurgents. It seems timely to reiterate that the Mau Mau war was no simple dispute between colonizer and colonized.

The use of self-mastery to inform and understand choices between loyalism and Mau Mau did not produce irreversible allegiances or two fixed and distinct identities.¹⁶ Instead, resistance and collaboration shared common intellectual origins and idioms. As elsewhere, 'One should perhaps think of a spectrum with collaboration at one end and resistance at the other and most responses falling somewhere in between'.¹⁷ The population oscillated between loyalism and Mau Mau, understanding both in the terms of moral ethnicity, the 'contested process of defining cultural identity, communal membership and leadership'.¹⁸ Moral ethnicity, a heavily gendered concept, entwined macro- and micro-concepts of power. The debates surrounding Mau Mau and loyalism centred upon the household in order to uphold male claims to speak with authority in the arena of political debate. Domestic wealth empowered and poverty silenced.¹⁹ The household was the location for measuring virtue through assessments of the ability of men to harness the productive power of the household in order to beget wealth.²⁰

From at least the end of the nineteenth century, profitable control of the homestead demonstrated the moral authority required to speak in public on matters of political importance.²¹ Those who had achieved this authority were considered to demonstrate self-mastery, best understood as 'the moral maturity of working for oneself'.²² Self-mastery allowed for the ownership of land, the employment of labour, marriage and procession through various social strata to elderhood. Responsible elders were thought to practise self-mastery. Their virtue, and thereby right to lead political action, was to be visible in their honourable relations with their clients, particularly landless clan members given access to the clan's land in return for labour. Hard work

¹⁶ While specific citations are made at relevant points in the following passage, my understanding of the concept of self-mastery in the pre-Mau-Mau period is derived from Kershaw, *Mau Mau From Below*; Lonsdale, 'Wealth'; D. R. Peterson, 'Wordy women: gender trouble and the oral politics of the East African Revival in Northern Gikuyuland', *Journal of African History*, 42 (2001), 469–89; D. R. Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya* (Portsmouth NH, 2004), 1–27. The broader arguments advanced here have much in common with those made for Nyeri in D. R. Peterson, 'The Home Guard in Mau Mau's moral war' (paper given at the African Studies Association annual conference, Boston, 2003).

¹⁷ P. A. Buckner and C. Bridge, 'Reinventing the British world', *Round Table*, 368 (2003), 81.

¹⁸ B. Berman, D. Eyoh and W. Kymlicka, 'Introduction: ethnicity and the politics of democratic nation-building in Africa', in B. Berman, D. Eyoh and W. Kymlicka (eds.), *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa* (Oxford, 2004), 4.

¹⁹ Peterson, 'Wordy women', 473.

²⁰ A. Heyer, '"Nowadays they can even kill you for that which they feel is theirs": gender and the production of ethnic identity in Kikuyu-speaking Central Kenya', in V. Broch-Due (ed.), *Violence and Belonging: The Quest for Identity in Post-Colonial Africa* (Abingdon, 2005), 41. A similar case has been made for Maasai ethnicity. See R. D. Waller, 'Pastoral poverty in historical perspective', in D. M. Anderson and V. Broch-Due (eds.), *The Poor Are Not Us: Poverty and Pastoralism in Eastern Africa* (Oxford, 1999), 24.

²¹ J. Lonsdale, 'Mau Maus of the mind: making Mau Mau and remaking Kenya', *Journal of African History*, 31 (1990), 418.

²² Lonsdale, 'The problem', 295.

on this land proved manhood and set the landless on the path towards self-mastery. Tenure of land was earned at an undefined point in the future by labour, and in turn would bring wealth, elderhood and self-mastery.²³ This was, however, no model for a meritocratic Merrie Africa. Moral ethnicity in Kenya's central highlands, as elsewhere, oiled the machinery of patronage and sustained the domination of society by 'big men'.²⁴

By the late 1930s, the unequal network of reciprocity that linked patron with client had been broken.²⁵ Dissent was provoked by land shortages, widely attributed to the alienation of land by European settlers, which elite-dominated political action failed to reverse. Weakened by this defeat and their support for controversial attempts to ban clitoridectomy, some patrons' political legitimacy was further undermined by their attempts to reform land tenure within the Native Reserve. Faced with a rising population and decreasing soil productivity, many senior clan members evicted their landless tenants in order to maximize their own returns from the increasingly scarce and valuable resource. Gikuyu, Embu and Meru society was doubly cursed by its patrons, who had long been co-opted into the structures of colonial rule.²⁶ Collaborative networks of patronage connected rural households to the regime in Nairobi, via headmen, chiefs and the Provincial Administration. Material gain, and increasingly survival, was dependent upon inclusion within these matrices of clientage.²⁷ As chiefs and members of local councils, the elite supported and enforced the controversial soil conservation and animal husbandry measures implemented after the Second World War. Such policies promised to benefit the landed elite, but were reliant on the forced labour of a discontented general population and the cooperation of local agents in forcibly gaining the acquiescence of the Reserves.

As agents of the colonial state and as patrons, the elite consistently demonstrated the tyranny of wealth rather than its virtue. They thus abdicated their monopoly on leadership. Evicted tenants in the Native Reserves and those who could foresee that fate befalling them no longer felt constrained by the demands for honourable labour and political silence. They were united by the fear and lived experience of poverty, which distinguished them from the clan elders. The landless found further allies amongst the urban radicals and squatters evicted from the European farms, both groups which had long

²³ J. Lonsdale, 'Jomo Kenyatta, God and the modern world', in J.-G. Deutsch, P. Probst and H. Schmidt (eds.), *African Modernities: Entangled Meanings in Current Debate* (Oxford, 2002), 33.

²⁴ For broader discussions of these issues see B. Berman, 'Ethnicity, patronage and the African state: the politics of uncivil nationalism', *African Affairs*, 97 (1998), 305–41; B. Berman, 'Ethnicity, bureaucracy and democracy: the politics of trust', in Berman, Eyoh and Kymlicka (eds.), *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*, 38–53.

²⁵ The following passage is based upon Anderson, *Histories*, 9–53; Kershaw, *Mau Mau From Below*, 212–47; Lonsdale, 'Wealth'; D. Throup, *Economic and Social Origins of Mau Mau 1945–53* (London, 1988), 63–119, 139–70.

²⁶ See M. S. Clough, *Fighting Two Sides: Kenyan Chiefs and Politicians, 1918–1940* (Niwot CO, 1990); R. L. Tignor, 'Colonial chiefs in chiefless societies', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 9 (1971), 339–59.

²⁷ For more detailed discussion of colonial patronage and clientage see Berman, 'Ethnicity, patronage', 316–18.

felt abandoned by the rural patriarchs. This axis challenged the elite's political hegemony, but its constituents remained poor and therefore unable to stake a claim to virtuous leadership. Although by no means the first such challenge,²⁸ the insurgency represented the 'repudiation of clientage' by a society that felt 'betrayed by their patrons, white and black'.²⁹ Driven by 'a shared sense of generational destiny,'³⁰ the rebels appealed to age-set loyalties that denounced the power of elites institutionalized within vertically structured and elite led clans.³¹ Kenyatta's moderate plea to the loyalty of age-grades in oaths launched in 1947 fell on fertile ground, but was quickly overtaken by that of the *Anake a Forti* (the Forty Group).³² The members of the latter, ostensibly made up of those initiated in 1940 but in truth encompassing a far greater variety of individuals, became a motor for the radicalization of politics.³³ Many within Mau Mau saw themselves as the *Irungu* generation, the straighteners, who would overthrow the corrupt incumbent generation of patrons and usurp European power.³⁴

By the 1950s, the case for armed resistance to colonial rule was compelling. Mau Mau emerged from significant socioeconomic and political discontent, which connected the desperate poverty of the squatters on European farms in the White Highlands with the urban unemployed and landless residents of the Native Reserves. Local elites, co-opted by the colonial regime to serve as chiefs and headmen, were implicated in some of the most controversial aspects of colonial rule, adding to the readily apparent social conflicts.³⁵ However, despite the long history of division, the proffering of 'allegedly opposed and unarguable social categories' as 'determinations of action' during the Mau Mau war is mistaken.³⁶ Informants from both sides of the conflict in Nyeri and in Meru were unwilling to distinguish loyalists from Mau Mau in terms of wealth or seniority, suggesting temporary allegiances cut across the cleavages of gender, age and class.³⁷ Correspondence produced

²⁸ The East African Revival could be understood in such terms. See Peterson, 'Wordy women'.

²⁹ J. Lonsdale, 'Moral and political argument in Kenya', in Berman, Eyoh and Kymlicka (eds.), *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*, 82.

³⁰ D. Peterson, 'Writing in revolution: independent schooling and Mau Mau in Nyeri', in Atieno Odhiambo and Lonsdale (eds.), *Mau Mau and Nationhood*, 89.

³¹ A. Heyer, 'The mandala of a market: a study of capitalism and the state in Murang'a District, Kenya' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, SOAS University of London, 1998), 159.

³² Kershaw, *Mau Mau From Below*, 201; J. Lonsdale, 'Authority, gender and violence: the war within Mau Mau's fight for land and freedom', in Atieno Odhiambo and Lonsdale (eds.), *Mau Mau and Nationhood*, 59.

³³ For a discussion of the *Anake a Forti* and the growth of Mau Mau, see Anderson, *Histories*, 36–7, 189, 231; F. Furedi, 'The African crowd in Nairobi: popular movements and elite politics', *Journal of African History*, 14 (1973), 282–5; Throup, *Economic and Social Origins*, 141, 162–4, 173–6.

³⁴ R. M. Githige, 'The religious factor in Mau Mau with particular reference to Mau Mau oaths' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Nairobi, 1978), 53; D. Peterson, 'Writing in revolution', 88. For a detailed history of generational transitions see G. Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu 1500–1900* (Nairobi, 1974), 15–24.

³⁵ For a concise summary of the build-up to Mau Mau, see Anderson, *Histories*, 9–53.

³⁶ Lonsdale, 'The problem', 295.

³⁷ Kanampiu Githae and Murocha, interviews; Kirengeni, interview; Duncan Ngatia Muhoya, Sihar Gitahi Ribai and Kariuki Kiruma, interviews with author, Ihururu, Nyeri, 7 Feb. 2004.

by loyalists and discussed later in this paper came from a wide variety of authors: men and women, elders and schoolchildren, and landowners and traders. But loyalism was not just restricted to the literate. Kershaw's analysis of members of one unit of the loyalist paramilitary Home Guards found them to be generally between 26 and 40 years of age, poorly educated and subsistence or peasant farmers.³⁸ As the concern with resettling landless loyalists in the aftermath of the conflict discussed below demonstrates, the ranks of loyalism contained thousands of the poor and illiterate.

LOYALISM, MAU MAU, SELF-MASTERY AND PATRONAGE

The crude assumptions of social differences between Mau Mau and loyalists reflect the neglect of loyalists within Mau Mau's vast historiography. Based on very little primary evidence and derision of nationalists and former Mau Mau activists,³⁹ loyalists are all too frequently depicted as a few, wealthy Christian individuals acting in the service of colonial masters and pursuing narrowly defined self-interests.⁴⁰ Such an argument appears intuitive. The few studies of loyalism suggest a correlation between loyalism and membership of elites and the mission churches.⁴¹ As a consequence of their co-option into the colonial state by missionaries and administrators, members of the Christian elite had a monopoly over the public expressions of loyalty, thus creating the impression that they constituted a sizeable majority of loyalists. This interpretation further appeared to confirm what scholars could observe in postcolonial Kenya. Elite loyalists retained a dominant position in local areas long after Mau Mau. Their hegemony, logic suggested, could be extrapolated back into the past. This paper will make a different argument.

Many Gikuyu, Embu and Meru were pushed towards Mau Mau by exclusion from the means of achieving self-mastery within the colonial political economy by settler farmers, colonial administrators and land-hungry patrons. That choice first entailed a rejection of the leadership of many patrons, particularly the chiefs who, as one vernacular newspaper article argued in January 1948, 'should know that to be respected through fear is not

³⁸ Kershaw, *Mau Mau From Below*, 327–8.

³⁹ See for example, J. M. Kariuki, 'Mau Mau': *The Account of a Kenya African of his Experiences in Detention Camps 1953–1960* (Nairobi, 1975), 37; M. Mathu, *The Urban Guerrilla: The Story of Mohamed Mathu*, ed. D. Barnett (Richmond BC, 1974), 15, 56; D. Njagi, *The Last Mau Mau Field Marshals: Kenya's Freedom War 1952–1963* (Meru, 1993), 51; O. Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru* (Nairobi, 1967), 125.

⁴⁰ See for such a depiction of loyalism, B. Berman, *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination* (London, 1990), 357; R. B. Edgerton, *Mau Mau: An African Crucible* (London, 1990), 82; Elkins, *Imperial*, 29, 49, 118, 246; W. O. Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya: An Analysis of a Peasant Revolt* (Oxford, 1998), 88–9; D. M. Ng'ang'a, 'Mau Mau, loyalists and politics in Murang'a 1952–1970', *Kenya Historical Review*, 5 (1977), 368–9; C. G. Rosberg Jr. and J. Nottingham, *The Myth of 'Mau Mau': Nationalism in Kenya* (New York, 1966), 292, 295.

⁴¹ Ng'ang'a, 'Mau Mau, loyalists', 365–84; B. A. Ogot, 'Revolt of the elders. An anatomy of the loyalist crowd in the Mau Mau uprising 1952–1956', in B. A. Ogot (ed.), *Hadith 4: Politics and Nationalism in Colonial Kenya* (Nairobi, 1972), 134–49; M. Tamarkin, 'The loyalists', 247–61.

as good as respect through love'.⁴² However, dissidents intended, at least initially, that protest should remain disciplined and led by 'educated Africans'.⁴³ Even after Mau Mau's fighters had taken to the forests, they sang 'We don't want war we want justice'.⁴⁴ Unity was considered, in a pamphlet published in April 1952, 'as the foremost requirement if we are to achieve our ultimate goals; without unity we can do little'.⁴⁵ 'Africans have no weapons', the newspaper *Mumenyereri* observed, 'but their weapon is to speak the truth and to be honest'.⁴⁶ For this reason, education was considered particularly important to political activists. They were greatly proud of the independent schools system that had spread across Central Province from the 1930s.⁴⁷ In *Mumenyereri* it was argued that 'There is no other way of progress except education in order that slavery may be abolished'.⁴⁸ In both the independent churches attached to the schools and those of the European missions, many Christians came to believe that to be oathed was a religious duty.⁴⁹

The politics of protest became radicalized, a trend given impetus by some of those returning from service in the armed forces during the Second World War. After serving overseas 'We could no longer accept the belief that a *mzungu* (European) was better than an African'.⁵⁰ Their domestic opponents could scarcely ignore the ferocity of the discontent exhibited by some of the former servicemen. Chief Stanley Kiama traced the origins of the rebellion to the moment 'when the young people who were serving in the army came back to the reserve'.⁵¹ The growth of militancy led by Kaggia and others required the sacrifice by Mau Mau's supporters of their desire for immediate *viathi* in the hope successive generations would enjoy that privilege: 'We fought for independence with the intention of bequeathing it to our children'.⁵² The criminality that Mau Mau unquestionably and increasingly

⁴² *Mumenyereri* article translated in KNA MAA/8/106, Director of Intelligence and Security to Chief Native Commissioner, 6 Feb. 1948.

⁴³ *Mumenyereri* article translated in KNA MAA/8/106, Director of Intelligence and Security to Minister of Labour and Chief Native Commissioner, 15 Sept. 1948.

⁴⁴ Quoted in B. A. Ogot, 'Politics, culture and music in Central Kenya: a study of Mau Mau hymns, 1951–1956', in T. Falola and E. S. Atieno Odhiambo (eds.), *The Challenges of History and Leadership in Africa: The Essays of Bethwell Allan Ogot* (Trenton NJ, 2002), 118. Originally published in *Kenya Historical Review*, 5 (1977), 275–86.

⁴⁵ G. wa Wanjau, 'The spirit of manhood and perseverance for Africans', translated in G. wa Wanjau, *Mau Mau Author in Detention*, trans. Ngigi wa Njoroge (Nairobi, 1988), 236. Originally published as *Mageria Nomo Mahota* (Nairobi, 1952).

⁴⁶ *Mumenyereri* article translated in KNA MAA/8/106, Director of Intelligence and Security to Minister of Labour and Chief Native Commissioner, 15 Sept. 1948.

⁴⁷ See Peterson, 'Writing in revolution', 76–96; Peterson, *Creative Writing*, 139–58.

⁴⁸ *Mumenyereri* article translated in KNA MAA/8/106, Director of Intelligence and Security to Chief Native Commissioner, 10 Aug. 1948.

⁴⁹ Peterson, 'Wordy women', 488–9.

⁵⁰ B. Kaggia, *The Roots of Freedom 1921–1963: The Autobiography of Bildad Kaggia* (Nairobi, 1975), 66; see also 22–59; wa Wanjau, *Mau Mau Author*, x. See, for a counter-argument, H. Brands, 'Wartime recruiting practices, martial identity and post-World War II demobilization in colonial Kenya', *Journal of African History*, 46 (2005), 103–25; T. Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902–1964* (Oxford, 1999), 11.

⁵¹ KNA AHC/9/23, Chief S. Kiama, 'A conspiracy', *Uhoru wa Nyeri*, 18 Aug. 1954.

⁵² Wa Wanjau, *Mau Mau Author*, viii.

relied upon for survival could not beget self-mastery, as the gains of violent and criminal acts were dishonourable.⁵³ Jomo Kenyatta told a Kenya African Union meeting in May 1948 that 'we cannot progress if we are criminals and unwilling to work hard'.⁵⁴ Only honourable, honest labour would lead to self-mastery: 'For work is actions which are said to speak louder than words. It follows, hard work, knowledge and dissemination of knowledge, unity, love for one another are all the ways which point towards victory for our people'.⁵⁵

By pursuing what were seen as selfish goals, rather than working hard in concert with the rest of society, loyalists were accused at first of betraying their brothers and sisters. 'Unity is strength and is unbreakable', Mau Mau supporters sang, 'Where will all the stooges go? They will remain slaves for ever. Do you know the fruits of unity? We shall get freedom and our property'.⁵⁶ At first, Mau Mau supporters brushed off loyalist taunts by playfully adopting the label of 'uncircumcized boys' given to them.⁵⁷ Indeed, in Laikipia, Mau Mau supporters made the same accusation of loyalists with greater potency.⁵⁸ Loyalists were until mid-1954 isolated, often unrewarded and compromised by their connections to the colonial regime. Loyalists' jibes aimed at Mau Mau sympathizers carried no moral authority and their adoption of the nomenclature of junior elderhood, *kamatimu*, appeared ridiculous. Dismissed as boys, loyalists were thought unqualified to lead political activity. Mau Mau wreaked their vengeance on patrons who acquiesced to land alienation by white farmers and the disenfranchisement of the evicted tenants.⁵⁹ They protested that loyalists had destroyed the households of many in Central Province. One Mau Mau song told loyalists that 'When a Kikuyu baby cries you tell it to stop because it's father's in Manyani (detention camp) and the mother's in Kamiti (prison)'.⁶⁰ However, as the war progressed many became aware that loyalism offered a more realistic path towards self-mastery than that of Mau Mau. Sam Thebere, a Mau Mau forest fighter, once described his motives for joining the insurgency as the desire 'to regain stolen lands and to become an adult'.⁶¹ Few loyalists understood their political goals and private aspirations in any appreciably different manner once they became convinced of the merit of collaboration. Where loyalists differed from their rivals amongst the

⁵³ Lonsdale, 'Mau Maus of the mind', 419.

⁵⁴ Quoted in *Mumenyereri* article translated in KNA MAA/8/106, Director of Intelligence and Security to Chief Native Commissioner, 8 June 1948.

⁵⁵ H. Muoria, *I, the Gikuyu and the White Fury* (Nairobi, 1994), 170.

⁵⁶ Quoted in Ogot, 'Politics, culture and music', 118.

⁵⁷ Githige, 'The religious factor', 47.

⁵⁸ KNA DC/LKA/1/4, Laikipia District Annual Report 1953, 7.

⁵⁹ See, for example, accounts of the Lari massacre of March 1953, during which up to 100 members of the families of ex-Chief Luka Wakahangare and Chief Makimei Kuria and their clients were killed. See Anderson, *Histories*, 139–51; Marshall S. Clough, *Mau Mau Memoirs. History, Memory, and Politics* (Boulder CO, 1998), 156–7; Furedi, *The Mau Mau War*, 122; Rosberg and Nottingham, *The Myth*, 156–7; M. P. K. Sorrenson, *Land Reform in the Kikuyu Country: A Study in Government Policy* (Nairobi, 1967), 100.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Githige, 'The religious factor', 311.

⁶¹ Quoted in Lonsdale, 'Wealth', 326.

insurgents was in their belief that their interests were best protected, for the short term at least, within the confines of a patron–client relationship.

LOYALISM IN THE FIRST PHASE OF THE WAR

At first, few responded to the appeal of Harry Thuku⁶² to join him ‘in denouncing Mau Mau with all our might’.⁶³ The Mau Mau insurgency morphed into civil war only because the conflict was forced upon the people of Central Kenya. With security forces stretched thinly across the region and the loyalist auxiliary Home Guard poorly organized,⁶⁴ protection from Mau Mau was in short supply for its opponents. By refusing to be oathed for religious reasons, Christians posed the first threat to Mau Mau’s demand for silence.⁶⁵ Some paid for their dissent with their lives. While members of the Home Guard, headmen and chiefs made up the bulk of the loyalist casualties of the war, it should also be remembered that amongst the hundreds of Mau Mau’s African victims were elders, agricultural instructors, nuns, schoolchildren, preachers, teachers and tax clerks.⁶⁶ Fear of being declared a loyalist drove many to take oaths in order to protect themselves.⁶⁷ Mau Mau did not solely resort to terror to build support. Its appeal to widespread grievances, especially the desire to expand access to land, made Mau Mau a popular cause while there was no viable alternative. Moreover, the use of violence and Mau Mau’s initial relative strength allowed it to gain the begrudging endorsement of waverers when they were forced to choose.⁶⁸

Despite public pronouncements of support for the government, many loyalists provided covert assistance for Mau Mau units.⁶⁹ ‘It is’, one colonial

⁶² Despite being a leading dissident in the early 1920s and jailed by the colonial government, by the 1950s Thuku was a committed loyalist. See H. Thuku, *Harry Thuku: An Autobiography* (Nairobi, 1970).

⁶³ Colony & Protectorate of Kenya, *History of the Loyalists* (Nairobi, 1961), 28.

⁶⁴ At various stages of the war and in different locations the Home Guard was known as the Kikuyu, Embu or Meru Guard, the African Home Guard, Farm Guards and Special Tribal Police. The generic term of ‘Home Guard’ is used here for convenience and to avoid confusion. For specific details of the various groups and the shifts in nomenclature see D. Branch, ‘Loyalism during the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya, 1952–60’ (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2005).

⁶⁵ Peterson, ‘Writing in revolution’, 86–7.

⁶⁶ Correspondence in KNA DC/MRU/2/1/2 gives very brief details of each victim in Meru (see Appendix I).

⁶⁷ L. White, ‘Separating the men from the boys: constructions of gender, sexuality and terrorism in Central Kenya, 1939–1959’, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 23 (1990), 10.

⁶⁸ Kershaw, *Mau Mau From Below*, 237.

⁶⁹ For examples of Home Guard refusing to engage Mau Mau units, see TNA: PRO WO 276/388, Kiambu District Intelligence Summary for the week ending 19 Dec. 1953, 2; KNA ARC(MAA) 2/5/307 III, DC Nyeri to Provincial Commissioner (PC) Central, 7 Oct. 1953. For Home Guards providing accommodation for Mau Mau fighters intending to attack a different Home Guard unit, see TNA: PRO WO 276/388, Kiambu District Intelligence Summary for week ending 25 Apr. 1953, 2–3. For Home Guard participation in an attack on a lorry containing Mau Mau prisoners and their subsequent liberation, see TNA: PRO WO 276/394, Embu District Intelligence Summary for the week ending 19 Nov. 1953, 4.

official conceded, 'very hard to say who is a loyal Kikuyu'.⁷⁰ Such practices later became less common. Repatriation to Central Province of large numbers of disaffected labourers from Nairobi and the White Highlands, a growth in the strength of the security forces, and the course of events in the war in the forest meant such practices steadily became less common. The repatriation to Central Province of society's most radical elements was an attempt to constrain the geographical spread of the rebellion. However, within the Reserves this process provided a groundswell of further embittered recruits for the Mau Mau units.⁷¹ The military effects of the moves were negated to a certain degree by a concurrent significant increase in the numbers of security forces operating in the Reserves, particularly the loyalist Home Guard. By threatening the supply of recruits, funds and provisions to Mau Mau at source, loyalists became the main target of the rebels.⁷² Between April and August 1953, particularly in Fort Hall, the insurgents made a concerted effort to destroy the embryonic Home Guard.⁷³ However, the security forces steadily regained the initiative.

From the end of 1953, Mau Mau's guerrillas were slowly forced away from their preferred bases close to their home areas, which had plentiful access to food, intelligence and reinforcements.⁷⁴ As they became dislocated from their constituency, Mau Mau fighters chose to become more predatory in order to survive. The constraints on violence intrinsic to a conflict between neighbours and siblings were destroyed.⁷⁵ Furthermore, the heat of battle evaporated some of the ambiguities of the earlier period. A Mau Mau activist captured in March 1954 told his interrogators that 'the war between the gangsters and the Homeguard will never end, as the Homeguards were the main enemies and not the Europeans'.⁷⁶ In return, from early 1954 onwards Mau Mau's foot-soldiers stood accused by loyalists of endangering the self-mastery of themselves and others. 'There is plenty of work to be done but the workers are few,' James Nyaga wrote: 'Are you one of those who have reduced the number of the workers? Let me repeat again that if you have no work the devil has plenty of work to give you – Terrorism!'⁷⁷ For all Mau Mau's shortcomings, at this stage of the war loyalism offered no viable alternative for those seeking self-mastery. The government promised loyalists that they would form the foundation on which the government would 'seek to build during the reconstruction period'.⁷⁸ But these pledges

⁷⁰ KNA MAA/7/546, Deputy Chief Secretary to Chief Native Commissioner (CNC), 27 Oct. 1953.

⁷¹ For discussion of the returning squatters see Elkins, *Imperial*, 56–9.

⁷² D. L. Barnett, "'Mau Mau': the structural integration and disintegration of Aberdare guerrilla forces' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1963), 82; Kershaw, *Mau Mau From Below*, 260 fn.2.

⁷³ KNA VQ/1/31, DC Fort Hall, 'The future of Kikuyu guards', 2, attached to DC Fort Hall to PC Central, 31 Oct. 1953.

⁷⁴ Anderson, *Histories*, 266–7.

⁷⁵ For example, an attack on a guard post in Embu in January 1954 was considered notable as it had been executed by 'strangers'. See Anderson, *Histories*, 267.

⁷⁶ KNA VP/2/20, Naivasha District Intelligence Summary for the week ending 26 Mar. 1954, 2.

⁷⁷ KNA AHC/9/24, J. Nyaga, 'Devil finds work to the lazy', *Kayu ka Embu*, 15 Jan. 1954, 2.

⁷⁸ KNA VQ/1/31, 'Extract from the Provincial Commissioner, Nyeri's memorandum on "Future administration of the Kikuyu districts"', 31 July 1953.

remained vague and formal rewards minimal during the initial stages of the war. Service in the Home Guard was unpaid⁷⁹ and fear of Mau Mau attack meant it was unsafe for loyalists to cultivate their landholdings in certain areas.⁸⁰ A package of increased rewards for Home Guards, including better rations, exemption from a Sh.20 Special Tax levied on Central Province to pay for the Emergency, and payment of school fees for loyalist children, was announced in December 1953.⁸¹ Yet the combined benefits of membership of the Home Guard totalled just Sh.15 per month per full-time member of the force.⁸² Even the repatriates from the Rift Valley could, if only in theory, earn Sh.30 per month in Fort Hall from their employment in labour gangs.⁸³ Mau Mau supporters in Nyeri scorned the Home Guards: 'You work for nothing'.⁸⁴ This attitude was soon to change and with it the nature of loyalism.

WINNING THE WAR

In June 1954, a captured Mau Mau fighter told his police interrogators that, despite having been oathed, many people now saw loyalism 'as a better way of achieving the objects of Mau Mau. They think that, after the Emergency, they will be able to persuade the Government to give them land in return for their services'.⁸⁵ While the moment at which a shift in sentiments became apparent differed from place to place, loyalism began in mid- and late 1954 to emerge as a more likely path to land, freedom and self-mastery than Mau Mau. Anti-Mau Mau action steadily became more popular.⁸⁶ Increased rewards made loyalism a political and economic investment. Furthermore, successful execution of a series of military operations provided loyalists with the security to oppose Mau Mau openly. Most significant of these was Operation Anvil, a mass screening and detention exercise carried out in Nairobi. The city remained one of the sources of Mau Mau's radicalism until 24 April 1954,⁸⁷ when a security cordon was thrown around it for a month.

⁷⁹ KNA VQ/1/30, DC Nyeri to Executive Officer, Central Province Emergency Committee, 10 June 1954.

⁸⁰ KNA VQ/1/31, DC Fort Hall to PC Central, 6 Oct. 1953, 1.

⁸¹ KNA VQ/1/51, 'Record of a meeting held at Nyeri on 22nd December, 1953', 24 Dec. 1953. The tax had been introduced on 31 March 1953; see 'These Kikuyu must pay more', *East African Standard*, 1 Apr. 1953, 1.

⁸² KNA MAA/7/761, minute from 'F' to Chief Native Commissioner and Secretary for African Affairs, 3 Mar. 1954, 1–2.

⁸³ KNA VP/14/13, DC Fort Hall, 'Agricultural policy in the Emergency', 21 Apr. 1954. Those of Elkins's informants who were once employed in these labour gangs stated that they rarely, if ever, received payment. Elkins, *Imperial*, 128.

⁸⁴ KNA VQ/1/51, Assistant Superintendent of Police Special Branch Nyeri to PC Central, 16 June 1954, 1.

⁸⁵ KNA VQ/1/51, Assistant Superintendent of Police Special Branch Nyeri to PC Central, 19 June 1954.

⁸⁶ A. Clayton, *Counter-Insurgency in Kenya: A Study of Military Operations Against Mau Mau* (Nairobi, 1975), 30.

⁸⁷ Furedi, 'The African crowd in Nairobi', 275–90; Throup, *Economic and Social Origins*, 171–202. For accounts of the war in the city, see D. M. Anderson, 'The battle of Dandora Swamp: reconstructing the Mau Mau Land Freedom Army Oct. 1954', in Atieno Odhiambo and Lonsdale (eds.), *Mau Mau and Nationhood*, 155–90; Anderson, *Histories*, 181–229; Mathu, *The Urban Guerrilla*.

Nairobi's Gikuyu, Embu and Meru populations, approximately 50,000 strong, were systematically screened; 24,100 were detained and a further 6,150 repatriated to Central Province.⁸⁸ Assistance for the rebellion evaporated and the Home Guard in Nairobi enthusiastically translated their newfound power into ill-gotten material gains.⁸⁹

With their supply lines from Nairobi cut, Mau Mau supporters in Central Province found themselves isolated from one another and the general population. In October 1954, Chief Joshua Gacingiri of Kirimukuyu, Nyeri, wrote to the District Commissioner with his reflections upon his first year in office. At the time of his appointment 'the majority of the population was far more intimidated by the large number of terrorists', which could move 'with very little and unsuccessful interference'. A year later, 'the population in my location has begun to grow tired of helping and sheltering the Mau Mau'.⁹⁰ While 1,252 loyalists were thought to have lost their lives in the first two years of the Emergency, for the two years from October 1956 just 352 loyalists were believed killed by Mau Mau.⁹¹ The process known as villagization, the centralization of the previously dispersed population into newly constructed villages, certainly improved the security of loyalists.⁹² The villages, clustered around Home Guard posts, became the sites of widespread abuse of an effectively captive population. Home Guard misdemeanours included murder,⁹³ cattle rustling,⁹⁴ the theft and destruction of livestock⁹⁵ and property of those suspected of Mau Mau

⁸⁸ For accounts of Anvil, see Anderson, *Histories*, 200–12; Elkins, *Imperial*, 121–5.

⁸⁹ KNA migrated files from Tel Aviv currently being catalogued by RHL, Oxford TA Kenya 053, the Tenants of City Council Houses, Shauri la Moyo to City Council African Affairs Officer, 26 Aug. 1954; TA Kenya 050, Surinder K. Kochhar to DC Nairobi, 31 Aug. 1954; TA Kenya 051, Security Officer, Block Hotels to DO Pumwani, 2 Sept. 1954; TA Kenya 054, Major F. R. Corner to N. F. Harris MLC, 20 Sept. 1954; TA Kenya 052, Traffic Superintendent, Kenya Bus Services to DC Nairobi, 23 Oct. 1954.

⁹⁰ KNA VP/1/16, Chief J. Z. Gacingiri to DC Nairobi, 1 Oct. 1954. For further evidence of changing attitudes towards Mau Mau and details of mass sweeps of the forests by thousands of civilians, at least some of whom were forced to participate, see KNA MSS/124/5, W. H. Laughton to M. McKeag, 16 Jan. 1955; 'Women rise up against terrorists: 8,000 act as "Beaters" in South Nyeri operations', *East African Standard*, 8 Aug. 1955; KNA AB/8/31, minutes of Meru African District Council meeting, 6–7 Dec. 1955, 1; KNA ARA/6/1, G. Irvine, 'Chogoria Hospital', attachment to Dr. C. Irvine, 'Chogoria Hospital Report: 1955', 4; KNA VP/1/47, Lt. Col. Watson Gandy, CO 7th KAR, 'Operation Schemozzle', 5 Dec. 1955; KNA DC/EBU/1/1/15, Embu District Annual Report 1956, 1; Furedi, *The Mau Mau War*, 124; G. Lathbury, 'The security forces in the Kenya Emergency', in F. S. Joelson (ed.), *Rhodesia and East Africa* (London, 1958), 41.

⁹¹ KNA WC/CM/1/5, Department of Information, 'Notes for the press on the Kenya Emergency', 18 Oct. 1955, 3.

⁹² KNA VP/14/13, DC Nyeri, 'Review of situation – Nyeri District', 27 July 1955, 1.

⁹³ See correspondence in KNA AM/1/21, 'Murders Nyeri area', relating to alleged murders of Mau Mau suspects committed by Home Guards under the supervision of European officials, and half-hearted attempts at investigation of such cases.

⁹⁴ KNA ARC(MAA) 2/5/323, G. Adamson to DO Mukugodo, 1 Aug. 1954; G. Adamson, *Bwana Game: The Life Story of George Adamson* (London, 1968), 201–2.

⁹⁵ KNA DC/FH/3/16/39, M. Muturi to DC Fort Hall, 29 May 1955. Jackson has argued that the consumption of meat played a central role in Mau Mau discourses due to its limited availability. The recurrence of consumption of livestock in accusations made against loyalists may be a reflection of this. See K. Jackson, Jr., "'Impossible to ignore

sympathies⁹⁶ and the abduction of women.⁹⁷ Rape and sexual abuses committed by Home Guards and other members of the security forces were widespread,⁹⁸ and atrocities during interrogations were commonplace.⁹⁹ Ultimately, the extent of ill-discipline led to the disbandment of the official Home Guard and its replacement by a better-supervised Tribal Police force at the beginning of 1955.¹⁰⁰ However, the brutal nature of village life made continued support for the forest fighters difficult for all but the most committed.¹⁰¹

Addressing the Home Guard of Fort Hall immediately prior to its transformation in early January 1955, Governor Baring announced that 'You have earned the right to lead your people and you will be given privileges before those who failed to take an active part in the fight'.¹⁰² Loyalists were not slow to claim their prize. They requested employment in the Tribal Police and Provincial Administration.¹⁰³ They asked for forestry, liquor, livestock trading and transport licences.¹⁰⁴ Communal labour was used to terrace loyalists' land.¹⁰⁵ Coffee licences were restricted to those who had not taken oaths.¹⁰⁶ Local councils created loyalist welfare funds from Emergency fines¹⁰⁷ and central government provided compensation for widows of Home

their greatness': survival craft in the Mau Mau forest movement', in Atieno Odhiambo and Lonsdale (eds.), *Mau Mau and Nationhood*, 182.

⁹⁶ KNA ARC(MAA) 2/5/198 I, B. N. Kamau to CNC, 16 Aug. 1956. In the same file, see also K. Waharwigi to Secretary for African Affairs, 10 Aug. 1956; G. W. Kibuku to Chief Secretary, 7 Oct. 1956; N. Kimau to Ministry of African Affairs, 24 Nov. 1956; J. K. Ngure to CNC, 29 Nov. 1956; N. Mwaniki to Minister of African Affairs, 6 Dec. 1956; W. M. Gichuhi to Minister of African Affairs, 6 Dec. 1956.

⁹⁷ KNA DC/FH/3/16/39, Station Master Fort Hall to DC Fort Hall, 6 Dec. 1955. The Ndakaini Home Guard units reported their headman as carrying out similar activities in KNA DC/FH/3/16/39, Ndakaini Home Guards to DC Fort Hall, 13 Feb. 1955.

⁹⁸ C. Elkins, 'Detention, rehabilitation and the destruction of Kikuyu society', in Atieno Odhiambo and Lonsdale (eds.), *Mau Mau and Nationhood*, 233–74.

⁹⁹ See, for an account of 'Kenya's Belsen', Anderson, *Histories*, 297–307.

¹⁰⁰ The announcement was made in KNA WC/CM/1/1, 'H. E. the Governor's Directive No. 4 of 1954', 31 Dec. 1954. For explicit acknowledgement of the significance of accusations of abuses for the disbandment of the Home Guard see KNA ARC(MAA) 2/5/327, PC Central to Minister for African Affairs, 16 Dec. 1954; KNA DC/NYK/3/1/30, 'Record of a meeting held at Government House on Thursday, December 23rd 1954', 24 Dec. 1954, 1.

¹⁰¹ Lonsdale, 'Authority', 62.

¹⁰² KNA DC/MUR/3/13/12, *Kenya Calling*, 15 Jan. 1955, 3–4.

¹⁰³ For Tribal Police, see KNA DC/NYK/3/16/36, G. M. Kamau to DO Nanyuki, Nov. 1956; M. Jacob to DC Nanyuki, 9 Nov. 1956; K. Njeru to DC Nanyuki, 12 Nov. 1956; M. Muli to DC Nanyuki, 19 Nov. 1956; G. N. Mburi to DC Nanyuki, 26 Nov. 1956; M. Riumpu to DC Nanyuki, 1 Dec. 1956; for Provincial Administration, see KNA DC/NYK/3/16/36, W. Ndebere to DC Nanyuki, 10 Dec. 1956.

¹⁰⁴ KNA DC/NYK/3/16/36, S. K. Magana to the Forester, Nanyuki, 16 Oct. 1956; Chief I. Munyi to DC Nanyuki, 28 Nov. 1956 (forestry); KNA DC/NYK/3/16/36, Z. M. M'Nabeu to DC Meru, 8 Oct. 1956 (liquor); KNA DC/NYK/3/16/36, K. Kamau to DC Nanyuki, 9 Sept. 1956; W. Maene to DC Nanyuki, 9 Oct. 1956; N. Wamutitu to DC Nanyuki, 9 Oct. 1956 (livestock trading); KNA DC/NYK/3/16/36, S. K. Magana to Transport Licence Board, 10 Oct. 1956 (transport licences).

¹⁰⁵ KNA VP/14/13, DC Nyeri, 'Development in Nyeri district – January–June 1954', 14 July 1954, 1.

¹⁰⁶ Kershaw, *Mau Mau From Below*, 259.

¹⁰⁷ KNA AB/8/31, minutes of Meru African District Council meeting, 6–7 Dec. 1955, 4.

Guards killed in action.¹⁰⁸ Famine relief was channelled through loyalists' shops¹⁰⁹ and loyalist trading centres sprang up at the centre of the newly constructed villages.¹¹⁰ In Embu, the Administration financed loyalist trading companies, a model farm and an agricultural training centre for the children of loyalists.¹¹¹

Throughout the Emergency, tenants on local-council-owned land who were suspected of supporting Mau Mau were evicted in favour of loyalists.¹¹² The Administration would be able to give greatest rewards to its most loyal allies during land consolidation, introduced as part of wider attempts to intensify African agricultural production but exploited as a counter-insurgency tool.¹¹³ The necessity for the identification and measurement of existing dispersed and fragmented land holdings, the allocation of consolidated acreage, and the issue of private land titles provided opportunities for the punishment of Mau Mau sympathizers and rewarding of loyalists. This was achieved by allowing loyalists procedural control of the process.¹¹⁴ In Fort Hall, where consolidation was most perverted by the context of the war, it was hoped by figures within the Provincial Administration that their allies should have 'little difficulty in re-allocating land so as to benefit themselves and their fellow loyalists'.¹¹⁵ Widespread and popular grievances born from consolidation quickly emerged,¹¹⁶ and would last long into the postcolonial period.

Once set upon the path of the modernization of Central Kenya as a response to Mau Mau, the Provincial Administration heavily favoured landless loyalists during economic and social reconstruction, particularly

¹⁰⁸ KNA AHC/9/52, 'Malipo kwa Waaminifu Wajane (Compensation for loyalist widows)', *Mwanamke*, 25 Aug. 1954, 2.

¹⁰⁹ KNA VP/1/16, DC Nyeri to PC Central, 25 June 1954; KNA VP/14/13, DC Nyeri, 'Review of the situation', 27 July 1954, 2.

¹¹⁰ KNA VQ/5/1, DC Fort Hall to PC Central, 10 Dec. 1955.

¹¹¹ KNA DC/EBU/1/2/4, DC Embu to DO Ndia, 2 July 1956, 2; KNA DC/EBU/1/2/4, DO Ndia, 'Handing over notes, June 1956, 9, 18 and 19; KNA DC/EBU/1/2/6, DC Embu, 'Embu district handing over report: R. H. Symes-Thompson – H. C. F. Wilks', 20 Nov. 1956, 12; KNA DC/EBU/1/2/7, DO Ndia, 'Ndia division handing over notes: Gordon – Johnson', Apr. 1957, 3; KNA DC/EBU/1/2/8, DC Embu, 'Handing over Report – Mr. A. P. Palmer to Mr. P. G. Derrick', 3 May 1958, 14.

¹¹² KNA VP/1/27, DC Nyeri to DOs North Tetu and Mathera, 10 May 1954; DO North Tetu to DC Nyeri, 21 June 1954; KNA DC/KBU/1/45, Kiambu District Annual Report 1955, 17; Kiambu District Annual Report 1957, 4; KNA DC/KBU/2/1, DO Kikuyu, 'Handing over report Kikuyu division – Kiambu: J. D. Campbell to E. D. Fox', 30 May 1955, 3; KNA MA/7/7, Land Consolidation Officer Kiambu to DC Kiambu, 28 Sept. 1957. For examples of publicity for such actions, see KNA AHC/9/52, 'Magaidi Wengine Wanapoteza Nchi Zao (More terrorists to lose their land)', *Mwanamke*, 14 July 1954, 1; 'Trees from terrorist's land used to build and protect villages', *East African Standard*, 9 June 1955.

¹¹³ For the most detailed discussion of this process, see Sorrenson, *Land Reform*.

¹¹⁴ RHL Mss Afr s 633, box 18, file 4, G. Sluiter, 'Confidential report on migrant labour and connected matters in four villages in the Kiambu Reserve of Kenya', 1957, 48; D. M. Ng'ang'a, 'Mau Mau, loyalists', 371; Sorrenson, *Land Reform*, 166.

¹¹⁵ KNA VP/1/27, R. G. Wilson, L. Ward and R. Sandford, 'Fort Hall district: land reform', 7 Apr. 1954, 7.

¹¹⁶ KNA VP/2/70, Assistant Superintendent of Police Special Branch Nyeri to Senior Superintendent of Police Provincial Special Branch, 12 Sept. 1960, 1.

through labour recruitment.¹¹⁷ One district officer in Kiambu acted as a loyalist recruitment agency by maintaining registers of Home Guards for European employers wanting 'the most trustworthy people you can get'.¹¹⁸ With Tribal Police, screeners, Home Guards, chiefs, drivers, court elders and clerical staff on its payroll, the Provincial Administration was a significant employer of loyalist labour.¹¹⁹ As the Forestry Department sought to restart timber operations abandoned earlier in the Emergency, loyalists were prioritized for resettlement in villages constructed in forest areas.¹²⁰ They were appointed to oversee the ex-detainee labour force on new rice-growing schemes at Mwea and Tebere.¹²¹ Loyalists, including women, were urged to make good the shortfall in labour in the aftermath of the repatriations of squatters, mass detentions and Operation Anvil.¹²² Large-scale resettlements of loyalist labour to the European farms in the Rift Valley took place throughout 1955 and 1956.¹²³ Within Central Province, movement restrictions were relaxed for loyalists earlier than for the rest of the population, thus enabling freer movement in search of work.¹²⁴ In contrast, many ex-detainees had restriction orders placed upon them by local loyalist screening committees at the time of their release, which made them unable to leave their home locations to seek work.¹²⁵ Beginning in 1955, loyalists took to the roads to the White Highlands and Nairobi in the search for work and the anonymity of new lives.¹²⁶ By 1959, the majority of loyalists in Nyeri had found work outside of the district.¹²⁷ They left behind those who had a reason to stay and gains to protect: a loyalist rump of landowners, chiefs and district officers, who, in the popular memory of the war that solidified as the detainees returned home in the late 1950s,¹²⁸ came to assume the role of all

¹¹⁷ KNA PC/NKU/2/17/18, Special Commissioner, 'Reabsorption of detainees', 17 Jan. 1957, 3.

¹¹⁸ KNA MA/1/2, DO Kikuyu to all residents of Kikuyu and Kabete settled areas, 3 Feb. 1955.

¹¹⁹ See Nanyuki district employment registers in KNA DC/NYK/3/16/49.

¹²⁰ KNA VP/1/38, Minister for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries, 'Scheme for reabsorption of Kikuyu, Embu and Meru displaced as a result of the Emergency', 8 Dec. 1954.

¹²¹ KNA VP/1/38, DC Embu to PC Central, 13 Nov. 1954; Joint Secretaries, 'Resettlement committee: guarded villages at Mwea/Tebere', 23 Nov. 1954; KNA VQ/1/32, DC Embu to PC Central, 19 Feb. 1954; PC Central to CNC, 1 Mar. 1954.

¹²² KNA AHC/9/23, 'Working at Nyeri', *Uhoru wa Nyeri*, 3 Dec. 1954; AHC/9/52, 'Wanawake Waafrika Wengi Wameandikiza Kazi Nairobi (More African women employed in Nairobi)', *Mwanamke*, 16 June 1954, 1.

¹²³ KNA WC/CM/1/2, minutes of 104th meeting of the War Council, 10 May 1955, 3-4; KNA WC/CM/1/3, minutes of the 144th meeting of the War Council, 22 Nov. 1955, 4; KNA WC/CM/1/3, minutes of the 149th meeting of the War Council, 29 Dec. 1955, 7-8.

¹²⁴ KNA VP/5/1, minutes of meeting of DCs Central Province, 28 Feb.-1 Mar. 1957, 2.

¹²⁵ KNA VP/1/42, Laragwan Screening Camp Screening Team, 'Application for a restriction order dossier: Gickuki Tama', 20 Feb. 1956; DC Nyeri to DO Othaya, 23 Feb. 1956; DC Nyeri to DO Othaya, 4 Apr. 1956; DC Nyeri to DO Othaya, 4 June 1956. See also wa Wanjau, *Mau Mau Author*, 206-12.

¹²⁶ Wa Wanjau, *Mau Mau Author*, 207.

¹²⁷ KNA DC/NYI/1/1, Nyeri District Annual Report 1959, 8.

¹²⁸ For a discussion of changing memories of allegiances during the war, formed in the late 1950s and early 1960s, see G. Kershaw, 'Mau Mau from below: fieldwork and experience, 1955-57 and 1962', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 25 (1991), 288-9.

loyalists. Out of sight and mind, the landless and poor loyalists were quickly forgotten.

As the security of loyalists and potential benefits of collaboration improved, condemnations of Mau Mau became more commonplace. Many of those who publicly denounced the rebellion from 1954 onwards had been previously sympathetic to the cause of the insurgents, whom they now held to account for failing to deliver on their promises. This the loyalists did in letters sent to district newspapers established by the government. The letters, available now in translations sent for information to central government in Nairobi, consistently argued that the political, economic and moral debts of the rebellion could not be offset by any visible profit. Although reproduced for propaganda purposes, the letters are valid and important historical sources. The letters cited here are all attributable to individuals, some of whom can be cross-referenced with other qualitative evidence. Although far from infallible and unquestionably privileging the literate, collectively the letters and articles are the only contemporary sources in which we find loyalists explaining in their own words, albeit translated, the reasons for their opposition to Mau Mau. While the letters touch upon the themes of the propaganda campaign conducted by the colonial regime, they do so in a far more complex manner than does the presentation within official propaganda of the division between the two warring sides as a simplistic dichotomy between progress and backwardness.¹²⁹ The letters instead reveal loyalism to have been constructed upon similar intellectual pillars – such as self-mastery, modernity and respectability – to those which had been deployed earlier in the decade to justify support of Mau Mau. Whether self-justification, public pleas for understanding or rigorous internal examination of motivations, the letters' echoing of the metaphors and idioms found in the pre-Emergency pamphlets and vernacular newspapers, discussed above, indicate that the criticisms of Mau Mau were rooted in the same intellectual debates that spawned the rebellion.

Many loyalists used the rhetoric of Christianity to condemn the rebellion. Loyalists, Maina Kinaichu told his readers, 'are the light of your future country. They are the people who could give light to the people who are in the Mau Mau darkness'.¹³⁰ James Mbogo Mwangi wrote of Mau Mau that 'As a result of refusing to obey God's commandments these people could have no good in themselves and nothing good could be produced by them'.¹³¹ Lessons absorbed from the pews of mission churches were put to use to explain the often un-Christian response to Mau Mau. Samuel Mugo wrote in June 1954: 'We read in [the] Holy Bible that what you put in seed the same you will harvest. Now, Mau Mau have planted death in the country and now the time has come for them to harvest what they have planted and that is death'.¹³² Few Christian loyalists were pacifists. Even many of those who refused to carry weapons or to join the Home Guard saw no problem in the use of extreme force to crush the insurgency. The future politician, Jeremiah

¹²⁹ S. Carruthers, *Winning Hearts and Minds: British Governments, the Media and Colonial Counter-Insurgency* (Leicester, 1995), 156–7, 165.

¹³⁰ KNA AHC/9/23, M. Kinaichu to Editor, *Uhoru wa Nyeri*, 3 Nov. 1954.

¹³¹ KNA AHC/9/25, J. M. Mwangi to Editor, *Kayu ka Embu*, 31 Aug. 1955.

¹³² KNA AHC/9/24, S. Mugo to Editor, *Kayu ka Embu*, 20 June 1954.

Nyagah, wrote in October 1954: 'The terrorists have to and must be defeated with their own weapon – force'.¹³³

Some of those most closely acquainted with the military force of the colonial regime were convinced of the hopelessness of the Mau Mau's position. Justus Njoroge Wanyaga, a veteran of the Burma campaign during the Second World War, joined the Home Guard in the Rift Valley as he was 'determined to help again with Her Majesty's Government in Kenya'.¹³⁴ However, most ex-servicemen within the loyalist ranks in the 1950s appear to have been motivated more by the futility of Mau Mau's violence in the face of the armed forces of a mighty empire than by any lingering loyalty to the Crown. Memories of the destructive power of the British armed forces left indelible memories on those who had witnessed it. Maina Kinaichu wrote: 'How can they [Mau Mau] win this war? Did you not see the war of the British and the Japanese, Italian, and the Germans? What are you compared to all that?'¹³⁵ Ex-soldiers could become loyalists as well as rebels. Their concerns about an overwhelming colonial military response merged into a much deeper strand of memory. Senior elders could easily recall the violent suppression of earlier Gikuyu mass protest movements, such as that led by Harry Thuku, and the colonial conquest.¹³⁶

Other loyalists saw Mau Mau violence not just as futile, but as evidence of the indolence of the insurgents, who were accused of attempting to take by force what they did not have the energy or patience to acquire through hard work. Mau Mau supporters 'left the other people working for the progress of their country and took the Mau Mau oath because of their laziness and selfishness and went to live in the forests like wild animals'.¹³⁷ Loyalist criticisms of Mau Mau returned again and again to the question of labour. As a Home Guard from Riakiania observed, Mau Mau caused 'other people to be punished and do hard work without gain'.¹³⁸ The congregation of the Chogoria Presbyterian church sang, 'Work, for the night is coming'.¹³⁹ The discipline demonstrated by the creation of wealth by one's own labour remained the ultimate measure of virtue. Deshon Waweru wrote that Mau Mau supporters 'use force as they please and at the same time eat and spend what they have not worked for. What sort of goodness can we expect from such?'¹⁴⁰ As Leonard Njeru, of the Keboria Intermediate School in Embu,

¹³³ RHL Mss Afr s 1727, J. J. Nyagah to M. Foote, 16 Oct. 1954.

¹³⁴ KNA DC/NKU/2/24/73, J. N. Wanyaga to DC Kiambu, 29 Sept. 1953.

¹³⁵ KNA AHC/9/23, M. Kinaichu to Editor, *Uhoro wa Nyeri*, 3 Sept. 1954.

¹³⁶ Lonsdale, 'Authority', 59. Similarly in the mid-1980s, Gikuyu elders counselled restraint during protests against the Moi regime by deploying memories of the trauma of the Mau Mau war. See 'Whither Kenya? Why there is no chaos yet', *Finance Magazine*, Mar. 1986, cited in M. S. Kimenyi and N. S. Ndung'u, 'Sporadic ethnic violence: why has Kenya not experienced a full-blown civil war?' in P. Collier and N. Sambanis (eds.), *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis – Volume I: Africa* (Washington DC, 2005), 153.

¹³⁷ KNA AHC/9/24, M. M. Nyambura, 'A house-fly and tsetse-fly', *Kayu ka Embu*, 28 Feb. 1955.

¹³⁸ KNA AHC/9/24, G. K. N. Njirata to Editor, *Kayu ka Embu*, 15 Feb. 1955, 2.

¹³⁹ KNA ARA/8/4, 'Original Kikuyu hymn book (Presbyterian)'.

¹⁴⁰ KNA AHC/9/23, D. Waweru to Editor, *Uhoro wa Nyeri*, 3 Nov. 1954.

wrote, 'the outcome of laziness is theft'.¹⁴¹ Young 'Cowboys' were held responsible by Benjamin Njue M'Chandi for the growth of Mau Mau. They had, he claimed,

ignored working to earn their own living and who later when they became poor and with nothing whatsoever, cunningly and cleverly found this Mau Mau movement through which they could get everything they required for their own living, by deceiving other people that if they help them with money, food etc. they will expel all Europeans out of this country, and thereby acquire for them the nicest thing – self-government.¹⁴²

Mau Mau's youthful ill-discipline was a common complaint of loyalists. Chief Muhoya bid Mau Mau to 'Go back to your ordinary life of obedience to your parents'.¹⁴³ Muhoya's fellow chief, Stanley Kiama, bemoaned that with Mau Mau 'young people started to ignore their parents' advice' and 'got into the filthy things'.¹⁴⁴ It was the 'children and boys wandering about in the markets and Towns in this district without doing any work' who, according to Bernard Ngari Harrison of the Kegonge School in Embu, formed 'terrorist gangs' and 'deceived others to enter the forest'.¹⁴⁵ Loyalists' condemnations of the insurgents' youthfulness were a response to the challenge that Mau Mau posed to 'all aspects of birth, life, and death',¹⁴⁶ and the political and social consequences of this dissent. Maina Kinaichu asked Mau Mau activists:

How do you think people can live harmoniously without a leader? Your policy is to kill all the leaders; how then shall we manage the life? There is a Kikuyu saying and it is worth while quoting it here that a family without a father or a mother takes long to develop.¹⁴⁷

The authority to lead was to be earned by the virtuous masters of domestic space, because 'if you follow deceitful leadership, you will fall into the pit of destruction'.¹⁴⁸ The insurgents were condemned for their poverty by one headman: 'My friends, Mau Mau terrorists are after no good, they are poor people and as you can see so far from their actions, they will in no way defeat the Government'.¹⁴⁹ Mau Mau supporters were belittled by loyalists as impoverished criminal delinquents and so, it was believed, morally ill-equipped to lead political action or participate in debate: 'When you kill your fellow men because of foolishness, I tell you that you are far from becoming a leader of any sort'.¹⁵⁰

Mau Mau stood accused of destroying the political unity and social cohesion that many considered essential for development. Despite the

¹⁴¹ KNA AHC/9/25, L. Njiru, 'What could develop our country', *Kaya ka Embu*, 15 Jan. 1956.

¹⁴² KNA AHC/9/25, B. N. M'Chandi to Editor, *Kayu ka Embu*, May 1955.

¹⁴³ KNA AHC/9/23, Senior Chief Muhoya, 'The disobedience of the Kikuyu children', *Uhoro wa Nyeri*, 3 Nov. 1954.

¹⁴⁴ KNA AHC/9/23, Chief S. Kiama, 'A conspiracy', *Uhoro wa Nyeri*, 18 Aug. 1954.

¹⁴⁵ KNA AHC/9/25, B. N. Harrison to Editor, *Kaya ka Embu*, 15 Nov. 1955.

¹⁴⁶ White, 'Separating the men', 25.

¹⁴⁷ KNA AHC/9/23, M. Kinaichu to Editor, *Uhoro wa Nyeri*, 3 Sept. 1954.

¹⁴⁸ KNA AHC/9/24, S. Njeru, 'What should I do?', *Kayu ka Embu*, 28 Feb. 1955, 2.

¹⁴⁹ KNA AHC/9/24, Headman N. Mabui to Editor, *Kayu ka Embu*, 31 Jan. 1955.

¹⁵⁰ KNA AHC/9/24, E. Munene to Editor, *Kayu ka Embu*, 30 Jan. 1954.

troubles of the 1950s, Nancy Njarua believed 'one thing we must not drop is the progress. This we must carry on in spite [of] the emergency'.¹⁵¹ Mau Mau's forest fighters were frequently derided by loyalists as 'wild animals' and in particular as 'hyenas'.¹⁵² Allegories were used to condemn those who shirked the labour required to gain wealth and virtue, apparently preferring instead to steal and scavenge.¹⁵³ In contrast, loyalism was identified as the only way 'to help in the growth of our country and our tribe'.¹⁵⁴ Loyalists complained that Mau Mau was hindering progress. One wrote that Mau Mau 'made our country go back into darkness'.¹⁵⁵ Another urged the people to think only of 'ways which would raise our standard of living abandoning what would keep us behind'.¹⁵⁶

Loyalist women enunciated their opposition to Mau Mau through the domestic modernity preached by the Maendeleo ya Wanawake (Women's Progress).¹⁵⁷ First established in 1952, the government's Maendeleo ya Wanawake established local clubs across Kenya. By 1954 there were 508 clubs, over half in Central Province and Nairobi, in which African women were taught domestic science as conceived by European community development workers. Building on pre-Emergency notions of social welfare, the clubs were adapted to become a counter to Mau Mau.¹⁵⁸ In Central Province, 'no woman shall be a member of a Maendeleo Club unless she has foresworn Mau Mau'.¹⁵⁹ Mary Muthanji, an employee of the Community Development department, established a branch at Kirigi village in Embu with the support of the local district officer and loyalist elite. 'In this club', Muthanji wrote, 'I teach women general cleanliness, children welfare and laundry. I also teach them some gardening work, because as you know Kenya is a farming country'. However, 'all work and no play make Jack a dull boy', and sport played a prominent part of the group's activities.¹⁶⁰ Hygiene, an issue of critical importance in the Emergency villages, formed a major part of the

¹⁵¹ KNA AHC/9/23, N. Njarua, 'Care of the children – the African women advised', *Uhoro wa Nyeri*, 3 Nov. 1954.

¹⁵² See, for example, KNA AHC/9/23, K. Waiganjo to DC Nyeri, 8 June 1954, *Uhoro wa Nyeri*, 18 Aug. 1954; KNA AHC/9/24, H. Mwaniki to Editor, *Kayu ka Embu*, 30 June 1954; KNA AHC/9/24, C. N. M. Kaguyu, 'A story of an oldman and his three sons', *Kayu ka Embu*, 22 Nov. 1954.

¹⁵³ See, for widespread use of animals in morality tales, C. Chesaina, *Oral Literature of the Embu and Mbeere* (Nairobi, 1997), 59–122; R. Mwangi, *Kikuyu Folktales: Their Nature and Value* (Nairobi, 1982), 57–130. The term 'hyena', in Nairobi at least, was a pejorative term that denoted sexual indiscipline, another trait of youthful delinquency; see White, 'Separating the men', 23.

¹⁵⁴ KNA AHC/9/24, O. Kunguru, 'Advice to all teachers', *Kayu ka Embu*, Jan. 1955.

¹⁵⁵ KNA AHC/9/24, B. M. Njeru to the Editor, *Kayu ka Embu*, 30 June 1954.

¹⁵⁶ KNA AHC/9/57, W. Kireru to Editor, *Utheri wa Nyeri*, Aug. 1957, 5.

¹⁵⁷ See also Elkins, *Imperial*, 261–2; White, 'Separating the men', 24–5; A. Wipper, 'The Maendeleo ya Wanawake organization: the co-optation of leadership', *African Studies Review*, 18 (1975), 99–120.

¹⁵⁸ Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion, and Social Change in Kenya* (Boulder CO, 1992), 165–7. For discussions of community development in postwar Kenya, see Joanna Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya 1925–52* (Oxford, 2000), 298–359.

¹⁵⁹ KNA AHC/9/25, 'Maendeleo ya Wanawake clubs', *Kaya ka Embu*, 30 June 1955. Also cited in Elkins, *Imperial*, 261–2.

¹⁶⁰ KNA AHC/9/24, M. Muthanji to Editor, *Kayu ka Embu*, 31 Jan. 1955.

message of the Maendeleo ya Wanawake. On 7 June 1955, the Gitumbi club 'went round the whole village and collected all youths and bathed them, cut their hair, took their jiggers off and washed their clothes'.¹⁶¹

Juliana Muthoni joined her branch of the group in 1953 'because I missed any chance to get any education when I was a girl'. She compared her membership of the Maendeleo ya Wanawake, where 'I have benefited much', with Mau Mau, 'which will bring you no good rather than to destroy anything which could help your children in future'.¹⁶² Through the Maendeleo ya Wanawake women opposed to Mau Mau also explained their stance with reference to the insurgents' presumed anti-progressive agenda and as an expression of their gendered experience of the conflict. With many men fighting or detained, villages were dominated by women and children. In Kabare village in Embu, of the 1,360 inhabitants in 1956 just 176 were men.¹⁶³ While many women resisted male coercion, as described by Thomas for example, increasingly from 1954 women impelled Mau Mau fighters to surrender.¹⁶⁴ They were no longer able to make the sacrifices necessary to support themselves, their families and a losing guerrilla army.¹⁶⁵ Nancy Njarua pleaded to her fellow Gikuyu women: 'To save your life and save your children's lives you should try in whichever way possible to see that the few remaining gangsters have surrendered'.¹⁶⁶ While self-mastery was an expression of male dominance of the household, its meaning was debated by women too.

In the 1940s, landlessness 'compelled husbands and wives to argue about masculinity and marriage in a context where men could not be good husbands'.¹⁶⁷ In the midst of war, the conditions for this argument were multiplied many times over. With land confiscations commonplace, detention widespread and the level of bride-price rising significantly, women's loyalism was in part a condemnation of the failure of men to be husbands.¹⁶⁸ Those who turned to the Maendeleo ya Wanawake used its brand of modernity to consolidate control of households. Whether the product of widowhood, orphanhood or a sense of abandonment derived from the death and detention of men, during the Emergency, Gikuyu, Embu and Meru women acquired what Heyer terms 'an independence and self-sufficiency'.¹⁶⁹

Both male and female loyalists accused Mau Mau of pursuing an anti-education agenda, thought to be primarily demonstrated by an arson campaign against mission schools.¹⁷⁰ During the twelve months from June

¹⁶¹ KNA AHC/9/25, S. M. Ngai to Editor, *Kaya ka Embu*, 30 June 1955.

¹⁶² KNA AHC/9/25, J. Muthoni to Editor, *Kaya ka Embu*, 15 Dec. 1955.

¹⁶³ KNA DC/EBU/9/1, Greet Sluiter, 'A study of Kabare-Village in the Embu-District', May 1956, 3.

¹⁶⁴ Lynn Thomas, "'Ngaitana (I will circumcise myself)": the gender and generational politics of the 1956 ban on clitoridectomy in Meru, Kenya', *Gender and History*, 8 (1996), 338–63; Lynn Thomas, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley CA, 2003), 79–101.

¹⁶⁵ Lonsdale, 'Authority', 62.

¹⁶⁶ KNA AHC/9/23, Nancy Njarua, 'African women', *Uhoro wa Nyeri*, 3 Nov. 1954.

¹⁶⁷ Peterson, 'Wordy women', 471.

¹⁶⁸ KNA DC/EBU/9/1, Sluiter, 'A study of Kabare-Village', 6.

¹⁶⁹ Heyer, 'Mandala of a market', 264.

¹⁷⁰ Anderson, *Histories*, 232; Kenya, *A History of the Loyalists*, 80.

1953, 67 schools were torched in Embu alone.¹⁷¹ In the short term, these attacks were no doubt in response to the loyalist activities of teachers and parents, and attempts to procure the materials necessary for the construction of the impressive counter-state established in the forests.¹⁷² However, such actions were the product of longer-standing grievances against the preference given to mission schools at the expense of independent Gikuyu schools in the pre-Emergency period.¹⁷³ The attacks did not represent Mau Mau opposition to education *per se*. Whatever the cause, the arson campaign did much to solidify support for loyalism. Progress was widely seen as dependent on the growth of education. In the words of one Nyeri loyalist, 'in the true education lies the chief hope of [the] African race and it is the key to the welfare and happiness of the people'.¹⁷⁴ 'In order that a country may acquire self-government,' wrote another, 'it must first have many educated people'.¹⁷⁵ Education for girls was a recurrent topic of discussion. 'The only way to step towards modern civilization is to have educated men and women,' Samuel King'ori believed.¹⁷⁶ Grace Wambura claimed 'the happiest people are those married to educated girls'.¹⁷⁷ In contrast to the insurgents' arson campaign, the government paid school fees for up to three children per family¹⁷⁸ and issued grants to schools in loyalist areas.¹⁷⁹ Loyalists were not slow to realize that the Emergency increased the educational opportunities for themselves and their children. One wrote that:

owing to the loyalty of the people in this country, there has been great improvement in Education. Many people now who two years ago could neither read nor write are quite happy to see themselves able to read as well as to write.¹⁸⁰

In the early 1950s 'we thought that in the very near future Mau Mau would do much for the development and welfare of our country and so we help it with all our strength'.¹⁸¹ By late 1954, loyalists could advocate cooperation with government as a way of attaining self-mastery and accuse Mau Mau of hampering that quest. Muthoni Karanga, a schoolgirl from Embu who lived

¹⁷¹ KNA DC/EBU/1/2/3, DC Embu, 'Handing over report: Mr. R. A. Wilkinson to Mr. F. R. Wilson', 19 July 1954, ch.V, 1-2; KNA AHC/9/52, 'Macukuru Meru Bururi wa Embu (New schools in Embu)', *Mundu-wa-Nja*, 10 Mar. 1954. See also DO Kandara to DC Fort Hall, 19 Mar. 1954. for details of cess imposed after destruction of school in Gatundu.

¹⁷² For the latter, see Peterson, 'Writing in revolution', 90.
¹⁷³ For discussions of the importance of colonial educational policy, in particular the Beecher report of 1950, in the growth of unrest, see Kershaw, *Mau Mau From Below*, 227; Lonsdale, 'Wealth', 424; Donald L. Barnett and Karari Njama, *Mau Mau From Within: Autobiography and Analysis of Kenya's Peasant Revolt* (New York and London, 1966), 141-3.

¹⁷⁴ KNA AHC/9/57, D. Ndujiu to Editor, *Utheri wa Nyeri*, June 1957, 5.

¹⁷⁵ KNA AHC/9/24, P. N. Jacob to Editor, *Kayu ka Embu*, 15 Sept. 1954.

¹⁷⁶ KNA AHC/9/57, S. King'ori to Editor, *Utheri wa Nyeri*, July 1957, 5.

¹⁷⁷ KNA AHC/9/24, G. Wambura to Editor, *Kaya ka Embu*, 30 July 1955.

¹⁷⁸ This was agreed in KNA VQ/1/51, 'Record of a meeting held at Nyeri on 22nd December, 1953', 24 Dec. 1953.

¹⁷⁹ See, for example, KNA DC/MUR/3/4/21, Education Officer, Fort Hall, to Supervisor, A. A. C. Weithaga, & President, ACC&S, Gituru, 8 Sept. 1953.

¹⁸⁰ KNA AHC/9/25, L. M. Njoka, 'Wambere people during the Emergency', *Kaya ka Embu*, 30 June 1955.

¹⁸¹ KNA AHC/9/25, S. M. Ngai to Editor, *Kaya ka Embu*, 30 June 1955.

at the Githure guard post, wrote in November 1954: 'Why are you giving help to Mau Mau terrorists in the bush as if they are growing food for you in the bush? Why are you foolish to go naked and hungry and still give Mau Mau your money and food, what good will they do to you?'¹⁸² A Catholic loyalist from the Baricho mission argued: 'You should know that the meetings and the words which are brought to you at night by those dirty people with long hair, are the ones which make your country poor'.¹⁸³ Mau Mau, according to Eusebio Ngari, 'have brought poverty, famine, and murdering in the country'.¹⁸⁴ 'Freedom', Headman Stephen Mututo Kibubu wrote, 'does not come from hatred and such things like murdering'.¹⁸⁵

At the heart of Gikuyu politics and conceptualizations of leadership and resistance lay the need to protect access to land. In the 1930s, Gikuyu elders abdicated responsibility for organizing political activity by failing to find recompense for land alienations.¹⁸⁶ Mau Mau initially emerged as a vehicle for redress of those grievances. Ironically by inducing consolidation, confiscations and the introduction of private tenure, Mau Mau stood accused of exacerbating those same injustices in the mid-1950s. As one correspondent argued, 'When the war started the points were that the Mau Mau will be able to chase [out] all the foreigners in this country and by so doing the people will have a very good freedom, and developments. That is not what is happening now'.¹⁸⁷ B. M. Njeru, working at the Kianyaga detention camp, wrote that 'Mau Mau self-government is for one to be deported or to be imprisoned or to lose his life. That is what Mau Mau mean by self-government'. After urging Mau Mau activists and sympathizers to surrender and confess, Njeru concluded:

I warn you now, and come and let us build ourselves together for peace and prosperity of our country and when the time comes, when we will have reached the standard, the good Government will give to us the real self-government, as it has done to other countries.¹⁸⁸

Through preferential treatment during land and political reform and the post-conflict reconstruction of the local economy, loyalism had become a path towards land, self-mastery and, inadvertently, freedom. When independence eventually arrived in 1963, it bore a striking resemblance to colonial subjugation due to the state's continuing reliance on patron-client networks, and thus the use of moral ethnicity by all concerned in order to mediate those relationships. With the chiefs and headmen having been supplanted from influence as part of a deliberate policy of modernization during the counter-insurgency campaign,¹⁸⁹ the colonial government turned to the

¹⁸² KNA AHC/9/24, M. Karanga to Editor, *Kayu ka Embu*, 22 Nov. 1954.

¹⁸³ KNA AHC/9/24, N. K. Muciri to Editor, *Kayu ka Embu*, 15 Aug. 1954.

¹⁸⁴ KNA AHC/9/24, E. N. Ngari to Editor, *Kayu ka Embu*, 31 July 1954.

¹⁸⁵ KNA AHC/9/23, Headman S. M. Kibubu to Editor, *Uhoro wa Nyeri*, 18 Oct. 1954.

¹⁸⁶ Kershaw, *Mau Mau From Below*, 186.

¹⁸⁷ KNA AHC/9/23, M. Kinaichu to Editor, *Uhoro wa Nyeri*, 3 Sept. 1954.

¹⁸⁸ KNA AHC/9/24, B. M. Njeru, 'What our reader says', *Kayu ka Embu*, Dec. 1954.

¹⁸⁹ See, for one of the first descriptions of a modernist response to Mau Mau, KNA VQ/1/51, PC Central, 'The civil problem of Mau Mau and some thoughts on its possible solution', 14 Jan. 1954, 5.

alumni of Alliance High School, Makerere, Fort Hare and Oxford during decolonization.¹⁹⁰ Land consolidation, large-scale resettlement schemes, relocation to Nairobi and the Rift Valley, elections and Africanization of the Provincial Administration provided this latter group with the resources with which they could construct their own networks of clientage. Once again the state was effectively linked to households, even those of former Mau Mau sympathizers, by a sequence of patrons and clients. Although not usurped entirely, chiefs and headmen were demoted and replaced in the upper echelons of patron–client networks by African legislators and administrators appointed as Kenya began to prepare for decolonization. In order to meet the challenge of Mau Mau effectively, loyalism had been constructed not on the basis of custom and tradition, but upon a self-consciously modern moral ethnicity increasingly represented within the offices of the Provincial Administration and Legislative Council, and which would come to dominate postcolonial Kenya.¹⁹¹

CONCLUSION

Mau Mau's insurgents took up arms 'to regain stolen lands and to become ... adult[s]'.¹⁹² But by the end of 1956 they could not hope to achieve either aim. Throughout its existence, Mau Mau was subject to a Gikuyu theory of labour that asserted 'everyone who cultivates the soil is a Kikuyu'.¹⁹³ The insurgency's answers to that rigorous and ongoing examination became progressively less and less satisfactory. Land reform and the terror of the counter-insurgency war had dispossessed and disenfranchised many of the movement's supporters. Once economic and political rewards, most notably land, for collaboration were formalized, loyalism travelled in the opposite direction along the continuum of labour, wealth and virtue. From being told 'You work for nothing',¹⁹⁴ landless and landed loyalists were able to toil towards wealth.

In February 1957, Maina Wambugu, an employee of the Community Development department in Othaya, described a tea party held at Gatugi village in Nyeri. 'One could hardly see any gloomy or dirty person at the occasion', Maina wrote; 'All were singing, laughing and making themselves cheerful'. He continued: 'I heard one person remark that the country was experiencing social revolution. During days of trouble many of them could not imagine that such a happy day would again be enjoyed. But now people

¹⁹⁰ D. Branch, 'Loyalists, Mau Mau and elections in Kenya: the first triumph of the system, 1957–58', *Africa Today*, 53 (2006), 27–50; D. K. Leonard, *African Successes: Four Public Managers of Kenyan Rural Development* (Berkeley, 1991).

¹⁹¹ For descriptions of the operation in Murang'a district of postcolonial patron–client networks headed by loyalists, in particular Julius Kiano, see G. Lamb, *Peasant Politics: Conflict and Development in Murang'a* (Lewes, 1974); N. G. Wanjohi, *The Politics of Ideology and Personality Rivalry in Murang'a District, Kenya: A Study of Electoral Competition*, Institute of Development Studies, University of Nairobi, working paper 411 (Nairobi, 1984).

¹⁹² Quoted in Lonsdale, 'Wealth', 326.

¹⁹³ Quoted in Peterson, *Creative Writing*, 10.

¹⁹⁴ KNA VQ/1/51, Assistant Superintendent of Police Special Branch Nyeri to PC Central, 16 June 1954, 1.

are nearing to a complete normal life'.¹⁹⁵ Loyalists had gained control of their households. No longer threatened by Mau Mau and free to enjoy the fruits of their labour, loyalists had satisfied Kenyatta's pre-qualification for political dominance: 'You must rule yourselves in your own lives if you want to rule this country.'¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ KNA AHC/9/57, M. Wambugu to Editor, *Utheri wa Nyeri*, Feb. 1957.

¹⁹⁶ Quoted in Lonsdale, 'Wealth', 327.