

**THE CHIEF MAU MAU IDEOLOGUE: GAKAARA WA WANJAU'S**

**CONTRIBUTION TO POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF**

**THE AGIKUYU, 1940 – 2001.**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL  
SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULLFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR  
THE CONFERMENT OF THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS IN  
HISTORY, KARATINA UNIVERSITY.**

**NOVEMBER, 2022**

## DECLARATION

### Declaration by the Candidate

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a conferment of a degree in any other university or for any other award.

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### Declaration by the supervisors

We confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under our supervision and has been submitted with our approval as university supervisors.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to those who suffered for the sake of political liberation of Kenya from colonial rule. May your spirit of self-sacrifice abide in us forever.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I give thanks to my ever present companion, the Almighty God. I knew with you, my God, I would make it. My gratitude also goes to my mentors; Prof. John Mwaruvie, who makes the most complicated concepts appear very simple; Prof. Osamba's encouragements, *utatoboa*, makes me feel that success is not too far away and Dr Muthoni's patience and goodness makes me have the urge to achieve her status and be able to assist others. Without the three of you, this academic journey would have proved impossible.

I will forever be grateful to my spouse for allowing me to quench my academic thirst. You will forever remain the *Apple of my soul*. My children understood and supported me when I needed them most. I appreciate the cooperation and selfless assistance of the Kenya National and Nyeri Archives' staff, the Nyeri Mau Mau Museum staff, Karatina University Library staff, The Kenya National Library staff in Nyeri and Karatina and all my esteemed respondents. I also will never forget the valuable input of Mr Muhoro who helped in the typing of my work, Mr Kanyai who helped me with his computer when mine broke down and many others who gave me moral support.

To all those who were with me throughout this tedious academic journey; I can't formulate the proper words to thank you.

## ABSTRACT

Gakaara wa Wanjau was referred to as the “Chief Mau Mau Propagandist” by the colonial government because of his revolutionary literary works. This made him to be one of the longest serving Mau Mau detainees from 1952-1959. Despite his activist works that culminated in his long detention, Gakaara wa Wanjau was neither rewarded nor recognised among the most honoured independence heroes by the post-colonial regimes. He was arrested and accused of involvement with *Mwakenya* (The Union of Patriots for the Liberation of Kenya) activities during president Moi’s era. The purpose of this study was to examine Gakaara wa Wanjau’s literary contribution to the politics of freedom struggle in both colonial and post-colonial Kenya. The objectives of the study were to: (i) trace Gakaara wa Wanjau’s socio-political experiences during the colonial period that influenced his political consciousness; (ii) examine the influence of his political writings to the Mau Mau nationalist movement and, (iii) finally explore Gakaara’s socio-political activities after detention that influenced his relationship with the post-colonial governments. The study was informed by the Relative Deprivation Theory (RDT) which argues that people take action for social change in order to gain their rights. The study adopted historical research design which employs document analysis and validated with oral interviews from respondents. The sample population comprised thirty informants who are reasonably enough in a biographical research. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to select respondents drawn from Gakaara wa Wanjau’s acquaintances in the struggle for independence. The study used open-ended questionnaires research instrument to generate qualitative data. The study contributes towards enriching the Kenya’s Mau Mau historiography by demonstrating that there were other forms of effective struggle for independence, like literary activism whereby the barrel of the pen was used, apart from fighting in the forest.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

**A.I.P.C.A:** African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa.

**A.W.U:** African Workers Union.

**D.C:** District Commissioner.

**D.O:** District Officer.

**E.A.A:** East African Association.

**E.A.T.U.C:** East African Trade Union Congress.

**G.D.O:** Governor's Detention order.

**GEMA:** Gikuyu, Embu and Meru Association.

**K.A.U:** Kenya African Union.

**K.C.A:** Kikuyu Central Association.

**K.I.S.A:** Kikuyu Independent Schools' Association.

**K.L.C:** Kenya Land Commission.

**K.P.E:** Kenya Primary Education.

**L.N.C:** Local Native Council.

**M.P:** Member of Parliament.

**NDESAFA:** Nyeri District Ex-Servicemen African Friendly Association.

**P.C.E.A:** Presbyterian Church of East Africa.

**S.T.F.S:** Settlement Transfer Fund Schemes.

**UUGI:** *Urumwe wa Ukuria wa Gikuyu* (Unity for the Development of the Agikuyu Culture) The Gikuyu Language Committee Committed to the Standardisation and Moderation of African Languages.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The British colonial government interfered with the social, economic and political structure of the Agikuyu leading to mass discontentment. In 1924, the KCA (Kikuyu Central Organisation) was formed to air their grievances. Agikuyu leaders among them Jomo Kenyatta used literary skills to unify them and raise their political consciousness. Jomo Kenyatta as the editor of *Muigwithania* (Reconciler), the KCA newspaper, appealed to the Agikuyu to be of high esteem, united and diligent (Kenyatta, 1929). He advised the Agikuyu to learn from the British who, according to him, were strong because they were united. They had to unite in order to be able to send representatives to Europe to represent them on land issues. He further contended with them that wherever they went for employment, they were to remember to give service to their own people and have respect for one another. According to Jomo Kenyatta, unity was achievable if the Agikuyu did away with slander and jealousies from among themselves (Kenyatta, 1929).

Jomo Kenyatta also emphasised on the need for higher education if the Agikuyu were to make great achievements. He urged them, *Ugi wi mbere ya hinya* (Wisdom is better than strength) (Kyle, 1999). The Agikuyu accepted Kenyatta as their leader such that, when he landed in Mombasa from abroad on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1930, word went round that he was their “new king”. Kenyatta was also a charismatic man. Among the Agikuyu he enjoyed a command of public oratory (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). The *Muigwithania* (Reconciler) newspaper was translated by the colonial authorities and

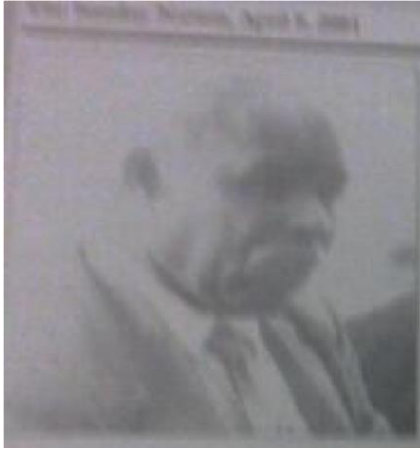
subjected to criminal investigation. It was banned in 1940 but had already been successful in mobilising the Agikuyu into making political and economic demands from the colonial government (Durrani, 2006).

Banning of *Ituika* (Generational handover of power) by the colonial government also interfered with the socio-political set up of the Agikuyu. There was a popular belief that an *ituika* would redeem the country from Mwangi elders who had “sold” it (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). According to the Agikuyu tradition, an *Ituika* would allow the younger generation of married men to be leaders or respected elders (Njagi wa Davidi, a respondent). Around 1925 to 1928, the Agikuyu expected an *ituika* to take place corresponding to the last ceremony, which took place about 1890 to 1898. Therefore, in 1928, the Irungu generation began singing and dancing *Ituika* ceremonial songs and dances to mark the termination of rule by the Mwangi generation. The colonial government declared the *Ituika* illegal. This denied the Irungu generation their birthright of perpetuating the national pride and enjoyment in the community’s social, political and religious organisation (Kenyatta, 1978).

In 1946, Kenya African Union (KAU) was formed to replace the KCA (Durrani, 2006) and to incorporate people from other ethnic groups. In 1946 a group of radical Agikuyu, most of whom being former servicemen during the Second World War were impatient with the pace of change proposed by KAU. They formed the *Anake a 40* (Forty group) and started violent opposition against colonial rule (Branch, 2007). They also administered oaths so that people joined the movement that came to be referred to as the Mau Mau.

The majority of the Agikuyu took the Mau Mau oath (Branch, 2007). This oath unified the Agikuyu from all walks of life. The British colonial government wanted to break this solidarity by ruthlessly dealing with all Mau Mau suspects and detaining them (Brandabur, 2007). However, literary activism played a vital role in keeping the movement intact. African writers like Gakaara wa Wanjau, Isaac Gathanju among others used their own printing presses in active support of the Mau Mau (Durrani, 2006).

Gakaara wa Wanjau, Henry Mworia, Jomo Kenyatta, Mbiyu Koinange among other African writers often published information, mainly in vernacular, which addressed the Agikuyu's material needs and to inform the people on what was going on around them. Their literary works became so popular that the British government produced counter propaganda. The colonial government also published a vernacular newspaper *Mucemania* (Meeting) to counter the nationalist publications but it lasted for only three months (Durrani, 2006). Literary information became so useful in the resistance struggle that the colonial government spent so much energy in not only producing counter propaganda, but also banned African progressive booklets and printing presses and arrested the literary activists like Gakaara wa Wanjau and detained him. Gakaara wa Wanjau was arrested and detained by the colonial government as the 'Chief Mau Mau Propagandist' (Durrani, 2006). Thus, the British colonial government recognised him as an activist who published information, mainly in vernacular, urging the Agikuyu to fight for their land and freedom.



*Gakaara wa Wanjau (Ref: Sunday Standard / April 15 2001).*

Gakaara wa Wanjau had an impressive list of novelettes, political essays, songs and poems through which he urged the Agikuyu to fight for their land and political freedom. All his books were banned and he was arrested and detained from 1952 to 1959. While it was possible for the colonial government to ban the hymn books, it became impossible to ban the songs since they were already learnt by heart. Songs continued to be sung and they inspired the Mau Mau movement long after the publishing of the hymn books was banned. They were a source of information and encouraged the Agikuyu to fight colonialism in an organised way (Durrani, 2006). The theme of perseverance was also taught through the songs and they reminded the Agikuyu that land was their God-given right (Kanogo, 1993). Therefore, the collection of Gakaara's political songs was useful in raising political consciousness among the Agikuyu since they were easy to learn.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

From 2003, the Kenyan government recognised the members of the Mau Mau movement as independence heroes who sacrificed their lives in order to free Kenya from colonial rule. Gakaara wa Wanjau fought through his literary works unlike most of the honoured Mau Mau heroes like Dedan Kimathi, Waruhiu Itote, Stanley Mathenge, and Bildad Kaggia among others who violently engaged the British colonial authorities from the forest. Although available literature portray him as a nationalist during the colonial period (Pugliese, 1992), not much has been done in order to examine his political thought as a nationalist who contributed to Kenya's political independence through his revolutionary writings. This work fills this gap and demonstrates the various strands in the fight for independence by those who used their literary prowess to decolonise the mind of the Kenyans. Literary activism was very crucial in the struggle for the political independence of Kenya.

## **1.3 Aim of the Study**

The general objective of the study was to examine Gakaara wa Wanjau's literary contribution to the politics of freedom struggle in both colonial and post-colonial Kenya. The specific objectives were to:

- i. Trace Gakaara wa Wanjau's socio-political experiences during the colonial period that influenced his political consciousness.
- ii. Examine the influence of his political writings to the Mau Mau nationalist movement.
- iii. Explore Gakaara's socio-political activities after detention that influenced his relationship with the post-colonial governments



#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following questions:

- i) What socio-political experiences influenced Gakaara wa Wanjau's political consciousness in colonial Kenya?
- ii) How did Gakaara's literary works influence the Mau Mau nationalist movement in colonial Kenya?
- iii) What were Gakaara's social-political activities after detention that influenced his relationship with the post-colonial governments?

#### **1.5 Justification of the Study**

The study demonstrated that Gakaara wa Wanjau's contribution to the Kenyan nationalist struggle through his literary skills in raising the political consciousness of the Agikuyu during the colonial period was very vital. The study therefore contributed in generating knowledge on the various strands of Kenya's freedom struggle. Gakaara used his brain and pen to decolonise the mind. The analysis of his vernacular literary works showed that he particularly targeted the Agikuyu as his main audience with the intention of raising their political consciousness. His influence was evident from 1940 to 2001.

#### **1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The study was confined to Gakaara's experiences that led him into political activism and an analysis of his literary political works which included pamphlets, progressive

booklets and song books. It assumed that the Mau Mau was already a nationalist movement and did not engage itself with all the details of the development of the movement. The study was specifically limited to Gakaara wa Wanjau's literary contribution to the Mau Mau nationalist movement committed to the political freedom of Kenya. The target population was mainly Gakaara's acquaintances. The researcher faced the challenge of the study informants being scattered in different parts of the country. The literary information on Gakaara wa Wanjau was also scattered in History and Literature Departments in various libraries. The challenge was overcome through the use of key informants and the library staff.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a description of research studies relating to how Gakaara wa Wanjau, among other black elites, used literary skills to raise the political consciousness of Kenyans during and after the colonial period. The literature is examined chronologically. In addition, this chapter provides a theoretical framework.

#### 2.2 Description of all the Research Studies

Jomo Kenyatta was the editor of *Muigwithania* (Reconciler) newspaper between 1928 and 1929 with the main objective of unifying the Agikuyu against colonial administration. Occasionally, proverbs were used so that the Agikuyu would understand what action was expected of them but the colonial government could not use a legal action against the newspaper since its agents could not easily understand the hidden meaning in the proverbs. For example, Kenyatta used proverbs like, *Ita ritari ndundu rihuragwo na njuguma imwe* (Those who do not take counsel together are overcome with a single knobbery) and *Kamuingi koyaga ndiri* (A little company is able to lift the (heavy) beer making log) to mean “Unity is Strength” (Kenyatta, 1928 - 1929). This vernacular newspaper provided evidence that the literary skill was an effective tool in raising the political consciousness of the Agikuyu during the colonial period.

Gakaara (1952) intended to expose the suffering subjected on the Africans by the colonialists in his vernacular pamphlet, *Magerio nomo mahota* (Practice makes perfect). This pamphlet sought to demonstrate the need for all the Agikuyu to become actively involved in the struggle for the recovery of their land, national independence and delivery from the white man's slavery. Gakaara wrote to make the Agikuyu aware that the colonial government was deceiving them by using the divide and rule tactics. According to him, all the Agikuyu were being deceived whether in religious ministries, in clerical jobs, as squatters, peasant farmers, soldiers in the independence movements, school children and so on (Gakaara, 1952). The colonial government was dividing them so that they could then be manipulated. Gakaara advised the Agikuyu that they should not allow the colonialists to belittle them in any way. They should also value their land more than the European's deceptive wealth in the form of airplanes, motor cars and expensive clothes. Africans should be united to fight for their land and freedom. This pamphlet was relevant to the study because it expressed Gakaara's own views against colonial exploitation of the Africans. The pamphlet's contents expressed Gakaara's impatience with colonial deception and the African ignorance of the issue (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002).

Kournosoff (1959) explained that discriminatory laws against Africans contributed greatly to African discontent against colonial rule. Colonial injustices against the Africans made them bitter and more prone to join Mau Mau. The uprising caused a great soul searching on the part of both the British government and the then Kenya government. This brought about a new constitution, direct elections for African and a revolution towards African land tenure system. Gakaara wa Wanjau as a victim of colonial injustices developed a resentment against the colonisers and therefore took a

very active literary role in raising the political consciousness of the Agikuyu. He demonstrated European exploitation of the Africans and the need for unity in order to drive the Europeans out of Kenya. This in return fueled the Mau Mau struggle that contributed to the attainment of Kenya's independence.

Corfield (1960) report on the origins and growth of Mau Mau revealed how the Agikuyu's political consciousness was raised by some leaders. In a KAU meeting in Ruringu, Nyeri, on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1952 Jomo Kenyatta called himself the "Leader of Mumbi" to put the meeting to order. He urged those "born of Mumbi" to sit on the earth that was theirs and be quiet. He argued that KAU was the mouth piece of Kenyans for the purpose of political freedom, that land was the gift of God to the Africans and if democracy would prevail then Africans would have to rule Kenya. Kenyatta tactfully distanced himself from the Mau Mau when he stated, "He who calls us Mau Mau is not truthful. We do not know this thing called Mau Mau". He said that Mau Mau was a new word and even the elders did not know it. Kenyatta also addressed the issue of inequality in colonial Kenya whereby he argued that there should be equal pay for equal work done. Gakaara attended the KAU meeting in Ruring'u as evidenced in song no 10 of the Mau Mau songs he republished to celebrate 25 years of Kenya's independence. In the collection of Mau Mau songs, Gakaara popularised KAU and embraced Jomo Kenyatta as a national leader.

KAU flag was hoisted in the Ruringu meeting and Jomo Kenyatta explained the three colours of the flag as follows; Black stood for black people, Red showed that the blood of an African was the same colour as the blood of a European and green was to show

that God gave the green country to the Africans. The shield, spear and an arrow on the flag were the weapons used to guard the land by the ancestors. However, Kenyatta cautioned the Agikuyu not to fight because a spear was no match to a white man's bomb, thus expressing his moderate views.

The Corfield report revealed Jomo Kenyatta as a leader accepted by the Agikuyu to lead them to independence. This influenced Gakaara wa Wanjau in his writings because even the Mau Mau songs praised Kenyatta as a leader. Kenyatta called for the Agikuyu unity by invoking the name of Mumbi, the ancestral Gikuyu original parent. Gakaara also called for unity with the use of the creed, *Witikio wa Gikuyu na Mumbi* (The Gikuyu Ideology).

Rosberg and Noltingham (1966) acknowledged the fact that the Agikuyu resistance to colonial dominance became increasingly militant in the postwar period. They gradually became more committed to the employment of non-constitutional means to achieve social economic and political changes. In addition, songs were very effective in bringing about a tradition of unity and defiance to the government by both the rural and urban population. Symbols recognised as common to all people were employed in oath taking ceremonies with the purpose of overcoming social fragmentation and establish loyalty to the community. Such symbols included the traditional founders of the community, prayers to *Ngai* (God) as they faced Mt Kirinyaga, and a return to age-group greetings and other customs particularly by those who took the oath. Gakaara wa Wanjau contributed to the Mau Mau movement by raising the Agikuyu's political awareness through his writings. For example, he wrote and published Mau Mau songs

and a political creed which called on the Agikuyu to unite under the traditional worship and in recognition of their common ancestry. Gakaara's political creed was distributed among the Mau Mau fighters by Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi. This means that Gakaara wa Wanjau was instrumental to the unity of the Mau Mau movement, by means of his literary skill.

Itote alias General China (1967) explained that the purpose of the Mau Mau oaths was to unify the Agikuyu. Taking the oath was for the Agikuyu a natural expression of a common bond of anger against colonial rule and hope for achieving their freedom. For the oath administrators, the time for oath taking was a good opportunity to educate the recruits about the history of their country, the objectives of the Mau Mau, the military tactics and so on. It was an excellent time to impress upon the recruits the reason for the land and freedom struggle. Gakaara wa Wanjau, the protagonist of this study, took the oath in 1952 to demonstrate that he was united with those who were fighting for land and freedom. He also made a collection of Mau Mau songs to show that he identified himself with the Mau Mau.

Gakaara (1971) gave a description of the declaration of the State of Emergency by Sir Everlyn Baring who replaced Sir Phillip Mitchell as the governor of Kenya in 1952. Baring toured the country to witness the Mau Mau trail of destruction. He then prepared new laws to ensure the arrest of the Mau Mau leaders. "Operation Jock Stock" was whereby about eighty Mau Mau leaders were to be arrested and deported to the arid areas of Kenya on the night of 20/10/1952.

In the "Governor's Detention Order", the arrested had a personal detention number prepared beforehand. The list of suspected Mau Mau radicals was referred to as the "black list" which included KCA and KAU leaders, independent schools and church leaders, trade union leader's, publishers and those suspected to have been oath administrators and the drivers for these leaders (Gakaara, 1971). The law also required that nobody would enter or leave Gikuyu, Embu and Meru counties without a permit. Gakaara was among the approximately eighty Mau Mau leaders arrested under the "Operation Jock Stock". His detention number, GDO-B-15, was a proof that he was in the colonial "black list" of the Kenya nationalists who were fighting for the independence of Kenya.

Smith (1973) recorded that Alliance High School (A.H.S.) was opened in 1926 with G. A. Grieve as its first headmaster. Grieve headed the school up to August 1940 when he retired and on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1940 Carey Francis, took over. Rumours of Carey Francis' tough disciplinary measures were spread around the school by the old Maseno boys who already had had an experience with him. Francis did not beat about the bush but spoke openly of the things he did not like about the school and which he meant to change. The boys did not like him and on 28<sup>th</sup> October a rather peremptory notice was removed from the notice board. Francis assembled the school and announced that unless the boy concerned confessed forthwith, sugar on porridge would be stopped for seven days. On 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October the boys left their breakfast untouched. On 1<sup>st</sup> November they did not attend morning classes. At noon they went for lunch and found nothing. A senior boy taking part in the revolt was beaten, the rest of the school stampeded, seized their possessions and departed. Only eleven students were left in the school and only because they had nowhere to run to. Notices were circulated requiring the immediate



return of the boys who wished for readmission to school discipline. By 11<sup>th</sup> November all the boys were back and were punished. Smith recorded that after readmission, all the boys had to do without sugar in the drinks provided by the school for one day. One rude boy was beaten and two were dismissed. Gakaara wa Wanjau was one of the two unlucky boys and he later termed the expulsion as unfair. It probably motivated him to write about the unfairness of the colonial regime.

Muriuki (1974) expressed that Waiyaki wa Hinga was not a nationalist martyr as the Agikuyu believed. However, he indicated that the memory of Waiyaki as one who died for the sake of the Agikuyu land gave impetus to the Mau Mau movement. One of the songs composed during the Mau Mau struggle described him as one who died leaving behind a curse that the Agikuyu should never give up on their land. Gakaara wa Wanjau included this song among the Mau Mau songs that he published. Songs played a very significant role in fuelling the struggle for freedom, even after the writer's books were banned by the colonial government.

Kaggia (1975) explained that the KCA was a predominantly Gikuyu political association. Outside KCA, Africans were very submissive to the British colonial rule. Africans were taught by the whites that the *Mzungu* (European) was ordained by God to rule and that it was impossible to replace him. The uneducated revered the European while the educated admired his way of life and aspired to copy him. Most of the educated thought it was more profitable to support rather than oppose the colonial rule. However, this scenario changed in the late forties and early fifties due to the return of the servicemen from the Second World War, emergence of trade unions and the

circulation of popular *nyimbo* (song books). Therefore, a new kind of awareness developed and many Africans participated in politics demanding radical changes. The old submissiveness to the British rule was gone between the end of the Second World War and the declaration of Emergency. Kaggia also mentioned that the chief authors of the popular *nyimbo* (songs) included Gakaara wa Wanjau and Muthee Cheche. According to Kaggia, the prosecution relied on the songs alone for information about the aims and objectives of the Mau Mau. Gakaara wa Wanjau was involved in the raising of the political awareness of the Agikuyu after the Second World War. He did this through writing and publishing political literature, Mau Mau songs and a political creed.

Kariuki (1976) described the origin of the name “Mau Mau”. It was a childhood anagram for *Uma! Uma!* meaning “Get out! Get out!” It was a security measure for the Agikuyu taking the oath of unity. Those taking the oath kept a guard who was instructed to warn those taking the oath to escape, as the enemy would not understand the meaning of the words. During a raid on the Mau Mau oath taking ceremony, the police heard the name *Mau Mau* but on arrival, they found nobody, only the paraphernalia of oathing. When they reported this, the oath of unity was given the name “Mau Mau”. This study considers this background knowledge important as Gakaara wa Wanjau also took the Mau Mau oath and became a Mau Mau activist before he was arrested and taken to detention.

Kenyatta (1978) noted that very large sections of the Agikuyu were living as squatters on European farms during the colonial period. The rest of the population lived largely in Gikuyu reserves and towns. This explained the kind of deprivation the Agikuyu

suffered. In his book, Kenyatta described himself as a leader accepted by the Agikuyu due to his exposure to the outside world and participation in the community's activities. He started and edited the first Gikuyu journal, *Muigwithania* (Reconciler) which gave him the opportunity to tour all over the Gikuyu country to discuss various cultural, political, social, religious and other problems. Jomo Kenyatta also defined the Gikuyu country as the area that covered five colonial administrative districts of Kiambu, Fort Hall (Murang'a), Nyeri, Embu and Meru. These were the main areas that were affected by the Emergency laws between 1952 and 1959 when the colonial government tried to stamp out the Mau Mau rebellion (Gakaara, 1971).

Jomo Kenyatta (1978) explained that the most everlasting oath was that which involved swearing by the soil. The soil was the most important factor in the Agikuyu's religion, political and economic life. As agriculturalists, the Agikuyu depended entirely on land and religiously they communed with the ancestral spirits through contact with the soil. Thus, the Agikuyu referred to the land as the mother of the community. It fed them in lifetime and nurtured the ancestral spirits for eternity. According to Kenyatta, every inch of land in the Gikuyu country had its owner. The Agikuyu collectively defended the boundaries of their territory. Jomo Kenyatta also explained the aspect of unity among the Agikuyu whereby the pronoun "I" was used very rarely in public assemblies. Gakaara appealed to the Agikuyu to unite towards the struggle for land and freedom. He argued that the Agikuyu were poor not because they were lazy but because of the colonialist's economic exploitation. In Gakaara's collection of Mau Mau songs, Kenyatta is depicted as the undisputed leader of the Agikuyu community and as the preferred first president after independence.

Mukaru-Ng'ang'a (1978) wrote that the ex-soldiers resisted the colonial unpaid terracing. They held a meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1947 in Fort Hall (Murang'a) and resolved that their women were no longer going to be involved in terracing. This was effected the following day and no woman turned up for terracing. The men later followed and by August 1947 the forced terracing had been effectfully resisted. According to Gakaara, this gave the ex-soldiers a sense of achievement that motivated the Mau Mau against colonialism (Gakaara, 1971).

Gakaara (1983) authored prison diary in which he explained some of the factors that motivated him into political literary activism that led to his arrest and detention. His experiences as a student of Alliance High School and as a colonial government's employee made him bitter against colonial rule. He identified himself with the Mau Mau movement and became its political literary activist. After his arrest and detention, he managed to write and keep a diary between 1952 and 1957 in which he exposed the British atrocities to the Mau Mau detainees. Gakaara claimed that this piece of history was important because the British colonial authorities did their best to keep it hidden from the world.

Madelung (1985) stated that the Mau Mau guerrilla fighters and their sympathisers clung to the idea that the black workers and peasants could be convinced of the righteousness of the nationalists' cause. They therefore produced an impressive number of songs to raise the political consciousness of the masses. The songs expressed the Agikuyu's hatred for the colonialists and demanded for the return of their alienated land and freedom. They advised the loyalists that they too should join the Mau Mau

movement because they also had lost land to the colonialists. The songs comforted those in jails by assuring them that their land and political freedom would be won and warned the loyalists that they would pay for their treachery when the foreigners were finally driven out of the country. The Mau Mau songs expressed confidence in their leaders like Dedan Kimathi and their God who they believed was supporting their freedom army. The current study concurs with Madelung's view that the Mau Mau songs were meant to convince many more people to join the Mau Mau. Gakaara wa Wanjau collected, published and distributed Mau Mau songs with the intention of raising the political consciousness of the Agikuyu. Through the songs, he was urging them to join the Mau Mau movement.

Gathigira (1986) described Gakaara wa Wanjau as a strong nationalist who was quite conscious of the need to include other ethnic groups in the Mau Mau movement through oath-taking. Gakaara felt that if large numbers of Africans outside Central Kenya took the oath, it could lead to national unity. According to Gathigira, there was appreciable success for oath administration on the Kamba living in Nairobi. Gathigira also mentioned Gakaara wa Wanjau alongside other Kenyan nationalists like Jomo Kenyatta, Bildad Kaggia and Fred Kubai among others who were arrested on the night of October 20<sup>th</sup> 1952 and detained. Gathigira's description of Gakaara wa Wanjau was quite relevant to this study as it helped examine his role as a Mau Mau activist and a nationalist who fought for Kenya's independence.

Mboya (1986) explained that the Mau Mau revolt was a result of social and economic problems suffered by the Agikuyu during the colonial period. Africans were subjected to different forms of discrimination which included unequal pay, being forbidden by

the colonial government from cultivating key cash crops, discrimination in schools and hospitals, lack of African representation in the legislature among others. Land problem was sensitive among the Agikuyu and this explained why the Mau Mau revolt was largely concentrated in Central Kenya and some parts of the Rift Valley rather than covering the whole of Kenya.

Mboya asserted that it was not until the Mau Mau uprising had erupted that logical changes began to take place towards improving African conditions in Kenya. It was during the Mau Mau uprising that racial discrimination began to disappear, the number of Africans started increasing in the Legislature and the Swynnerton Plan was put in place which brought reforms on African agriculture. The Mau Mau were also able to appeal to international sympathy because, as Mboya stated, the world's newspapers were more interested in areas where there was violence than in areas where nationalists were working quietly. Mboya's work became relevant to the study on Gakaara wa Wanjau's literary contribution to the political consciousness of the Agikuyu since Gakaara was of the same view that Europeans exploited and looked down on Africans. The economic and social problems against Africans outlined by Mboya as the reasons for the birth of the Mau Mau movement were the same ones that motivated Gakaara wa Wanjau into his literary political activism.

Macgoye (1986) stated that in a way, the forest fighters won the war of independence. To explain this statement the author quoted the British commander Sir George Erskine, who said that he did not believe that bullets would finish the Mau Mau problem. To him, the problem was how Europeans, Africans and Asians could live in harmony on a

long term basis. The war with the Mau Mau was a major loss to both the African and the British alike for instance the British invested heavily in the war while the Africans lost many lives. Under the strain of the situation, both sides committed cruel acts to one another. The result was that the British government wanted to discuss with African leaders in the direction of independence. The government had at least learnt that the settler community was not able to manage Kenya. Gakaara was of the view that the Mau Mau won the war for the political independence in Kenya. He expressed this in his post independence literary works. For example, on the cover of the booklet, *Nyimbo cia Mau Mau iria Ciarehithirie Wiyathi* (Mau Mau Songs that Facilitated Independence), he implied that they were crucial in facilitating the political independence of Kenya.

Wanjau and Njoroge (1988) stated that Gakaara's authorship and publication of the *Witikio wa Gikuyu na Mumbi* (The Faith of Gikuyu and Mumbi) was one of the grounds for his detention by the colonial government. The creed expressed the Agikuyu's faith in God, their ancestral parents, ancestral religious ceremonies, their leaders and the unity of the community. According to the creed, the colonial government had robbed the Agikuyu of their God-given land, an act that humiliated them. They had to fight to restore their ancestral glory. The creed was relevant to the study as Gakaara authored, published and ensured its distribution to make the Agikuyu conscious of their land and freedom rights and therefore fight against colonialism.

Gakaara (1989) was a pamphlet in which the author cautioned the Agikuyu that the Christian religion was discrediting the African religion as paganism. To Gakaara, this

was a European tactic to enslave the African mind. Christian baptism was equal to administering an oath to the Africans to coerce them to leave behind their traditional beliefs and customs to embrace the European culture. The pamphlet was relevant to the study because it shed light on why the Mau Mau tended to shed their Christian names and revert to the traditional African religion. The Mau Mau oath was like baptism whereby one felt a spiritual renewal (Kariuki, 1976). In this pamphlet, Gakaara included the Mau Mau political creed, which had been one of the main reasons for his arrest and detention by the colonial authorities. This work also explained why the post-colonial government of Daniel T. Arap Moi looked at him with suspicion. Moi's government deregistered some Agikuyu traditional religious movements such as Ngonya wa Gakonya's *Hema ya Ngai wi Muoyo*, (Tent of the Living God).

Ackworth (1990) published his telephone interview with Ngugi wa Thiong'o on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1990. According to Ngugi, *Mwakenya* stands for *Muungano wa Wazalendo wa Kenya* (The Union of Patriots for the Liberation of Kenya). During the interview, Ackworth recorded that the *Mwakenya* movement was a result of Jomo Kenyatta's and Moi's governments' repressive measures against any opposition. Repressions were in the form of detentions without trial, imprisonments on false charges, torture in police cells, political deaths of people like Dr Robert Ouko and Bishop Muge and so on. The movement was underground but would manifest in above ground booklets like *Moi's reign of terror* which tried to prove that Moi's regime was tyrannical. Ackworth alleged that the *Mwakenya* attempted to unmask Moi's regime which hoodwinked the international community into believing that it was democratic. This revelation by Ackworth is relevant to the study because Moi's regime associated Gakaara wa Wanjau



with *Mwakenya* because of his literary activities, particularly his prison diary *Mwandiki wa Mau Mau Ithamirio-ini* (Mau Mau Author in detention) (Mwarigu, 1996).

Wandai (1990) stated that one of the chief authors of freedom songs was Gakaara wa Wanjau and Muthee Cheche. They collected the songs and put them into books. According to Wandai, the songs were very important because they were able to communicate even to the illiterate people who could not read newspapers. African newspapers were banned but it was not possible to ban the songs since they were written in the hearts and minds of the people. After the colonial government banned the hymn books, the songs remained in the hearts and the minds of people. They inspired the Kenya African Union (KAU) leaders, the general population and gave courage to the Mau Mau fighters in the forest. It was easy to convince the illiterate fighters on the reasons for fighting for freedom through these songs. The songs were sung during the Mau Mau meetings, KAU meetings, in the colonial concentration camps and at the desperate periods during the Emergency when the songs sustained everyone. The Mau Mau freedom songs featured in the Kapenguria trial. Wandai claimed that the prosecution relied upon them alone for the information about the aims and objectives of the Mau Mau. Wandai's work was relevant to the study since Gakaara's song writing featured as a literary skill used to raise the political consciousness of the Agikuyu during the colonial period.

Kanogo (1993) affirmed that Mau Mau songs stressed the Agikuyu land grievances against the colonial government. From the Mau Mau songs recorded by Kanogo, the Agikuyu believed that land was a God-given right robbed from them by the colonialists.

They had faith that God would grant them victory in their fight for their land and they would drive the foreigners out of the country. Kanogo's views were relevant to the study on Gakaara wa Wanjau's literary contribution to the political consciousness of the Agikuyu. Gakaara's collection of Mau Mau songs was very popular which was evidenced by the fact that the majority of the Agikuyu could sing them in different forums. This meant that his literary skill was effectively used to arouse the Agikuyu's political consciousness since written work was quite long lasting in the minds of the people.

Pugliese (1992) described Gakaara wa Wanjau as a Kenyan writer who published a number of booklets relating to the Agikuyu culture, customs and language and the recent Kenyan history. Pugliese further noted that Gakaara wrote political pamphlets and magazines which caused his arrest in 1952. He was released alongside other nationalists in 1962. Pugliese recognised Gakaara wa Wanjau as a writer of political literature and a nationalist.

Mwarigu (1996) described Gakaara as a "man of letters" who rubbed political authorities the wrong way before and after independence with his cultural activism. According to Mwarigu, Gakaara rose into prominence in 1984 soon after being awarded the Noma prize for literature for his prison diary, *Mwandiki wa Mau Mau Ithamiriointi* (Mau Mau Author in Detention). The book's publication and the award attracted the attention of security agencies in Kenya and soon Wanjau was arrested and accused of being involved in Mwakenya activities. He was released three weeks later in April 1986, but only after making a statement which suggested that Ngugi wa Thiongo and

his associates Micere Mugo and Maina wa Kinyatti were instrumental in ensuring that the writer's diary was not only published but also awarded the Noma award. Mwarigu's article was relevant to the current study in that Gakaara was arrested and detained both in colonial and postcolonial governments because of his continued efforts in raising the Agikuyu's political awareness.

Illieva (1996) in her article, *Critic Underestimated Gakaara's Contributions*, noted that the publication of Gakaara's prison diary was encouraged and assisted by Prof. Ngugi wa Thiongo, Maina wa Kinyatti, Prof. Micere Mugo and the translator Ngugi Njoroge. This was personally acknowledged by Gakaara himself. Illieva proved that Gakaara deserved the award as the jury to select the award winner met annually and its proceeds were on the basis of independent opinion and assessment secured from specialists. The article was relevant to the study because of mentioning Gakaara's associates like Prof. Ngugi wa Thiongo and Maina wa Kinyatti who also got into trouble with Moi's government. Gakaara's relationship with them may have been intellectual but it raised the suspicion of the post-colonial government.

Illieva (1998) explained what the Noma Award was all about. It was an annual award for an outstanding new book authored and published in Africa. Among the members of its jury were African scholars. This article was relevant to the study because it was the Noma award that indirectly severed Gakaara's relationship with Moi's government.

Otieno and Presley (1998) claimed that Waiyaki wa Hinga, who was brutally murdered by the white imperialists, left behind a curse which obliged the Agikuyu to protect their land from foreigners. According to Otieno and Presley, Waiyaki had admonished the Agikuyu that they should not surrender an inch of their soil to foreigners. The author

also countered the colonial propaganda that the Mau Mau were atheists by stating that they believed in God. The Mau Mau prayed to God facing Mount Kenya and regarded him as their shield. Like Gakaara wa Wanjau, Otieno and Presley also exposed colonial atrocities in detention camps by writing about her own rape ordeal at the hands of a colonial prison officer who made her pregnant and later ridiculed her.

Gakaara (1999) appealed to the Agikuyu to return to their traditional way of worship. According to him, it was the traditional way of worship that unified the Mau Mau and therefore helped them to win the war of independence. They took an oath to drop Christianity which was the religion of the colonialists, prayed to their God as they faced Mount Kirinyaga and he enabled them to defeat the colonialists. This kind of literature was bound to make Gakaara appear anti-government since it was the same belief system being propagated by *Mungiki*, an organisation banned by Moi's government.

Kyle (1999) noted that Jomo Kenyatta called on the unity of the Agikuyu and emphasised on the need for good education for the Africans in the *Muigwithania* (Reconciler) newspaper. Kyle also noted that between 1947 and 1954, the Kenya economy rose at an astonishing rate of 13% per year and over the whole period between 1940 and 1960 the average annual growth was 6% p.a. Advancement in technology enabled the European settlers to lay off large numbers of African work force. Many Africans were squatters with no property rights to fall back on. Those allowed to stay on had to sign regular contracts, which limited the number of livestock they were allowed to keep. Many people migrated to towns where they suffered joblessness and poor living standards. On the other hand more Europeans were immigrating to Kenya

into the commercial sector. The European ex-servicemen were generously compensated while their African counterparts were disappointed. Gakaara wa Wanjau's literacy works tried to bring to the African attention the fact that the European was an exploiter and a deceiver who oppressed the African in his own country.

Njogu (2001) in his article, "Tribute to a Literary Icon", claimed that he was privileged to learn from Gakaara to whom he referred as "one of Kenya's foremost literary icons". According to Njogu, Gakaara had a strong sense of nationalism and was a great contributor in literature and culture. Njogu also closely worked with him in the attempt to standardize and modernize the Gikuyu language. In colonial and postcolonial eras, Gakaara wrote in Gikuyu. During the colonial period he was detained without trial in several detention camps and in postcolonial Kenya he was detained without trial on account of his intellectual work on language and culture. At the time of his death he was the patron of UUGI; the Gikuyu language committee committed to the standardization and modernization of African languages. Njogu's tribute to Gakaara also described him as a political intellectual whose political and literary activities were deliberate and well thought out. This article was relevant to the study because it revealed Gakaara as a writer committed to the nationalist cause. The post-colonial governments suspected him of negative political activities because of his commitment to language and culture.

Kiruthu (2001) explained that Jomo Kenyatta's involvement in politics was largely due to his literacy. In the 1920s Jomo Kenyatta was enrolled in the E.A.A (East African Association) as its propaganda secretary. In 1925, he became the secretary general of

the KCA, again because he was literate. His main work involved drafting letters, translation and administration. When KCA launched its party newspaper, *Muigwithania* (Reconciler), in 1928 Kenyatta became its editor.

Due to his literary abilities, Kenyatta was sent by the KCA to London to present the Agikuyu's grievances to the British government. Once in Europe, Kenyatta was able to publicize Kenya's grievances. He toured Europe extensively and wrote articles on Kenyan grievances which were published in *Manchester, Guardian, Times, Daily Worker and Sunday Workers*. Kiruthu was of the view that literary works contributed to Kenya's freedom struggle. Accordingly, political freedom may not have been achieved at the time it did without the literary contributions of political activists like Gakaara wa Wanjau.

Berman and Lonsdale (2002) contended that Mau Mau was an underground organisation known to the Agikuyu as *Uiguano wa Muingi* (The Unity of the Community). The hostile movement was intended to cause a crisis with the aim of forcing major concessions from the colonial government. They used oaths with the intention of uniting the Agikuyu who were already a divided community. The Mau Mau songs had biblical undertones. The Agikuyu compared themselves with the children of Israel while the British were compared with the Egyptians. Jomo Kenyatta was compared with the Biblical Moses and the songs implied that he would lead the Agikuyu to freedom and wealth. Further, Berman and Lonsdale noted that Gakaara wa Wanjau was a son of a Presbyterian Church minister in Nyeri. He was expelled from Alliance High School as one of the three boys who refused to apologize after a food

strike. Gakaara then served in Ethiopia as an army clerk. After the Second World War, he engaged in political literature in which he explained that the whites had given Africans new wants but denied them the equal pay, land and free trade that would raise their economic status. The whites had gained power by using the divide and rule tactics against Africans. According to Gakaara, the Africans had first to understand the extent of colonialists' deceit in order for them to regain their lost self-esteem. If Africans were united, they were capable of attaining the European economic status.

Berman and Lonsdale's analysis was relevant to the study on Gakaara wa Wanjau's literary contribution to the political consciousness of the Agikuyu. The Mau Mau movement was mainly on the unity of the Agikuyu and Gakaara wa Wanjau used his literary skills to unite them. The Mau Mau songs which he helped collect and publish appealed to all the Agikuyu to fight for their land and freedom, trust in God and work hard to raise their economic status. Berman and Lonsdale revealed that Gakaara's experiences on colonial injustices prompted him into political activism. The study demonstrated that, with the use of political literature, Gakaara had the objective of making the Agikuyu politically aware so that they could support the Mau Mau movement.

Durrani (2006) observed that Gakaara wa Wanjau published newspapers, books, progressive booklets, pamphlets and songbooks with the intention of making the people politically conscious. The colonial government detained him due to his publishing activities and termed him "The Chief Mau Mau Propagandist". Gakaara in collaboration with others like Muthee wa Cheche made a collection of anti-colonialist songs which were printed into hymn books. The songs included *Witikio* (Faith), and

*Nyimbo cia Gikuyu na Mumbi* (Songs of Gikuyu and Mumbi). These songs were very effective particularly when the colonial government banned Africans' printing presses. They imprinted anti-colonial sentiments into the hearts of the people. The songs became an effective tool of organising people against colonialism. They were a source of information, heightened the peoples' political consciousness and prepared them for armed struggle. They educated the workers and peasants against the dictatorship of the colonialists. Durrani also noted that Gakaara Book Service also printed and published many handbills and posters which were distributed by Mau Mau activists throughout the country. This work was useful to the study because it demonstrated Gakaara's contribution to political consciousness of the Agikuyu during the colonial period.

Branch (2007) noted that a majority of the Agikuyu took the Mau Mau oath. The oath served to unify the Agikuyu who had previously been deeply divided. It became popular due to Mau Mau's promise to deliver land and freedom. Branch further contended that the Mau Mau emerged from the social, economic and political discontentment, which unified the poor squatters on European farms with the urban unemployed and landless residents of native reserves. Branch's analysis was relevant to the study because it gave a glimpse of why the majority of the Agikuyu took the Mau Mau oath. According to Branch, the Mau Mau movement unified the Agikuyu from all social classes. Gakaara wa Wanjau, like the other Mau Mau's described by Branch, joined the movement due to social-economic and political discontentment with the colonial rule.

Brandabur (2007) explained that the Agikuyu were loyal to their struggle against loss of land and culture. This was expressed in the popular oath taking. The British wanted



to break the Agikuyu solidarity by brutally dealing with the Mau Mau suspects and detaining them. The proposed study demonstrated how Gakaara wa Wanjau used his literary works to promote the unity of the Agikuyu during the colonial period.

Peterson (2008) portrayed Gakaara wa Wanjau as a nationalist who the colonial authorities were not able to silence, even inside the detention camps. According to Peterson, Gakaara and others defended the Mau Mau ideology. During the years he spent in detention, Gakaara composed several plays, wrote ethnography, poetry and extensively carried out correspondence with his family. According to Peterson, Gakaara advocated against immorality because in 1948 he was chairman of the Nakuru Branch of the Rift Valley Agikuyu whose objectives included doing away with prostitution. During the same year, he published *Wanawake siku hizi* (Modern women) which upheld the chastity of women and good morals in general.

Branch (2009) described the Mau Mau as a war more devastating to the Agikuyu than to the colonialists because so many joined the opposing camps turning it more or less like a civil war. The Mau Mau debate was largely silenced in the national debate in Kenya during the presidencies of Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi. This largely explains why the outspoken Mau Mau supporters like Gakaara wa Wanjau were sidelined. However, Mwai Kibaki's government legalised the Mau Mau movement and even supported the efforts by the victims of the colonial government's atrocities to seek compensation. Since the Mau Mau movement is currently recognised as heroic, it is important to treat the Chief Mau Mau Ideologue, Gakaara wa Wanjau as a hero of the struggle for the independence of Kenya.

Mworia (2009) described Gakaara's background as poor due to the unfavourable environment. The author asserted that Gakaara had experienced army service in Ethiopia and after the war, the growing desperation of the squatter life in the highlands. Mworia further persisted that, to Gakaara, it was unrealistic to expect colonialism to allow its subjects to pursue self-improvement. Gakaara blamed the unequal colonial structures for African poverty. Mworia compared Gakaara and Kenyatta and stated that Kenyatta was more conservative while Gakaara was more radical. Moreover, the colonial rule had enslaved the African mind. Mworia's book was relevant to the study because it gave a brief background that might have shaped Gakaara's life as a political activist. From the book, the researcher discerned that Gakaara was embittered with the colonial regime.

Kaggia, de Leeuw and Kaggia (2012) explained that the Mau Mau movement was so highly organised that it was difficult for the colonial government to defeat it completely. It had its own Central Committee to manage its affairs. Taxi drivers ensured effective transport of above all the Mau Mau leaders and coded language ensured important information was disseminated among members without arousing suspicion to outsiders. Funds to sustain the movement were collected from members. The movement also had its own propagandists who informed people about the aims of the movement and distributed political literature. Kaggia named Gakaara wa Wanjau as one of those who collected and published Mau Mau songs. From Kaggia's work, the researcher discerned Gakaara wa Wajau's crucial role as one of the very important propagandists who fueled the struggle for independence.

Karimi (2013) contended that, apart from the Mau Mau war, the British Empire had not faced another such an intensive and massive war except perhaps in North America among the thirteen colonies. The Agikuyu refused to stand the oppression and depreciation of their lands and freedom by the British colonial government. The Agikuyu also resisted the exploitation of their labour by the colonialists and the poor education offered by the missionaries. Karimi also highlighted the physical, verbal and psychological assaults inflicted on the Africans by the colonialists. Political awareness became conspicuous among the Agikuyu after the Second World War when the Africans realised that the white man was not superhuman. The Agikuyu ex-soldiers formed the *Anake a 40* (The forty group) and started resisting paying of hut tax, the compulsory digging of trenches and contours and the cattle dips.

Karimi also highlighted KAU as the main political party existing for the political freedom of Kenya. The party held massive rallies for example in Kaloleni where its flag was launched. KAU's biggest political rally was held in Ruringu in Nyeri on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1952. In this meeting, KAU'S flag was raised and activists declared an all-out armed struggle against the colonial administration. Gakaara wa Wanjau also highlighted the importance of KAU in the freedom struggle where he called on the Agikuyu to attend the party's political rallies without excuses.

Nguthiru PEFA Church hymn book contains some of the songs whose hymn tunes were copied by the Mau Mau. Biblical characters in the songs like Abraham, Moses, David

and Jesus were likened with Jomo Kenyatta, who the Mau Mau envisioned as the first president after they achieved independence. The Biblical God is recorded in the Christian songs as holy and mighty such that his name was not supposed to be mentioned in vain. One of the Mau Mau songs, *Ritwa ria Ngai wa Gikuyu* had a similar title as one of the songs in the Christian hymn book, *Ritwa ria Ngai wa Iburahim*, and carried the same message to the Mau Mau. In their case, the Mau Mau sang that the name of the Agikuyu God was holy and mighty and as such it should not be mentioned in vain.

Gakaara n.d. *Nyimbo cia Mau Mau Iria Ciarehithirie Wiyathi* (Freedom Songs that Facilitated Independence). The songs according to Gakaara were referred to as "Freedom Songs" because they were mainly sung during the struggle for independence. They contained the history of Mau Mau freedom struggle from 1948 to 1964 when Kenya became a Republic. They highlighted the political issues of the time, enlightening the Agikuyu on the politics of KAU, rallied support for their political leaders like Jomo Kenyatta and Dedan Kimathi, encouraged them to send their children to school and appealed to them to play their varied roles as they united to drive the colonialist out of Kenya. The songs encouraged those who were undergoing challenges like the political prisoners and detainees. They recorded important events in the struggle for independence and gave the Agikuyu hope of political and economic freedom. The booklet was relevant to the study since it contained some of the songs collected and published by Gakaara during the colonial period.

Gakaara n.d. *Ururira wa Gikuyu na Mumbi* (The Common Origin of the Agikuyu). In this pamphlet, Gakaara made a portrait of how the Agikuyu had a common origin and hence the need for their unity. According to Gakaara, it was the Agikuyu unity and faith in God that enabled them win the Mau Mau war with British who had sophisticated weapons like guns ammunition, tankers and war aircrafts. He appealed to the modern Agikuyu to go back to traditional worship so that God would hearken to their prayers. Such kind of literature was likely to make Gakaara suspect in president Moi's government which could not tolerate people appealing to the return to traditional worship like Ngonywa wa Gakonya of *Hema ya Ngai wi Muoyo* (Tent of the Living God).

Gakaara n.d. *Uugi Karing'a* (A Registered society for the preservation of Gikuyu). As the patron of UUGI, Gakaara's opinion was that there was no danger of national disunity in the propagation of vernacular languages and varied Kenyan cultures. He cited Switzerland as a country with the best example of national unity, yet it was multilingual. To Gakaara, acculturation caused identity crisis and social disorders in Africans. Gakaara was therefore committed to what he referred to as "chasing out colonial mentality from the mind of the African". Moi's government could not tolerate this kind of commitment and literary activities in African languages.

Gakaara n.d. *Ugwati wa Muthungu Muiru* (The Dangers of Colonial Mentality). This booklet portrayed Gakaara as one aggrieved by the colonial mentality in the African. He tried to explain that the colonialist deceived the Agikuyu that English was a better language than *Gigikuyu* (Gikuyu language). He argued that a *Mugikuyu* (a Kikuyu) who spoke to another in English could be said to have a colonial cock crowing in his mind.

According to Gakaara, the colonialist left his cock crowing in the mind of Africans after independence. This was equal to being chained to the colonialists. Gakaara added that deviating from vernacular languages made Africans deviate from their culture. He gave an example that the deviation from traditional greetings kept the younger people from respecting the older generation. He explained that colonial mentality was entrenched in the mind through the teaching and learning in English such that children were made to believe that their vernacular languages were inferior. He commended the Kenyan government for introducing the policy of vernacular learning in lower primary school. This would in a way drive out the colonial mentality from the children's' mind.

### **2.3. Theoretical Framework**

Two theories informed this study;

1. Relative deprivation theory as explained by Ted Robert Gurr in *Why men rebel* (Gurr, 1970). According to Gurr, political protests and rebellion could be understood if the minds of those who opposed bad governments and bad policies were analysed. He advised that it was also good to understand the beliefs and cultural practices of such societies and the governments they opposed. He concluded that social psychological factors, or relative deprivation, were the root causes of political violence. According to Gurr, relative deprivation is the discrepancy between what people have and what they think they deserve. If what people think they can achieve and what they have differ, they justify themselves by putting the blame on someone else. The primary source of collective violence is the resultant frustration aggression mechanism. Frustration does not necessarily lead to violence, but when it is sufficiently prolonged and sharply felt, it often results to anger and eventually violence. The relatively deprived feel angry

when the economic and political welfare that they think they deserve is inferior to that of others to whom they compare themselves. Then there is high likelihood of rebellion, which is manifested in collective violence. Gurr explained that violence is a means to an end. Political violence is likely to occur if the current social-economic and political leadership is seen as illegitimate.

The Agikuyu reaction to colonial rule included violent rebellion, which could be well explained within Gurr's relative deprivation theory. Their material conditions worsened as their aspirations increased and as rapid economic growth widened the gap between them and Kenya's increasingly prosperous immigrant communities (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). Of the Kenya's cultivators, the Agikuyu lost most of their land to white settlement. Also of the people whose ecology allowed the cultivation of coffee, they were the last to be allowed to plant this most valuable crop of Kenya's export (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002).

This theory was relevant to the current study in that Gakaara wa Wanjau like others in the Mau Mau movement, was drawn into political activism by the colonial exploitation and discrimination when he worked for a British firm as a clerk. He joined the Mau Mau movement which was basically fighting for land and freedom alienated from Kenyans by the British colonial government. He produced political pamphlets and songs meant to educate the Agikuyu on their land rights and need for political freedom.

2. The Propaganda Model of Media Control Theory advanced by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky in *manufacturing consent: The political economy of mass media, 1988* also informed this study. This model tries to understand how population is manipulated and how the social, economic and political attitudes are fashioned in the minds of people. The theory is relevant to the current study since Gakaara wa Wanjau

utilised propaganda which threatened to unify the blacks in Kenya against the minority white rule. The colonial government banned all his literary works and subjected them to criminal investigation scrutiny, terming him “The Chief Mau Mau Propagandist”.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the methodology used in the study. It describes the research design, target population, sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The study adopted a historical research design. Ogunniyi (1992) explained that, "A historical research is a systematic examination of the past in order to understand the present and to look into the future wisely. The sources must be both authentic and valid because the researcher does not exercise any control on the available data". This approach was suitable in assessing Gakaara wa Wanjau's literary contribution to the political consciousness of Kenyans during and after the colonial period. Content analysis of his literary works was done and corroborated with oral interviews and other documents generated at the time. The researcher collected data and systematically arranged it to provide the required information. The bulk of the research material was on Gakaara's literary works.

#### **3.3 Sample Population**

The sample population in the study comprised of approximately thirty informants who were largely family members and acquaintances of Gakaara wa Wanjau when he was still alive. Cohen, Kahn and Steves (2002) argued that a minimum of thirty respondents

would be a reasonable starting point for qualitative research. The respondents were also appropriate for the study since the researcher engaged in in-depth interviews. Furthermore, the target population was considerably representative in the qualitative research since the information required was factual and beyond that number, the respondents in a biographical research were not expected to add any reasonably new information. The weakness in this strategy, therefore, was that some of the informants had the same information already acquired from the earlier respondents. The researcher used Gakaara's family members to identify his acquaintances for interviews with the aim of being led to more individuals conversant with Gakaara wa Wanjau's political activism during the colonial period. This was achieved.

### **3.4 Sampling Procedures**

The study employed purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Gakaara's five relatives, particularly those who experienced colonial rule, were purposively sampled for the researcher expected them to have more knowledge about him. The family members then directed the researcher to five of Gakaara's acquaintances. The acquaintances then led the researcher to ten respondents with more information on Gakaara who in turn led to eight more. The researcher then purposively identified three respondents who interpreted Mau Mau songs while one interpreted some French literature concerning Gakaara. This ensured a diverse number of informants for the study. To ensure systematic collection of data, sample questions were formulated beforehand in line with the research objectives. Open ended questions were used to accommodate the informants' literacy levels.

### **3.5 Research Instruments**

The study utilized primary data, secondary data and oral interviews. The researcher accessed primary information from the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Center in Nairobi, the Gakaara Press in Karatina and Ngatia Wang'ombe's personal archives in Karatina. Secondary data was accessed from text books, journal and newspaper articles. Oral information was collected from thirty respondents from Gakaara's family and acquaintances. An interview schedule was prepared beforehand which contained the main issues to be discussed with the informants. Note taking was utilized as a research technique. While collecting data, the researcher had notebooks with different sub-topics such as Gakaara's political and social experiences, employment, political literary works and his relationship with the colonial and postcolonial governments. Oral interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed. This eased the systematic collection and analysis of data.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher proceeded with the study after getting permission from the School of Education of Karatina University and the NACOSTI (National Council for Science and Tecnology). The study involved collection and corroboration of primary, secondary and oral sources in the context of the focus and scope of the research. The study used archival documents evidencing the Agikuyu's literary awareness during the colonial period from the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Centre in Nairobi. Primary data was important because it gave firsthand information to the researcher.

The study also used secondary data such as books and newspaper articles. Secondary data was obtained from the Karatina University Library, the Kenya National Library

Services in Karatina and Nyeri, the Gakaara Press, Wang'ombe Ngatia's personal archives in Karatina and the internet. The secondary data was relevant because it helped to gather information on what others thought on the subject under research.

Oral information was collected mainly from key informants selected from Gakaara's family members and close acquaintances. The researcher used an interview schedule listing the main issues to be discussed with the informants. The oral information was useful as it provided the background and the social context of the research.

### **3.7 Methods of Data Analysis**

Collected data was analysed descriptively to determine how Gakaara wa Wanjau used his literary skills to raise the political awareness of the Kenyans during and after the colonial period. The organisation of qualitative data was done chronologically based on Gakaara's experiences like education, employment, literary political activism, arrest and detention by the colonial authorities and finally his socio-political activities that determined his relationship with the post-colonial governments. The researcher then explored and interpreted the meaning of these life experiences by looking at Gakaara's social interactions, his contemporary cultural issues, ideologies and historical context. A classification system was adopted in order to record the inferred information systematically. There after content analysis of the collected data established facts on Gakaara's literary political activism. The facts were used to demonstrate how GakaarawaWanjau literary contributed to the raising of political consciousness of the Agikuyu during the colonial period.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSYS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

#### **4.1 Gakaara wa Wanjau's Socio-Political Experiences during the Colonial Period that Influenced his Political Consciousness**

##### **4.1.1 Introduction**

This chapter traces Gakaara's experiences that influenced him into becoming a literary political activist during the colonial period. This was done by looking into Gakaara's childhood and schooling, his army experience in Ethiopia and the Forty Group, which led the Mau Mau movement. The deteriorating socio-economic conditions among Africans after the Second World War were also analysed to determine their influence on Gakaara. Other literary influences against colonial rule and the politics of KAU must also have motivated him into a political literary activist. The prevailing socio-political ideas, the Olenguruone crisis and the Mau Mau political faith must also have influenced the contents of his literary works. The African subjugation to colonial rule must have motivated him into his literary anticolonial work intended to decolonise the mind.

##### **4.1.2 His Childhood and Schooling**

Gakaara was born in 1921 in Kirimukuyu location in Karatina, Nyeri County (Gakaara, 1983). His father, Johana Wanjau, was a Presbyterian Church minister who wanted his son to receive the best education possible. For his primary school education, Gakaara attended Tumu Tumu Primary School where he was always among the best performers of his class (Joseph Wang'ombe Ngatia, a respondent). As a church minister, Gakaara's father was most of the time absent from home since he was based at *Mihuti* Mission in Mukurwe-ini, several kilometres away from his home. Gakaara turned out to be very

bitter with the missionaries whom he felt denied him a father figure in the home (Joseph Wang'ombe Ngatia, a respondent). Despite his bitterness, he performed well academically and was ranked among the brightest pupils of Tumu Tumu primary school after sitting for his Standard 8 Kenya Primary Education (K.P.E) in 1938. He was thus able to proceed in 1939 to Alliance High School for his secondary school education where he was classmate to three future cabinet ministers namely Paul Ngei, Jeremiah Nyaga and Ronald Ngala (Gakaara, 1983).

The first Alliance High School headmaster, Mr. G. A. Grieve, retired in August 1940. Edward Carey Francis took over in September the same year. He was a tough disciplinarian and he immediately spoke about changes he intended to make in the school. On 28<sup>th</sup> October, a rather peremptory notice from the headmaster was removed from the notice board. Francis assembled the school and announced that unless the boys concerned confessed forthwith, sugar in porridge would be stopped for seven days. On 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October, the students left their breakfast untouched. On 1<sup>st</sup> November they did not attend to morning lessons. They returned at noon for a non-existent meal. A senior boy taking part in the strike was beaten and the rest of the school stampeded, took up their possessions and left. Only eleven students were left in the school, apparently because they had nowhere to go to (Smith, 1973).

Notices were circulated requiring the immediate return of the boys who wished for readmission to school discipline. By 11<sup>th</sup> November all the striking boys had returned and were then attended individually and readmitted on condition that they admitted they were wrong, were ready to take any punishment meted out to them and that they were ready to obey school rules. As a punishment, all the boys did manual work for three

and a half hours with the school's workmen but the latecomers did more. All had one day without sugar. One who was rude was beaten and two were dismissed (Smith, 1973). Gakaara was one of the boys expelled from Alliance High School after participating in the food strike (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). However, according to Gakaara's own explanation, his expulsion from school was unfair (Gakaara, 1983). Boys were made to march during a physical training session and Gakaara made a simple unintentional error. However, it was alleged that he refused to march well and was expelled (Gakaara, 1983). This increased his bitterness against the Europeans and was therefore motivated to write against the colonialists in his literary works.

#### **4.1.3 Gakaara's Army Experience in Ethiopia**

The colonialists feared that the blacks would not support them in the Second World War. In this connection, twenty three leaders from K.C.A, Ukamba Members Association (U.M.A) and Taita Hills Association (T.H.A) were tactfully arrested on allegations that they were administering oaths on their people against colonial rule and that they had secret deals with the Italians. They were exiled to Kapenguria until 1945 (Gakaara, 1971). Meanwhile the colonial propaganda effectively deceived the blacks in Kenya that the Italians had vowed to take over Nairobi and it was necessary for all of them to unite and join the World War on the side of the British in order to protect their men, women and children (Gakaara, 1971). The Agikuyu joined the Second World War in various capacities as clerks, nurses, drivers, constructors and car mechanics. They served in various countries like Burma, India, Egypt, Israel and Ethiopia among other countries.

Before he joined the war, Gakaara was very motivated by the fact that the Agikuyu could be united for a noble course. Peter Mbiyu Koinange was the most learned black

person in Kenya by 1938 (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). According to Gakaara, the colonial government slighted his Master of Arts Degree when they did not make him an elder in the Local Native Council (L.N.C). Mbiyu came up with an idea of elevating the KISA (Kikuyu Independent Schools Association) School in Githunguri to the status of a college. This was to be the Kenya Teachers College, meant for blacks in Kenya. The idea was embraced by the Agikuyu and they immediately started a fundraiser using the effective Gikuyu slogan, *Riika na Nyumba itiumanagwo* (Age sets and the community cannot be divorced). According to the Agikuyu custom, anything asked by an agemate could not be denied. Women too contributed to the fundraiser led by Rebecca Njeri and Priscilla Wambaki and were able to construct a ladies' hostel at the college (Gakaara, 1971).

Gakaara's first contribution for the purpose of the unity of the community was towards the construction of this college. His age mates approached him during a school holiday because by then he was a student in Alliance High School. He was proud to make a contribution of 20 cents (Gakaara, 1971). The overwhelming unity enabled the fundraiser to be very successful such that the college was opened in 1939 (Gakaara, 1971).

Gakaara wa Wanjau joined the war in December 1940 as a senior army clerk in Ethiopia with the tittle "Staff Sergeant" and a salary of 150/= per month (Gakaara, 1971). He sought the job after his expulsion from Alliance High School and according to him, this was a job like any other although he knew very well that the Second World War was not for the good of the Africans (Gakaara, 1983). In his line of duty in Ethiopia, Gakaara



was able to interact with other Africans under the British colonial rule from South Africa, Nyasaland, Nigeria and Ghana. These other colonised Africans would share with the Agikuyu service men about what they were promised after the war and also their experiences of racial discrimination.

The Agikuyu who served abroad also observed that European countries were not as good as the Gikuyu country. They also learnt that in Europe there were poor people some of them in tatters and even others were beggars while some were exceedingly rich (Kaggia, 1975). Bildad Kaggia claimed to have encountered European beggars in Paris who flocked into the military camp he was in to beg and collect pieces of bread. This particular group suffered inadequate clothing and water. They literally smelled of dirt and disease. Kaggia also interacted with a friendly white family in Britain while he served in the British army during the Second World War. This particular family was surprised and indignant to hear from Kaggia how their own government was oppressing and exploiting Africans. Hitherto, they believed that their government was a benevolent one, working very hard to uplift the Africans. The encounter with this family, which toiled in coal mines to earn a living, also made Kaggia realise that in Britain too people were working very hard without getting much. He concluded that whites were his equals and that with the right education and opportunities Africans could do anything that Europeans did (Kaggia et al., 2012).

Blacks from different British colonies discovered that they shared similar experiences. Africans realised that those in the battle fronts were treated as equals with European soldiers. They were praised and soon afterwards exposed to pleasures of life. However, any time the war was not on they would be discriminated against. Food for the white and black soldiers was made in different kitchens and the menu was not the same. They

would also not use common tents. A salary paid to the black soldiers was only 25 shillings a month (Gakaara, 1971). Although Gakaara was better paid, he identified with the black servicemen and was bitter about their maltreatment and discrimination by the British imperialists. One day in Addis Ababa, he even fought with a Sergeant Major who insisted on interfering with his office work. When the case was taken to the commanding officer or the Colonel, it was proved that the Sergeant Major was on the wrong (Gakaara, 1983). The other blacks in the army service were not as lucky.

Gakaara's distrust for the imperialists eventually grew into contempt when he realised that the colonialist government persisted in treating the black people as their slaves despite the fact that they had sacrificed their lives for the British; "My anger and eventual contempt for colonialists grew from my realisation that the British colonialists persisted in treating the black people as slaves although they shed their blood for the British cause" (Gakaara, 1983). This contempt drove him against the colonialists in his literary works.

#### **4.1.4 The Forty Group**

The Forty Group Association started in Nairobi after the Second World War. Some of its leaders included Mathenge Mirugi, Mwangi Nyaga, Waruhiu Itote, Isaac Gathanju, Kahiga Wacanga, Ndibui Wairuri, Henry Gathigira, Dominic Gatu, Ngari Kigecca, Wamuti Muhungi, and Githaiga Thinwa among others (Gakaara, 1971). The name of the association was coined from their argument that they were circumcised in the 1940s, went to the war in the 1940s and whatever they did they said it was of 40s (Gakaara, 1971). Any man circumcised in the 40s was eligible for membership (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). Gakaara was a member of the Forty Group as an ex-serviceman

(Joseph Ngatia Wang'ombe, a respondent). He observed with bitterness that the European ex-servicemen went back to their former lives, celebrating a victory won for them by the blacks. Those who went back to their settler farms sought cheap labour from the blacks (Gakaara, 1971).

Before the outbreak of the Second World War, the Gikuyu men were inexperienced in modern warfare. After the exposure during the war, they employed the same tactics against the British colonial government that helped them gain the experience (Gakaara, 1971). Although the colonial government was supposedly the enemy of the Agikuyu, for alienating them from their land and freedom, they went ahead to fight on the side of the British. They were deceived by the British war propaganda against the Italians and promises of compensation (Gakaara, 1971). In the war experience, Kenyan black soldiers were not promoted as they deserved. Additionally, they were subjected to unequal pay with their European counterparts.

After the war, the Agikuyu ex-soldiers felt they had a right to be compensated for fighting a war that was not their own. They believed that they had helped their colonial master win his war and thus deserved compensation. However, after the war they were just given medals bearing the image of the King of England. The medals on chains were expected to be hung around the necks of the ex-soldiers. According to the colonial administration, this was supposed to earn respect for the medal carriers (Gakaara, 1971). On the other hand, their white counterparts were offered extremely generous and attractive terms. They took land leases on the crown land, with the promise of security of tenure for 48 years and an option to purchase the farm after 5 years or at any time thereafter (Kyle, 1999). The European Electors' Union was formed to enable them

speak in one voice, which gained attention of the mother government abroad (Gakaara, 1971).

The African ex-servicemen were left jobless and uncompensated. They went to the D.C offices to seek jobs but wherever they mentioned the pre-war promises, they were rudely told that anything about the war ended with the war (Gakaara, 1971). In his book, *Agikuyu Mau Mau na wiyathi* (Agikuyu Mau Mau and freedom), Gakaara argued that some of the ex-servicemen were given plots to put up private investments. However, they were issued with deadlines on when to complete construction works. They did not have enough money to complete the work and at the expiry of the deadlines, the plots were withdrawn from them and thus they lost ownership (Gakaara, 1971). They lost all their savings in the attempted construction work and were therefore very bitter. To make matters worse, the already very bitter and impoverished ex-servicemen would be arrested for failure to pay tax to the colonial administration. This situation made them move to the urban centers like Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru and Nanyuki to seek jobs (Gakaara 1971). In these towns, they would be arrested and termed criminals. This was a government ploy to force the ex-servicemen go and seek employment in settler farms. It so happened that some of these farms were the compensations for the European ex-soldiers (Gakaara, 1971). The Africans felt degraded and they could not tolerate being treated as inferiors in their own country, having been accepted abroad (Kaggia, 1975). To Gakaara, this was equal to double exploitation. He argued that European landowners were growing richer out of the benefits accrued from African labour (Gakaara, 1948).

The Forty Group had a sense of achievement after mobilising citizens to rebel against the government policy before the declaration of the state of Emergency. The association

had gained popularity in Nyeri and Murang'a where terracing had become very unpopular. The Agikuyu reserves were characterised by rapid population pressure which led to serious soil erosion, a decline in agricultural production and serious cases of landlessness such that land became scarcer than labour (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). In the name of soil conservation, the Agikuyu hill farmers became the earliest and most forcibly cajoled into unpaid, communal and largely female labour of terracing their slopes against soil erosion. Some Agikuyu like Gakaara wa Wanjau posed radical criticism to the colonial government.

According to Gakaara, the Forty Group observed that women were forced into the terracing project leaving behind their children unattended such that they went without food. They were infuriated by the terracing and led by Kahiga Wacanga, they put notices in Nairobi expressing that at a given date they would do away with terracing. They went ahead and held several unlicensed meetings (Gakaara, 1971). One such meeting was held in Murang'a on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1947 with an attendance of about ten thousand people. The ex-servicemen argued that terracing should be done by paid labour from the Colonial Development Fund. They resolved that women would no longer go for terracing. The following day, no woman turned up for the unpaid labour. Men followed suit and by August 1947, terracing in Muranga stopped completely. The colonial government encouraged chiefs to use force but this too did not work (Mukaru-Ng'ang'a (1978). As far as the ex-servicemen were concerned, the end of terracing in Murang'a was an achievement (Gakaara, 1971).

Oaths of unity were organised and carried out by the Forty Group with the aim of ending colonialism. These oaths came to be referred to as *Muma wa Uiguano wa Muingi* (Oath

of the Unity of the Community). The Agikuyu loyalty to the struggle against loss of land, their traditional way of life and political freedom caused them to bond together in the practice of oath taking (Brandabur, 2007). The Mau Mau promise to deliver *ithaka na wiyathi* (land and freedom) won the movement the popular support of an otherwise deeply divided society (Branch, 2007). The Forty Group that initiated the Mau Mau, of which Gakaara was a member, motivated him to write a political creed, *Witikio wa Gikuyu na Mumbi* (The Ideology of the Agikuyu), to encourage them on (Ngatia Wang'ombe, a respondent). In the creed, he invoked the unity of the community and the political faith of the community.

#### **4.1.5 The Deterioration of Socio-economic Conditions among Africans after the Second World War**

Between 1947 and 1954 the economy of the British Kenya colony was growing at an astonishing rate of 13% per year. The average annual economic growth between 1940 and 1960 was 6% p.a. (Kyle, 1999). Consequently, there were major advances in technology among the European settlers, which enabled them to lay off large numbers of African work force. As these were squatters, they had no property rights to fall back on to. Those who were maintained in European farms were subjected to several contracts, which eventually limited the number of livestock that they were allowed to keep (Kyle, 1999). It was alleged that their livestock would spread diseases to the European owned livestock. African farming was not allowed to be on more than an acre by 1948. The salary they received as farm workers was so little that it could not meet even a half of their needs (Gakaara, 1971). Seeing no future on European settler farms, most of the squatters decided to shift to towns to look for jobs. The result was mass rural to urban migrations and towns like Nairobi and Mombasa were flooded with job

seekers (Gakaara, 1971). Those who were lucky to get jobs were lowly paid and many remained jobless. The living conditions for Africans went from bad to worse (Kyle, 1999).

In the urban areas, notably Mombasa and Nairobi, there was inflation of the prices of basic items. Poor living conditions and unemployment became a major challenge to the Africans. Majority of the Agikuyu in the urban areas suffered poverty. Many of them were forced to break the Agikuyu norm of respectability in the filthiness of slums in Nairobi (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002).

On the other hand, European wealth increased. In just three years after the Second World War, 8,000 White immigrants came to Kenya to allegedly strengthen the European population mostly in the commercial sector (Kyle, 1999). The European ex-service men were encouraged to settle in the White Highlands, like Laikipia and Transzoia, areas which were permanently reserved for European farms. Extremely generous and attractive terms were offered to them such as leasing of land, security of tenure for 48 years and an option to purchase the farms after five years or at any time thereafter (Kyle, 1999). The land issued to the European settlers was acquired from the Africans' best lands. This step was taken by the Europeans to disorganise the Africans in order to exploit them (Kenyatta, 1978).

Trade unionists also influenced Gakaara. Chege Kibachia of the African Workers Union (A.W.U) was arrested in 1947 when he almost united all black Kenyan workers. Under his influence, more than 15,000 black workers went on strike in Mombasa (Gakaara, 1971). Among their grievances were unequal pay, racial segregation in residential areas, unreasonable working hours among others. He was taken to court and

he won the case. This motivated him to open A.W.U. branches all over the country. He toured the country appealing to the blacks to sell their labour expensively depending on the work done and their level of education. In response, the Agikuyu working in Uplands Bacon Factory in Kiambu went on strike in 1947 to protest poor pay (Gakaara,1971). Although this turned tragic, because the police killed two and injured several workers, it proved that Chege wa Kibachia had an impact among the Agikuyu (Gakaara, 1971). Gakaara shared Chege Kibachia's view that African labour was being exploited for the benefit of the Europeans (Gakaara, 1948).

Gakaara got employment with the Kenya Railways, in Nakuru, in 1948. He was able to interact with other African workers and he observed that the Europeans treated the blacks as slaves. The Africans were working hard for the Europeans who continued to accumulate profit and wealth. They were physically beaten and always insulted because an adult African was referred to as a boy. To the Agikuyu, it was derogatory to refer to an adult as a boy (*Kihii*) which to them meant an uncircumcised youth. The African was pushed to work, paid very little and never congratulated for his good work. He was not granted any opportunity to reason out about his situation or get to know that he was doing anything of value to the Europeans. Africans were given no chance of getting rich and were tactfully meant to have low self-esteem so as to remain Europeans' slaves (Gakaara, 1948).

The growing economic desperation of squatter life and racial discrimination motivated Gakaara to write *Roho ya Kiume Na Bidii Kwa Mwafrika* (The Spirit of Manly Courage and Effort for the African) (Gakaara, 1948). In this booklet, Gakaara had sharp criticism against the colonial government, which according to him was not ready to allow its



subjects to have self-improvement. Europeans blamed African poverty on laziness but according to Gakaara this was untrue. He accused the colonial rule of enslaving the African mind (Mworia, 2009). According to Gakaara, the racist state was demoralising the African. Whites had given Africans new wants but denied them equal pay, land and free trade that would have satisfied them economically and socially. The colonial state had deliberately set Africans against each other so that they could not understand the extent of white deceit (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). Gakaara also observed that the Europeans used their expensive goods as baits to exploit the African labour. Africans were influenced into European expensive eating habits, clothing, using cars, airplanes, and good education. Africans were however economically disabled to afford these opportunities because the cost of life was high which they could not afford with their meagre pay (Gakaara, 1948).

Gakaara observed that the European land owners and businessmen grew richer out of the benefits they got from the African hard work and skill (Gakaara, 1948). He believed that Africans were not poor out of ignorance but out of European exploitation. To regain their self-esteem they had to be decolonised in the mind. They also needed to learn from the spider and build, out of their own substance, schools, hotels and airplanes as splendid as the whites. This depended on the unity between the rich and the poor (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). If the African was politically free he would then be able to improve himself socially and economically (Gakaara, 1948). In other words, Gakaara was calling for self-reliance (Gakaara, 1948).

#### 4.1.6 Other Literary Influences Against Colonial Rule

*Muigwithania* (Reconciler), *Mumenyereri* (The Guardian), the Bible and other literary works greatly influenced Gakaara. *Muiguithania* (Reconciler) was a monthly journal of the KCA and its first editor was Jomo Kenyatta, then known as Johnstone Kamau. Its underlying theme was the unity of the Agikuyu. Its motto, *Hoyai Ngai Na Murute Wira* (Prayer and Hard Work), had Christian connotations. Among the Agikuyu, the Christian principle was *Ngai ateithagia witeithitie* (God helps those who help themselves). To the politically conscious Agikuyu, the motto meant that the lazy could not expect freedom. So the Agikuyu had to work hard towards achieving their social, economic and political freedom. In *Muiguithania* Vol. no 3, 25 July 1928, a letter by G.H.M. Kagika appealed to the Agikuyu to be "one just as they spoke one language from Kabete to Meru". Jomo Kenyatta in *Muiguithania* Vol. 1 Jan 29 used proverbial language to appeal for the unity of the community. He referred to them as *Nyumba ya Mumbi* (House of Mumbi) as he advised them that *ita ritari ndundu rihuragwo na njuguma imwe* (Those who do not take counsel together are overcome with a single knobbery) and *Kamuingi Koyaga ndiri* (A little company is able to lift the heavy beer-making log) to mean "unity is strength".

*Muiguithania* was the predecessor of the vernacular newspapers that were published in the 1940s (Durrani, 2006). It was successful in mobilising people behind the national political and economic demands. The articles in the journal portrayed that it was the voice of the people, their guide and leader, month after month. It published complaints of the people about taxes, forced labour, low wages and the horrible treatment given by the settlers to their black labourers and squatters. It exposed the oppressive doings of government officials including some bad chiefs and anti-people actions of some

missionaries. Occasionally, the articles in *Muiguithania* were written in parables. By this method the people were able to understand what action was expected of them but the government was unable to take any legal action against the paper. The *Muiguithania* would sometimes publish nationalistic progressive songs which aroused the people into action. The colonial government officially banned the *Muiguithania* in 1940, after KAU published it, but it had already been successful in mobilising the Agikuyu into making political and economic demands from the colonial government. (Durrani, 2006).

*Mumenyereri* (The Guardian) by Henry Mworio became probably the most influential newspaper of the 1940s (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). This vernacular newspaper became *Muiguithania*'s spiritual heir. Henry Mworio had learnt journalism by correspondence as he worked with the railway. He wrote his first pamphlet, a hundred page, "What can I do for our sake?" in 1945. Its sales encouraged him to leave the railway and found his own paper, *Mumenyereri*. In it he expressed the need for democracy (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002) and it became popular among the Agikuyu since it helped them to keep abreast with KAU politics. It therefore became one of the most influential newspapers at the time. Other African newspapers and magazines in the 1940s included *Inooro ria Agikuyu* (The Whetstone of the Agikuyu) by Bildad Kaggia, John Chege's *Wiyathi* (Freedom), *Muthamaki* (The Statesman), *Hindiya Agikuyu* (The Time of the Agikuyu), *Mwaraniria* (Conversationalist), *Wihuge* (Stay Alert) and *Muramati* (Caretaker) (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). KAU also started its Kiswahili newspaper, *Sauti ya Mwafrika* (The African Voice) which gave Africans a forum to air their grievances. It was started by Tom Mboya assisted by Chege Kibachia (Gakaara, 1971). It was within this journalistic activity that Gakaara was to start his

own *Gikuyu na Mumbi* (Gikuyu and Mumbi) magazine as well as the monthly *Waigua Atia?* (What's up?). In these magazines he published original articles and songs.

*Ibuku ria Ngai's* (The Bible's) Gikuyu translators and interpreters compared the African experience of colonial rule to the Israelite experience of Egyptian bondage or the Babylonian exile. The African struggle for freedom was likened with the Israelite struggle in the wilderness during their exodus to the Promised Land. *Ngai* (Jehovah) was seen as a tribal interventionist God, father of a people whom he repeatedly rescued from the hands of their enemies. In the mind of the Agikuyu, the Bible fostered the Agikuyu as the tribe favoured by God (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). Therefore, during the colonial period, the Agikuyu embraced the Old Testament God. They enlisted God on their side in time of war like in Judaism. They compared themselves with the children of Israel and the British with the Egyptians. They were in exodus to the Promised Land. The Mau Mau songs likened Jomo Kenyatta with Prophet Moses to lead them to freedom and wealth as portrayed in one of the songs published by Gakaara; *Naake Jomo nianeirwo ruthanju rwa utongoria*  
*Tauria ruaneirwo Musa e Misiri,*  
*Atongorie ciana cia Gikuyu,* (Gakaaran.d).

Jomo was given the shepherd's rod,  
Like the one given to Moses in Egypt,  
To lead the children of Gikuyu.

Admittedly, Jomo Kenyatta was the Agikuyu patriarch comparable with Moses. Kenyatta was also thought of as the suffering Messiah who gave his life to save the Agikuyu as expressed in another song;

*Kinyatta arikaniire na Gikuyu,*

*Akiuga niekwiruta muoyo wake,*  
*Athii Uraya agacarie uthamaki,*  
*Waguciirira nyumba ya Mumbi,*  
*Nguria nitukoima ukombo-ini? (Gakaaran.d).*

Kenyatta promised the Agikuyu,  
He would sacrifice his own life,  
To go to overseas to look for leadership,  
To be able to represent the house of Mumbi,  
Shall we get delivered from slavery?

At the time these songs were composed, the Agikuyu believed that Jomo Kenyatta spent his time in London fighting for their land.

The Agikuyu also embraced the New Testament teachings of Jesus. Good behaviour was appealed for and the Mau Mau songs also cautioned that a tree without fruit was good for nothing and that the prodigal son must return home (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). The Bible therefore influenced the composition of Mau Mau songs which were sung in the Christian hymn tunes to inspire the Mau Mau fighters and the general Agikuyu population. The Christian hymn tunes in the Mau Mau songs was an indication that Christianity and the Bible influenced the Agikuyu. The Mau Mau songs were also fashioned in Christian hymn tunes to confuse those who were not conversant with the Gikuyu language into thinking that the singers were Christian worshipers (Githui wa Jack, a respondent). Gakaara was involved in the collection and compiling of these songs into song books.

#### **4.1.7 The Politics of KAU**

In 1938, the Agikuyu united in a fundraiser meant for the construction of a Kenya Teachers' college for the blacks. During the fundraising period, leaders would meet at Githunguri on the construction site and would deliberate not only on construction but also on land and freedom. Mbiyu wa Koinange in particular assisted the other Gikuyu politicians to write petitions on land to the colonial government. They also petitioned for more representation in the Legislative Council (Gakaara, 1971). Against this background, KAU was formed in 1944 with the main aim of advising Eliud Mathu, the first African nominee in the Legislative Council in 1944, on how to represent the Africans.

The party enjoyed nationwide support with Harry Thuku as the first chairman, Francis Khamisi as the secretary general and Albert Awino as the treasurer. Other KAU leaders included Mbiyu Koinange, Jesse Kariuki, Oginga Odinga, Achieng Oneko, Fred Kubai, Tom Mbotela, Bildad Kaggia, James Beatta and Jomo Kenyatta (Gakaara, 1971). The party agitated for the return of African land, banning of the Kipande, more advanced African education, equal pay for equal work done and an end to both colour bar and colonialism in Kenya. The colonial government simply shelved and ignored African petitions (Gakaara, 1971). The KAU Kiswahili newspaper, *Sauti ya Mwafrika*, became a good forum through which Kenya Africans could air their grievances against colonial rule. The contents of this newspaper definitely influenced Gakaara.

Between 1931 and 1946, Kenyatta was in Europe. The Agikuyu believed that he stayed that long in Europe for the cause of his people. They praised him in the Mau Mau songs for having suffered slander in Europe and thus to them he had sacrificed his life for the

salvation of the country from colonial rule (Gakaara, n.d). While in Europe, Kenyatta wrote *Facing Mount Kenya, My people of Agikuyu* and *Kenya the land of conflict*. The latter was translated by Henry Mworira into Gikuyu as *Kenya Bururi wa Ngui*. These books were on Agikuyu culture, their economy and politics of independence. Kenyatta also wrote articles in London and orally spoke about Kenyan problems in the Trafalgar Square in London which was a place set aside for people to speak out on whatever they wished. He would always get an English audience (Gakaara, 1971).

In 1945 while in London, Jomo Kenyatta's book, *Kenya the land of conflict*, spelt out the conflict in Kenya (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). He expressed that the Agikuyu demanded fundamental changes in the then political, economic and social relationships between the Europeans and the Africans. According to Kenyatta, the Africans were making their claims so that a bloodier and more destructive justice would not become inevitable (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). While in London, Kenyatta also did occasional lecturing apart from journalism. He also wrote letters to the colonial office and the British press on behalf of the Agikuyu (Kyle, 1999). Kenyatta's long stay in Europe made him mysterious and earned him respect. He also lived well as a leader should according to the Agikuyu's general belief. To the Agikuyu Kenyatta was their *Muiguithania* (Reconciler), a title given to Christ in the Bible (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5: 17-18; *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation*). The Agikuyu venerated him in Mau Mau songs and in their prayers (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002).

Kenyatta returned to Kenya on 24/9/46 and on 1/6/47 the then President of KAU, James Gichuru, handed over the leadership to him (Gakaara, 1971). Kenyatta opened many KAU branches in the country. KAU gained more popularity mainly because of Kenyatta's eloquence and political wisdom. In KAU's meetings, he comforted the blacks showing them that they were important in their own country and that the whites were not different from them. He asserted that the whites were foreigners who had taken the African land unjustly and that they must return it (Gakaara, 1971). In his political rallies, Kenyatta told the people that political freedom could only be attained by the brave and that people must work hard, be patriotic, avoid social evils, and acquire good education in order to raise more future leaders.

KAU featured in the political songs collected and written by Gakaara, like; *Twambite Kunyamarika* (We Suffered Initially). This song described a KAU meeting in Kaloleni, Nairobi, as a mammoth crowd bid goodbye to Mbiyu wa Koinange as he left aboard a plane to go and represent them on their pressing land issue. In his address, Jomo Kenyatta comforted them by telling them that God had responded to their prayers and hard work. God provided Mbiyu who was now leaving to be closely followed by Achieng Oneko. In the same song, Jomo Kenyatta unveiled the KAU flag which was symbolic of the imminent political independence. The jubilation was such that *Ngemi na hi Kaloleni ciariraga ta mbura* (Ulutations and clapping at Kaloleni thundered like rain storms) (Gakaara, n.d).

Another KAU song published by Gakaara was; *Nuu Wakwirire Utuike Muteti?* (Who taught you to be a politician)? This song explained that loss of land and political freedom turned the Agikuyu into politicians. They needed political freedom so as not



to be slaves in their own country. To them the lost land and freedom would be delivered back to them by their political party, KAU. They also stated that KAU advocated faith in God, justice and peace;

*Wiyathi na ithaka ikoimana naku?*

*Twi na ihooto ciitu kiama-ini gia KAU*

*Kiama-ini gia KAU mwiciragia atia?*

*Twendaga kihooto na kwihoka Ngai.*

From where shall we get land and freedom?

We have justice in our party KAU.

What is your line of thought in KAU?

We want justice and faith in God.

The song demonstrates that African leaders were very religious and trusted that God was on their side as a just God.

Jomo Kenyatta was a trusted leader of the Agikuyu. The Mau Mau songs carried his advice to his followers. He warned KAU members that the "tree of liberty" would have to be watered with blood (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). His bold speeches in KAU rallies encouraged others like the heads of *Gikuyu Karinga* (Kikuyu Orthodox) schools, independent churches and trade unions such that they started speaking openly of African rights in public meetings. From this same heat, Gakaara wrote his political pamphlet in Kiswahili in 1948, *Roho ya Kiume na Bidii kwa Mwafrika* (The Spirit of Manhood and Perseverance for the African). It circulated widely and was read in Kenya and Tanzania. In 1952 he translated it into vernacular, *Mageria Nomo Mahota* (Effort Brings Success) (Gakaara, 1983). This vernacular copy became very popular among the Agikuyu. It encouraged them to continue struggling and finally they would succeed.

It became one of the reasons for Gakaara's detention on October 20th 1952. He was charged with inciting the blacks to hate the Europeans (KNA, File no. 5/5417).

#### **4.1.8 The Prevailing Socio-political Ideas that Transformed the Gakaara's Political Consciousness**

Between the end of the Second World War and the declaration of the State of Emergency in Kenya, there was a new political awareness among the Africans. Political climate had changed and Africans were participating in politics and demanding radical changes (Kaggia, 1975). A number of factors contributed to this;

1. The Development of the African Press.

This was stimulated by a social revolution among the Agikuyu whereby the community was no longer under the control of the elders but in the hands of young men. The urbanised Agikuyu developed a radical political consciousness. A good number of them, like Henry Mworira, set up their own printing establishments where they edited newspapers in their own vernacular languages (Durrani, 2006). In both the rural and urban areas of Central Kenya, the Agikuyu resistance and opposition to colonial dominance became increasingly militant and gradually more committed to the employment of non-constitutional means to achieve social, economic and political changes (Rosberg & Noltingham, 1966).

2. The Karatina Vegetable Factory Dispute.

The Agikuyu developed an increasing distrust in colonial motives and policies and this was displayed, for example, in the Karatina Vegetable Factory dispute (Rosberg & Noltingham, 1966). The factory was built by the colonial

government to supply dried vegetables to soldiers serving in the Second World War. The dispute developed after the ex-servicemen from Nyeri formed the Nyeri District Ex-Servicemen African Friendly Association (NDESFAFA) and expressed their wish to buy the vegetable factory from the colonial government after the war (Gakaara, 1971). They sought an audience with the then Governor, Sir Phillip Mitchell. He met them in Kerugoya but the meeting ended in a stalemate. The Governor argued that Africans could only run the factory at a loss since they did not have the necessary skill. On the other hand the Africans argued that they could afford to hire technicians to run the factory. The Governor left to Nairobi with a promise to give a good reply. Meanwhile, the Agikuyu, Aembu and Ameru businessmen expressed their support for NDESFAFA by coming up with a company named the United Companies of Mumbi Factory and started selling shares (Gakaara, 1971).

The Governor's reply was sent through the Chief Native Commissioner, Mr. Wyn Harris; The United Companies of Mumbi would buy 49 shares, the white settlers would buy 49 and the remaining two would be bought by the government. The land previously used for vegetable supplies would be retained and the surrounding areas acquired for the purpose of sustainability of the volumes of vegetables required to keep the factory running. The Karatina residents would hear nothing of this since they wanted to keep their land. Without any more consultation with the ex-servicemen, the Karatina vegetable factory was relocated to European settler farms in the White Highlands (Gakaara, 1971).

### 3. Discriminatory Laws by the Colonial Government

The growing African discontent experienced after the Second World War was also due to the discriminatory laws applied in the colony. This provided African nationalists with fuel to feed the smouldering fires of African resentment which burst into flames in 1952 (Kournosoff, 1959). Colonial inequalities aroused feelings of frustration and hatred among Africans such that the African patriots had excellent propaganda to unite their people. When the Africans experienced inequalities in the dispensation of justice, respect for the Europeans melted away and they became much more prone to join Mau Mau.

The majority of the Agikuyu, Aembu and Ameru were either oath takers or sympathisers with the Mau Mau. The fact that they lived in close proximity to the White Highlands and Nairobi gave them a greater opportunity than any other ethnic groups of realising that the whites enjoyed different justice to that which they received (Kournosoff, 1959). The refusal of the then Kenya government to implement African socio-economic reforms, harassments and repression of African political activity directly precipitated Agikuyu militancy (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002).

#### 4. General Socio-economic Deprivation

There was also a rapid socio-economic development in the colony which resulted into increased deprivations among the peoples of Kenya and this fell disproportionately on the Agikuyu. The deprivations were felt in the White Highlands, in the Agikuyu reserves and in the urban areas. In the White Highlands, wages for agricultural labour remained exploitatively low forcing many to become squatters. Africans felt that the Europeans were treacherously dispossessing them of wealth and their freedom of labour tenancy. Accordingly, their landlords reduced them into *Ngombo* (slaves) of low wage labour or

evicted them into the degradation of living in shanties in towns (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002).

#### 5. The Denial Generational Handover of Power

In line with this, the Agikuyu composed popular political songs such as;

*Na waigua tu tu tu tu ii,*

*Ti mbura ti thatu,*

*Ni ciana cia Irungu ii,*

*Iratwara mutakawa,*

*Mwangi wibutabute,*

*Ndukahie ni beturu.*

When you hear a deafening noise,

It is not rain or sign of approaching rain,

It is the Irungu generation,

Driving vehicles,

Mwangi should resign,

To avoid being burnt by petrol.

The song was a warning to the Mwangi generation to pave way to the younger *Irungu* generation. The Mwangi generation had to be forced out of power of being the custodians of wisdom (Githuiwa Jack, a respondent). The Mwangi generation stayed on after the colonial government banned the *Ituika* (The Agikuyu generational handover of power). The Forty group and some young writers like Gakaara wa Wanjau felt they belonged to this younger generation. The *Kirira* (Secret knowledge and folklore) was no longer in the hands of the Agikuyu elders whose main work was to suppress disputes. The young people grew impatient with the elder generation and could not wait for any *Ituika* to start the work of guiding the community. Gakaara wa Wanjau, as one of the

young men of the Irungu generation who decided to take over the mantle of leadership from the Mwangi generation, therefore wrote his political pamphlet in 1948 to raise the political consciousness of the Africans and the Agikuyu in particular. He appealed to the Agikuyu unity so as to be able to get back the land and freedom already alienated by the colonialists (Njagi wa Davidi, a respondent).

#### 6. The Land Question

There was also the sensitive problem of land. This explained why the Mau Mau revolution was largely concentrated in the formerly Central Province and the Rift Valley provinces rather than covering the whole country (Mboya, 1986). The white landowners subjected Africans to verbal abuse, physical assaults and virtual slavery as observed by Gakaara wa Wanjau (Gakaara, 1948). This became the basis of his first political booklet where he expressed deep anger and exhorted Africans to show courage and defiance to their tormentors, the Europeans.

Even after their land was alienated from them, the Agikuyu could never give up on it. They could not just believe that their land was taken for good by the colonial government. They decided never to be silent until their land was returned either peacefully or by force. Among the Agikuyu was the prevailing popular saying that even if one was a real coward, too much pain would instill bravery such that one would rather die fighting (Gakaara, 1971). After the Europeans alienated the Agikuyu land, they competed for the now scarce resource and this multiplied enmity among them. Their inherited labour theory, *Mwana uri kiyo ndagaga muthambia* (A diligent child does not lack an adopter), could no longer provide an answer to their increasing poverty.

#### 7. Class Struggles

There emerged a class struggle in the sense that more of the Agikuyu were being excluded from the means of production. Poverty could no longer be attributed to laziness in the sense that land became scarcer than labour. The rich failed to adopt the poor leading to a class struggle which brought more divisions among the Agikuyu (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). This prompted Gakaara wa Wanjau into literary activism to make the Africans aware that this division was deliberately brought by the colonialists with the intention of exploiting them (Gakaara, 1948).

#### **4.1.9 The Olenguruone Crisis and the Emergence of the Hardcore Mau Mau Movement**

The Agikuyu from Kiambu were displaced to create room for the white settlers. Most of them moved to the Rift Valley to seek employment opportunities. Others were allocated land by the then Kenya Lands Commission in Maasai land, in Olenguruone (Gakaara, 1971). The colonial administration clarified to them that the allocated land was not permanently theirs (Gakaara, 1971). They were expected to follow the advice of the colonial government agricultural officers on how to terrace the land, what and how to plant. The Agikuyu opposed this advice and planted using the traditional methods claiming that the land belonged to them and that no one had the right to instruct them on what to do. They planted maize and took *Muma wa tiri* (an oath of soil) to fight and protect their land (Gakaara, 1971). They argued that if the Olenguruone land was not for replacement, then the government should return to them the Kiambu land. To pacify this group of the Agikuyu, the colonial administration was advised by an anonymous person that if the Agikuyu were under oath they would cooperate fully since they traditionally feared the repercussion of breaking oaths. *Muma wa thenge* (swearing

by a dead he goat) was therefore administered on the Olenguruone Agikuyu by elders from Nakuru court. This was meant to nullify the oath of the soil taken earlier and to make the Olenguruone Agikuyu cooperate with the colonial government (Gakaara, 1971). However, the Olenguruone Chief, Koima wa Gatibi, who was a former KCA politician, arranged for another secret oath named *Muma watiiri na thakame* (swearing by soil and blood). This oath hardened the people and also unified them. This demonstrates that there were different types of oaths to serve different purposes and the Agikuyu took this advantage to refuse to cooperate with the colonial administrators.

As the Agikuyu were hardened and unified by their oath and could not cooperate, the then acting Rift valley P.C, Morgan, gave them notice to move out of Olenguruone failure to which they would be exiled to Yatta. They refused to move and fifty of them were arrested and charged in court for staying on in Olenguruone after the expiry of the notice (Gakaara, 1971). Mzee Jomo Kenyatta as the already accepted leader of the Agikuyu represented them in court. Also present to represent them was Eliud Mathu, a Member of Legislative council and Ex-senior Chief Koinange wa Mbiyu who was a member of Kiambu Local Native Council (LNC). However, the fifty were sentenced to three months in prison (Gakaara, 1971).

After the court case, the colonial government decided that about 2,000 Africans were to be evicted from Olenguruone to Yatta. Therefore in 1949, soldiers described by Gakaara as armed, shameless and merciless unleashed destruction whereby food crops in the fields were slashed, herds and flocks confiscated, houses pulled down and burnt and people herded together (Gakaara, 1971). They were later on loaded onto lorries to Yatta in Ukambani. Gakaara described Yatta as an area impossible to farm as it was dry and rocky. Poisonous snakes were in large numbers and many people were affected by



diseases. As all this was happening to them, this group of people composed and sang consoling songs that narrated their ordeals. The Olenguruone songs were later used as examples of courage, patriotism and a source of awareness among the Agikuyu before, during and after the years of Emergency (Gakaara 1971). Below are some interpretations of Olenguruone songs published by Gakaara. The various songs were composed to commemorate the incident and its impact on the Agikuyu community.

The song, *Hoyai ma, Thai Thai ma* (Pray and Praise God), was an illustration of how the Olenguruone evictees had hope in divine intervention in the gloomy circumstances they found themselves in Yatta (Gakaara, n.d). They believed that God would help them win the war against colonialism (Gakaara, 1971).

Jomo Kenyatta was praised in the song as a leader concerned with the welfare of his people;

*Thimu niyakinyire yumite Githunguri,*

*Ya Jomo amenye nitwakinyire,*

A telephone call came from Githunguri,

Jomo wanted to know whether we arrived,

This spread the awareness that Jomo Kenyatta was their preferred national leader after the colonialists left the country (Githuiwa Jack).

The same song also revealed the suffering encountered by all evictees, women and even babies included. All of them were exposed to frightening thunderstorms, babies cried and some women, like one named in the song as Josphine, died of hardships in Yatta. Josphine's fate brought home the full horror of expulsion to the wilderness of Yatta from Olenguruone where they believed they had cultivation rights (Berman &

Lonsdale, 2002). The song brought out the aspect of perseverance in the fight for independence. Despite the hardships they encountered, the evictees retained their hope that political freedom was still coming. This Olenguruone song is important for two things;

- (i) Jomo Kenyatta features as the undisputed leader of the liberation movement
- (ii) The people were evicted during the rainy season without any preparation on how they would be sheltered. This led to deaths and untold suffering on the evictees. Josphine becomes an epitome of martyrs of Olenguruone and therefore the great suffering.

Another song entitled, *Ritwa ria Ngai wa Gikuyu* (The Name of the Agikuyu God), was a vivid description of the trail of destruction in Olenguruone as the Agikuyu settlers were being evicted by the colonial authorities (Gakaara n.d). Food stores were destroyed, homes razed down, food crops slashed down and livestock confiscated. However, the Agikuyu stood firm in their faith in God who they believed was their provider;

*Mbembe ciatemengwo Murungu akiona,*

*Ciana cia Ringuruo ikinyamarika,*

*Akirathima ndare na nyamu cia mutitu,*

*Agitwira turie* (Gakaara, n.d).

God witnessed slashing down of maize farms,

Children in Olenguruone suffered,

God blessed wild strawberries and wild game,

And told us to feed on them.

In other words, their crops were destroyed by the colonialists to starve them to death but their God stood with them and provided them with wild strawberries and wild game that enabled them to survive. Faith in God was more entrenched like the Israelites in the wilderness.

This song advised the Agikuyu not to cooperate with the colonial authorities;

*Mutikanaherwo uhoru njira-ini,*

*Kana mwitikire gutheeca irore,*

Do not listen to rumours,

Or place your fingerprints.

This meant that the Agikuyu were not supposed to take colonial propaganda seriously or betray their oath of loyalty by collaborating with the colonialists (Solomon Wanjohi, a respondent).

Exceptional bravery was portrayed by a teacher named as Koirugu in the song. He told the police officer arresting him to arrest his pupils too because he did not want to leave them behind like orphans. The arrest of a teacher meant that the colonial government did not spare the future generation from frustration. The Mau Mau emphasised on the acquisition of western education as a weapon to drive the colonisers out of the country and leave the educated Kenyans in charge of the future.

*Mwarimu Koirugu nianytirwo,*

*Akiira muthigari ndingitiga ciana,*

*Ta ciana cia ngoriai, akorwo nimukwenda ngorai cukuru-ini,*

*Tuthii twi hamwe* (Gakaara, n.d).

When teacher Koirugu was arrested,

He told the police officer, “I can’t just leave the children like orphans,  
If you will, collect me from school,  
Along with the children”.

The evictees’ firm faith in God, perseverance, hope and bravery must have motivated Gakaara to also play a role in the freedom struggle, which he did through literary activism. He recorded these events for posterity.

The Olenguruone songs in praise of evictees turned them into martyrs and heroes of independence. They were initially sung by the evicted settlers who were loaded on to trucks and made to pass through several of the most populated centers of Kenya to make the others learn that it would be disastrous to oppose the white man’s rule (Githuiwa Jack). As they passed, they sang songs that raised the Maasai name of Olenguruone to a national symbol of sacrifice and martyrdom. They also brought with them a tradition of unity and defiance against the colonial government on the part of men, women and children, all of whom had been oathed and therefore stood firm in the Mau Mau movement. (Rosberg & Noltingham, 1966).

The Agikuyu referred to Yatta as the land of *Mahiga Mairu* (Land of black stones). In their view, all wealth and hopes of their *Mbari* (lineage) rights were smashed by the European settlers (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). The Olenguruone songs as featured by Gakaara were an appeal to the unity of the Agikuyu to oppose the oppressor (Githuiwa Jack, a respondent). The Olenguruone episode no doubt motivated Gakaara into literary activism to raise the political consciousness of the Agikuyu. The written songs became a permanent memorial of the suffering of the Agikuyu in Olenguruone and Yatta.

#### **4.1.10 The Mau Mau Political Faith**

One of the things that strengthened the Mau Mau movement's political faith was the African traditional worship. The Mau Mau tended to drop the Christian faith which they regarded as the religion of the enemy, the colonialist. They faced *Kirinyaga* (Mt. Kenya) when praying to *Mwene Nyaga* (God of Kirinyaga) like their ancestors did. They believed that *Mwene Nyaga* or *Ngai* (God) would answer their prayers and add them strength to defeat the *Nyakeru* (colonialist). Gakaara believed that Christianity was merely a tactic used by the colonialist to divide and rule the Agikuyu. He wrote that the missionaries' aim was not really to preach for the benefit of Africans but their main objective was to make the people politically blind to prevent them from resisting the appropriation of their land. Christian baptism was, according to Gakaara, another way of administering oaths to Africans using European names to make them respect and obey every white man. It was also a way of turning Africans against their own traditional religion. Being "born again" was equal to becoming a new obedient person to the European rule and therefore, a collaborator. Gakaara wrote that God could still pay attention to the Agikuyu prayers without foreign names (Gakaara, 1999).

His opinion was shared by Bildad Kaggia who wrote that the missionaries indoctrinated the Africans to the notion of European superiority. They taught that authority is given by God and therefore any disobedience or rebellion against the colonial government was a sin against God. To an extent Gakaara and Kaggia were right because during the Emergency period the Christian churches openly supported the atrocities committed by the British forces and the homeguards against the Mau Mau (Kaggia et al., 2012).

During the Mau Mau oath administration, the Agikuyu expressed their refusal to have fellowship with the enemy, the colonialist. They worshipped the one true God of Kirinyaga, the creator of their ancestors Gikuyu and Mumbi. Gakaara and many like him joined the *Gikuyu Karing'a* (Gikuyu Orthodox faith) group (Gakaara, 1999). They believed that Ngai (God) gave them their land, the Gikuyu country, which was taken away from them by force and the people subjected to the white man's slavery. They prayed that God would strengthen them and bless them to be able to chase away their enemy, the colonialist. They would invoke the name of God as they opposed the white man's rule; *Tungikahotwo, niwe (Ngai) ukahotwo, na tungikaahotana, niwe ukahotana* (If we are defeated, God, it will be your defeat, If we win, it will be your victory) (Gakaara, 1999).

Gakaara argued that the colonialists' intention was to alienate the Agikuyu from their traditional way of worship. After learning the psychology and culture of the Agikuyu, the Europeans knew that once the people were alienated from their belief systems, then it was easy to manipulate them. It was then easy to make them feel inferior and rule them. The Agikuyu were made to believe that the traditional way of worshipping the God of the Gikuyu and Mumbi was paganism (Gakaara, 1999). This type of indoctrination had to be opposed.

According to Gakaara, the preaching of the word of God was a ploy by the colonialists to trick the Agikuyu. The Bible was referred to as *Kirikaniro* (The Promise) to suit the purpose of the Europeans. The missionaries taught the Africans basic reading and writing skills to enable them read the Bible. They were persuaded to believe that they did not know God before the Europeans came to Africa. Those who learnt to read and

write became preachers, catechists, examiners and finally would baptise as a way of administering oaths to converts for them to reject their traditional culture. The Christenised Agikuyu were thus alienated from their traditional worship and henceforth looked down on their fellow traditionalist Agikuyu. They thought that becoming Christians put them on a higher class and they, like the Europeans, talked ill of the traditional faith (Gakaara, 1999).

Gakaara published *Witikio wa Gikuyu na Mumbi* (The Ideology of the Agikuyu) as a political creed in 1952. It was an expression of political faith meant to be recited off head by the general Gikuyu population, the Mau Mau in meetings, in the forests and detention camps, to make their faith firm. It expressed;

- i. Faith in the Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth.
- ii. Belief that Gikuyu and Mumbi were the original parents, created by God and placed in the Gikuyu country.
- iii. Believe in Mugo wa Kibiru's prophecy that the whites were bound to come and mislead the Agikuyu.
- iv. That the Agikuyu were alienated from their true worship of *Mwenenyaga* and traditional culture.
- v. That their descendants, the Mau Mau, got the awakening on the white man's slavery and revived the dignity of their ancestors.
- vi. Belief in the holy traditional sacrifices.
- vii. The fellowship of all the world races that pray to one living God.
- viii. Faith in the two ruling age-sets of Mwangi and Irungu.
- ix. On the unity of the nine full Gikuyu clans.
- x. And the everlasting Gikuyuism.

Some of the *Nyimbo* (songs) published by Gakaara also expressed the prevailing political faith like in the song, *Ritwa ria Ngai wa Gikuyu*, interpreted below. They were involved in religious deconstruction whereby they described the name of the Gikuyu God as holy and unique and claimed to have received a commandment from him never to mention it in vain as it was powerful;

*Ritwa ria Ngai wa Gikuyu,*  
*Ni ritheru nama na niriamure,*  
*Ni erire Gikuyu oige ritikanagwetwo,*  
*Ni andu mena itheru, tondu rihinya.*

The name of the Agikuyu God,  
Is holy and unique,  
He ordered Gikuyu it should not be mentioned,  
In vain because it is powerful (Gakaara, n.d).

The Biblical God was connoted as the Agikuyu God in another song, *Ngai ni Eruhagia Irikaniro*, (God Renews His Promises). Religious deconstruction was used to praise the Agikuyu leaders; Just like God revealed to Abraham that he would have many descendants, and that he would become a source of blessings to many, so he did to Kenyatta as expressed in the stanza below;

*Nierire Kinyatta na kirooto,*  
*Niukaingiha ta njata cia matu-ini,*  
*Nduriri ikarathimwo niundu waku,*  
*Nake Kinyatta akimwitikia,*  
*Ngai akiihita na uhoti wake.*

He told Kenyatta through a dream,  
That you will increase like the stars of the sky,



Communities will be blessed through you,

And Kenyatta believed,

Thus God vowed with his mighty power.

The song implied that national political freedom was inevitable through the leadership of Jomo Kenyatta. It was the will of God that Jomo Kenyatta should be Kenya's political head. Against this background of growing political faith, Gakaara wrote his first political pamphlet in 1948.

#### **4.1.11 The African Subjugation to Colonial Rule**

The British imposed their rule over the blacks in Kenya and subjected them to political dictatorship, economic and mental control (Thiong'o, 1981). Africans were subdued in such a way that many of them came to accept the European supremacy over them, to the extent of believing that the European rule was ordained by God. Opposing the European colonial rule or even having an African government in place became only a dream to many. Majority of the uneducated Africans looked on the Europeans with awe because of their scientific achievements and high standards of living. The educated few were no better because they had no pride in being Africans. Their main objective was to qualify for the position of the Europeans. Most of them had so much faith in European dominance, intelligence, power and capability that they simply abdicated from politics. Most of them thought that it would pay to support the Europeans rather than to oppose them (Kaggia, 1975).

The fear of the Europeans among the uneducated needed to be eradicated. The black Africans needed to be aware that they were equal to the whites and that given the opportunity; they would perform as well as the Europeans did. On the other hand, the few educated Africans needed to be convinced that instead of emulating the Europeans,

it was better for them to strive for a position where they would not always be under them and that it was possible to replace them (Kaggia, 1975). To raise the political consciousness of the Africans, writers used vernacular languages that Africans could understand and identify with. The writing in vernacular became part and parcel of the anti-imperialist struggle in Kenya. Gakaara wa Wanjau was the most creative Kenyan who opposed the British rule using his literary works. He published and distributed political books, songs and poems. He urged the Agikuyu in particular to fight for their land, political freedom and the redemption of their culture (Thiong'o, 1981). He clearly reacted against African subjugation to colonial rule in his pamphlet, *Roho ya Kiume na Bidii Kwa Mwafrika* (The Spirit of Manly Courage and Effort for the African). He informed the blacks that they were equal with the Europeans (Gakaara, 1948).

#### **4.1.12 Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of events that took place from his childhood, it is possible to deduce that Gakaara was very bitter with the Europeans' way of life. For instance, European missionaries denied him a father figure by deploying his father away from home to work as a Presbyterian Church minister (Ngatia Wang'ombe, a respondent). After performing well in his K.P.E, he was admitted to Alliance High School in 1939 but in October 1940 he was expelled by Edward Carey Francis, a tough disciplinarian school master, of European descent. According to Gakaara, the expulsion was unfair (Gakaara, 1983). In December 1940, he joined the Second World War as an army clerk in Ethiopia. Racial discrimination against African servicemen made Gakaara to have more resentment against the whites. He believed that the whites were treating the blacks like slaves despite the fact that they risked their lives in the war for them (Gakaara, 1971).

In 1948, Gakaara worked with the Kenya Railways and observed that the European landowners and businessmen grew rich out of exploiting the blacks who in turn continued to grow poor (Gakaara, 1948). The 1940s was an era of journalistic activity and thus Gakaara's revolutionary mind may have been influenced by writers like Henry Mworira, Bildad Kaggia and John Chege. There was also KAU's *Sauti ya Mwafrika* (The African Voice) started by Tom Mboya assisted by Chege Kibachia (Gakaara, 1971). The Bible also influenced Gakaara because he collected and compiled Mau Mau freedom songs whose heroes were compared with Biblical ones. In the songs, the war for independence was compared to the Israelite exodus towards the Promised Land (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). Thus, Jomo Kenyatta was depicted as Abraham, Moses and to some extent the Mau Mau adherents viewed him as the saviour of Kenya from the yoke of colonialism.

Gakaara's contemporaries like Jomo Kenyatta and Mbiyu Koinange also inspired his literary activism. Jomo Kenyatta agitated for unity and political freedom. Mbiyu Koinange initiated the construction of the first Teachers College for blacks in Kenya. Gakaara proudly made his contribution of 20 cents towards the fundraiser (Gakaara, 1971). Trade unionists also had an influence on Gakaara's literary works. In particular, Chege Kibachia of the A.W.U. toured the country appealing to all the blacks to sell their labour expensively according to the work done and the level of education. This led to the Uplands Bacon Factory Strike in Kiambu in 1947 (Gakaara, 1971). Gakaara's political pamphlet that he authored in 1948 was clearly influenced by trade unionism because he shared Chege Kibachia's view that African labour was being

exploited for the benefit of the Europeans (Gakaara, 1948). He called on the blacks to reject colonial labour exploitation.

Social revolution also influenced Gakara's political literary activism. The community was no longer under the control of the elders but in the hands of young men, who felt that it was their responsibility to guide the community. A number of urbanised blacks set up their own printing establishments where they edited newspapers in vernacular language (Durrani, 2006). Angered by European exploitation of the blacks, Gakaara creatively used political books, songs and poems to appeal to the blacks to fight for their land, political and cultural freedom (WaThiong'o, 1981). This influenced many to join the Mau Mau movement.

## **4.2 The Influence of Gakaara wa Wanjau's Political Writings to the Mau Mau Nationalist Movement**

### **4.2.1 Introduction**

To establish how Gakaara wa Wanjau's literary works influenced the Mau Mau as a nationalist movement, the researcher gave a background to the Mau Mau oath taking and an overview on anti-colonial publishing during the colonial period, did an examination on Gakaara's anti-colonial literary works, and finally did an analysis on the colonial government's allegations on Gakaara that made them arrest and detain him as the "Chief Mau Mau Propagandist".

#### **4.2.2 Background to the Mau Mau Oath Administration**

The Mau Mau movement was a result of economic and political problems which had accumulated over the years and had not found any solution through constitutional channels. Africans faced discrimination in many different forms like in employment, in unequal salaries for similar jobs and refusal by the government to allow Africans to grow high value crops like coffee and tea. There was racial segregation in post offices, hotels and restaurants where it was an offence to serve European liquor to Africans. Government aid to schools was not availed to the Africans and hospitals were established on racial basis. African representation in the legislature was conspicuously absent (Mboya, 1986).

There was also the sensitive problem of land. Radical KAU members introduced a resolution in 1952 in the Kaloleni meeting that led to sending Mbiyu Koinange and Achieng Oneko to Britain to represent the blacks in Kenya on the burning issue of land. Accordingly, this was going to be the last deputation to Britain (Kaggia et al., 2012). The KAU radicals who were also secret members of the Mau Mau movement had lost faith in deputations but were willing to give Britain one last chance to solve the land problem in Kenya. After his return from Britain, Achieng Oneko reported that the British colonial secretary did not meet them. This convinced the Mau Mau that deputations were a waste of money and time (Kaggia et al., 2012). Africans were irritated by these discriminations and eventually frustrated and this led to the Mau Mau rebellion (Mboya, 1986). The Mau Mau movement basically aimed to achieve what KAU failed to achieve through constitutional means. It was clear that the colonialists would not leave Kenya without a struggle. Given the settler's hold on Kenya, the Mau Mau resistance had to be secret. The Mau Mau oath ensured secrecy of membership

and activities. Since the blacks were already impatient, they were ready to use violence to facilitate their political independence. The Agikuyu felt that social, economic and political change could only be achieved through unconstitutional means and thus they became increasingly militant (Rosberg & Noltingham, 1966).

Administration of oaths for the purpose of fighting for the Agikuyu land started as far back as 1924 (Gakaara, 1971). The Agikuyu belonging to the KCA took a secret oath whereby they vowed never to stop fighting for the return of the Agikuyu land (Gakaara, 1971). Oath administration with the purpose of fighting for both land rights and political freedom started in 1948 in Kiambu, largely influenced by the Olenguruone crisis (Gakaara, 1971). It was evident that oath taking by the Agikuyu of Olenguruone unified them, leading them to assist one another in times of hardships and to have perseverance. This unity of purpose proved to be a major weapon. In 1949, oath taking spread to Nairobi and Thika. In 1950 some KAU leaders, trade unionists and other Nairobi residents formed an oath administration council called *Muhimu* (Very Important) (Gakaara, 1971). The *Muhimu* was represented by two leaders from each of the Gikuyu, Meru and Embu district residents of Nairobi. Nairobi had three representatives (Gakaara, 1971). In Nyeri and the Rift Valley, Mau Mau oaths were administered from mid-1951 into the period of Emergency (Gakaara, 1971). The oath of the secret movement, *Muma wa uiguano* (Oath of unity), became the principal instrument to build the unity that *Muhimu* believed to be very important in challenging the British control of Kenya (Clough, 1998).

Due to the unity achieved by the Mau Mau oath taking, the movement managed to reasonably challenge the British control of Kenya. The radical Pan-Africanist journalist, George Padmore, wrote in 1953 that the Mau Mau war was “the biggest colonial war in Africa since the Boer war” (The British Daily, Morning Star, 2007). He noted that over 30,000 British troops were assembled to assist the British local police, the Kenya regiment, which was exclusively recruited from among the European male population, the Agikuyu home guards and the King’s African Rifles in open warfare against what the Africans called the Kenya Land and Freedom Army. The Agikuyu who took the oath into the secret Mau Mau movement used coded language and special handshakes that enabled the members to recognise each other and exclude outsiders. This reinforced unity, ostracised those who had not taken the oath and brought peer pressure on others to take it. For those who took the oath willingly, it heightened their sense of Gikuyu identity and strengthened their commitment to fight for land and freedom. For the unwilling, the unity oath usually ensured their passive cooperation and their silence. The unity that was achieved by the oath taking was such that if a Mau Mau prisoner was brought food by a relative or a friend, he served it to the rest until it was finished (Clough, 1998). Those who betrayed the movement were brutally murdered creating fear and thus loyalty to the movement. It was very hard to crush the Mau Mau since 90% of the Agikuyu had taken the oath (Clough, 1998). During the war for independence, the Mau Mau soldiers distinguished themselves as great guerrilla fighters. Considering the difficult conditions under which they lived and fought, compared with the British soldiers’ experience and sophisticated weapons, it is impossible to ignore their greatness for militarily soldiering on for four years (Kaggia et al., 2012).

Colonial propaganda tried to alienate the Gikuyu, Embu, and Meru communities from the rest of the Africans, particularly the Luo on account of oath taking. Gakaara wa Wanjau was among the strong nationalists who saw the need of developing oaths to include other Kenyan communities in the freedom struggle. There was appreciable success in administering oaths among the Akamba. A few Luo and Maasai people also took the Mau Mau oath (Clough, 1998).

#### **4.2.3 Anti-colonial Publishing during the Colonial Period**

In colonial Kenya, the information field was one of intense struggle. Publishing became a battle-field and source of power over news, information, ideas and ideologies for the ultimate control over national resources (Durrani, 2006). The colonial government tried as much as possible to control the sources, agents and contents of information so as to control the colonised. The African writers and publishers did their best to collect and package information that countered that of the colonialist. To be able to struggle against colonialism, the population had to be armed with the correct information on what was happening around them. The packaged information of the coloniser was aimed at creating confusion or silence among the colonised while the packaged information of the anti-colonialist publishers aimed at providing clarity and a voice to their struggle. It gave a voice to silence (Durrani, 2006).

In both the oral and print media, information was vital to the resistance struggles for the Kenya's people and contributed to a large extent in the attainment of political independence. That is why the British colonial government spent a lot of energy and resources producing counter propaganda and to ban the information emanating from those on the side of the Kenya people's struggle (Durrani, 2006). The political



independence of Kenya in 1963 was a proof of the success of information strategies as a tactic in the Kenyan anti-colonialist struggle. It is doubtful if formal independence could have been won if the social means of communication had not been developed, controlled and used as weapons in the struggle for liberation for the colonised people. The success of the Kenyan communication practices was in the fact that the content of resistance publishing addressed people's material needs (Durrani, 2006). Gakaara in particular appealed to the Agikuyu to work hard for the return of their alienated land so that they would be able to do their farming and animal herding for the return of their prosperity (Gakaara, 1948).

As noted elsewhere, *Muiguithania* was the first Gikuyu newspaper and its articles portrayed that it was the voice of the people, their guide and leader, month after month. It published complaints of the people about taxes, forced labour, low wages and the horrible treatment given by the settlers to their black labourers and squatters. It exposed the oppressive doings of government officials including some bad chiefs and anti-people actions of some missionaries. Occasionally, the articles in *Muiguithania* were written in parables. By this method the people were able to understand what action was expected of them but the government was unable to take any legal action against the paper. The *Muiguithania* would sometimes publish national progressive songs which aroused the people into action. The colonial government officially banned the *Muiguithania* in 1940, after KAU published it, but it had already been successful in mobilising the Agikuyu into making political and economic demands from the colonial government. (Durrani, 2006).

After the Second World War, several African publishers among them Henry Mworira, Jomo Kenyatta and Gakaara wa Wanjau produced anti-colonial booklets and thus the 1940s was a period of intense journalistic activities. For example the *Mumenyereri* (Guardian) press issued *Ngoro ya Mugikuyu ni ya Gutoria* (The *Mugikuyu* always Wins), *Tiiri niguo Nyina Witu* (*The Land is our Mother*), *Kenya Bururi wa Ngoe* (Kenya the Land of Conflicts), *Ithaka ciari Ciitu* (The land was Ours), among others. Acme Printing Press printed *Jifunze Siasa* (Learn Politics), *Africa Huru* (A Free Africa), *Nyimbo cia Wiyathi wa Kirinyaga* (Kirinyaga Freedom Songs) and *Wiyathi Igai Riitu* (Freedom is our Birth Right), *Roho ya Kiume na Bidii kwa Mwafrika* (The Spirit of Manhood and Perseverance for the African). Gakaara Book Service published *Witikio wa Gikuyu na Mumbi* (The Faith of Gikuyu and Mumbi), *Kenya ni Yakwa* (Kenya is Mine), *Miikarire ya Thikwota* (The Living Conditions of Squatters), *Magerio Nomo Mahota* (Practice Makes Perfect) and many others. The Gakaara Book Service also printed and published many handbills and posters which were distributed among the Mau Mau throughout the country. The purpose of publishing was to make the people conscious of their rights and to educate them on what was going on in Kenya.

Among the Mau Mau leaders who started their own publishing presses to support the struggle for the independence of Kenya included Bildad Kaggia, Fred Kubai, Gakaara wa Wanjau, Isaac Gathanju, Pio Gama Pinto and Ambu Patel among others (Durrani, 2006). Mau Mau messages were conveyed through newspapers, progressive booklets, pamphlets and songbooks. The most prominent leader active in all these forms of publishing was Gakaara wa Wanjau, who was a publisher and a writer of books in vernacular and Kiswahili. He was thus detained for his publishing activities in October

1952 as the “Chief Mau Mau Propagandist” (Durrani, 2006). To that effect, the colonial authorities alleged that Gakaara was an active supporter of Mau Mau movement.

To curb the spirit of resistance and the discourse of freedom and self-determination of these newspapers, the colonial government started its anti-Mau Mau propaganda and official justifications for the methods used to curb the Mau Mau movement. For example, on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1954, The Press Office, Department of Information in Nairobi issued an article entitled *Notes on the Mau Mau movement in Kenya*. In this article, the Mau Mau movement was alleged to be essentially a Gikuyu people movement and thus the Agikuyu had to play a large role in bringing about its eventual defeat. In this regard, the colonial government encouraged and supported the activities of the “Kikuyu Guard” and loyalists. The “Kikuyu Guard” was praised for carrying out military operations against the Mau Mau who the colonial press branded as terrorists, as the mainstay of agriculture and education in the reserves, protecting the churches and dispensaries, providing the much needed information about the Mau Mau activities and being the role models against the Mau Mau.

The colonial press also claimed to have confirmed that the Mau Mau movement was strong as a result of oath administration which allegedly was similar to European witchcraft. The Mau Mau oaths were portrayed as involving sadism, sexual perversion and bestiality. The press claimed that the government’s attempted “cleansing” those who had taken the oath using the Agikuyu witchdoctors but failed since the “cleansed” could always take another oath. The colonial government’s only option to break the power in the Mau Mau oaths was to make the Mau Mau give a full confession and reveal all the Mau Mau activities. According to the official press information, the team

in charge of Mau Mau confessions was not made up of regular prison department officials but of African and European clergy and laymen with sound knowledge of the Agikuyu psychology. The Mau Mau detainees who confessed and portrayed willingness to work with the government could be released. Despite this promise, the colonial press admitted that there were very few Mau Mau confessors.

The press reported that the Mau Mau detention camps were divided into three categories as guided by the Mau Mau screening teams. First were the hard-core irredeemable terrorists; secondly people with a lighter allegiance to the Mau Mau; and third those that could be released very quickly. The plan for the second group was to put them in “work camps” where they could engage on useful projects like bush clearing, irrigation and soil conservation. Those who cooperated could be joined by their families, released or alternatively be settled in the newly cleared land around the work camps. The government claimed that the work camps were intended to improve the living standards of the Agikuyu.

Official propaganda also claimed that the Agikuyu were gradually turning away from the Mau Mau in large numbers. This was to justify the “Villigisation Policy” as a means of controlling the Mau Mau terrorism on the isolated Agikuyu homes. The villages were protected by Kikuyu Guard Posts. The government propaganda claimed that the policy was making great strides in education, health and local government. It claimed that each new village would eventually have its own school, health center, women welfare center and a village council. The press also claimed that the policy had resulted into a happier and a more cooperative attitude among the villagers who were now free from the fear of murder and terrorist brutality.

The press gave the impression that the colonial government minded about African welfare because reportedly there were long-term plans for African advancement. Notable among these was the Swynnerton Plan for African Agriculture and African academic and technical education. The major challenge to the government efforts towards African progress was allegedly the Emergency cost amounting to £1,000,000 per month (Gakaara, 1983).

#### **4.2.4 An Examination of Gakaara's Anti-colonial Literary Works**

##### **4.2.4.1 Waigua atia? (What's up?)**

Gakaara's first political magazine was the monthly *Waigua atia?* (What's up?). The researcher was not able to access a hard copy of this magazine. However, available literature reveals that by 1952, the magazine was selling 12,000 copies per month (Durrani, 2006). In this magazine, Gakaara heavily used proverbial language to raise the curiosity of the people. This trapped many people to take oaths as they sought the interpretation of the language. The magazine was so popular that even the illiterate bought it with the hope that the literate would read for them. Like its contemporaries, the magazine reported proceedings of KAU's meetings. This served to keep the Agikuyu politically conscious (Gakaara, 1971).

##### **4.2.4.2 *Roho ya Kiume na Bidii kwa Mwafrika* (The Spirit of Manhood and Perseverance for the African)**

The most anti-colonial booklet written by Gakaara was *Roho ya Kiume na Bidii kwa Mwafrika* (The Spirit of Manhood and Perseverance for the African). It was published in 1948 and its main objective was to make the black Africans conscious that they were equal with the Europeans (Gakaara, 1983). The booklet enjoyed readership in both

Kenya and Tanzania. The title, *Roho ya kiume na bidii kwa Mwafrika* (The spirit of manhood and perseverance for the African), carried a symbolic meaning well understood by the Agikuyu. To them, the term *mundu murume* (manhood) and the “spirit of manhood” meant that every circumcised man had a responsibility towards the African community (Kenyatta, 1978). Gakaara was therefore appealing to all the responsible African men to unite and fight for the land deprived from them by the colonialists.

In 1952, he translated it into Gikuyu as *Magerio Nomo Mahota* (Effort Brings Success) to target the Agikuyu as a population. He aimed at raising the Agikuyu’s self-esteem to be proud of being African and unite (Gakaara, 1952). He informed the Agikuyu that the British colonialists deliberately worked towards lowering their self-esteem. According to Gakaara, the Europeans wanted the Agikuyu to believe that they had no ability to rule themselves and that their brains were equal to that of little children. He asserted to the Agikuyu that they possessed the ability, wisdom and knowledge to achieve great things like any other race. To him, the Africans could do what the Europeans could do.

Gakaara contended that the British were using the divide and rule strategy on the Agikuyu in order to be able to control them politically and socially and to economically exploit them (Gakaara, 1952). The Europeans tactfully divided the Agikuyu along religious lines and social classes thereby confusing them. Resultantly, there were now among the Agikuyu religious divisions such that some referred to themselves as Mohammedans, others Christians and others claiming that they belonged to the African Orthodox religion. The converted Africans were made to believe that they were superior to those who belonged to the traditional religion. They therefore despised those who

belonged to the traditional faith (Gakaara, 1952). Social division was also brought by the European education such that those who attained formal education were made to believe and therefore behaved like they were better than the rest of the African population. The situation was such that there was now a class of educated elites who looked down on others (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002).

Gakaara also highlighted on the complexity of land problem in Kenya. The Europeans had grabbed the Agikuyu land to the extent that it was no longer enough for the latter's settlement and farming. Gakaara observed that the Agikuyu were suing one another in courts of law because of land disputes (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). As far as he was concerned, the affected Agikuyu were supposed to sue the Europeans who had grabbed their land instead. Due to the same land grabbing by the Europeans, the Agikuyu's livestock numbers were dwindling. Thus without enough land and livestock, the Agikuyu were prone to conflicts with one another as poverty levels were rising amongst them. Gakaara interpreted this to mean that the Europeans had the objective of making the Agikuyu hate one another, thus get further divided (Gakaara, 1952). The Europeans would then take advantage of them, exploit their labour and skills, and therefore enrich themselves. Without land and livestock, the Agikuyu were prone to European exploitation because they went seeking jobs in European farms (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). The salary given to the Africans could barely meet their needs.

According to Gakaara, practically all the blacks were being exploited by the Europeans. For example; the wage labourers were paid poorly compared to the Europeans and the Asians (Gakaara, 1952). They lived in houses rented from the Europeans or white controlled institutions like urban centers. The food they ate was expensive and mostly

came from European farms or imported from Europe (Berman & Lonsdale 2002). Therefore, they practically earned nothing because all their money went back to the employer.

The squatters in white settled estates were not allowed to farm more than one acre of land. Their number of the livestock was controlled with the excuse that their animals would spread diseases to European animals (Kale, 1999). What they earned could not even meet a half of their needs. Therefore a man had to work with his wife and children on the European farms for self-sustainability. They were also not allowed to have any external communication (Gakaara, 1952).

In urban centers, the Africans lived in very bad conditions. They lived in rented shanties and had paid various taxes out of their meagre pay. Those living in slums had to prove their employment status, otherwise they were branded criminals. Those who owned rental houses were controlled on how to sub-lease them out. The slum dwellers were enticed with European lifestyle and thus they remained poor (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). This poverty made them remain in towns, always hoping that life would improve.

The Agikuyu farmers in the rural areas were no better. The food crops they produced were branded to be of low quality and therefore were sold at lower prices compared to those from European farms. They were also not free to sell their surplus as they wished as they were subjected to market controls imposed by the Europeans (Gakaara, 1952).



The African businessmen were exposed to high taxation and various trade licences. It was also made difficult for them to acquire trade licenses to export or import goods. Local licenses were also hard to get as Africans could never be licensed to sell such goods that were a preserve of Europeans and Asians like alcoholic drinks (Gakaara 1952).

Black government employees were paid very little compared to Asians and Europeans performing similar jobs (Gakaara, 1952). This tempted some of them to take bribes leading to Europeans branding them corrupt and untrustworthy. They could not access their pension until retirement. Therefore, many had to persevere, waiting for their retirement benefits (Gakaara 1952).

Those employed in the armed forces were exposed to pleasures of life and while they were fighting for the Europeans, they received praises. However, after winning European battles they were looked down upon. They were even denied any compensation due to them as wartime promises (Gakaara, 1952).

Gakaara observed that if anything good was to be realised by the Africans during the colonial period, it had to be through education, which he encouraged. There was hunger for education by the Africans in an effort to better their lives. However, schools where the African child could attain western education were very few. Africans lacked enough funds to construct their own schools, colleges and if possible universities. Therefore, the African child could not get as much education as he/she desired. The few available schools charged high fees to the disappointment of the bright African child from a poor background. This lack of education facilities was designed by the Europeans so that

they could continue getting cheap labour from the Africans. Africans with little or no western education were subjected to poor pay by the European employers (Gakaara, 1952).

Gakaara therefore urged the Agikuyu to unite against the Europeans. He argued that the Europeans were united in their strategy of exploiting the Africans and therefore the Africans were to unite to be able to overcome the hurdles deliberately placed on their way by the Europeans to ensure that Africans could never be equal to them. According to Gakaara, there was nothing to justify lesser pay and mistreatment of the Africans by the Europeans (Gakaara, 1952). According to him, Africans were supposed to be equal with other races in Kenya under the same law and salary. It was the Europeans who exposed the Africans to European foods, clothing, use of cars, airplanes and modern education while they ensured that the Africans could not afford these amenities (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). Gakaara contended that if the Africans became rulers in their own country, then it was possible to achieve the things deprived of them by the Europeans.

Gakaara called on the Africans to be united whether they were poor or rich, wise or unwise, disabled or able bodied, women or men, in the spirit of love for their country. They were to fight in all manner of ways with the objective of attaining political freedom. Nobody should alienate themselves from fighting for freedom with the excuse of religion, doing businesses, that one was in formal employment or just because one did not consider himself or herself a politician. All had a role to play as they were all equally deprived and looked down upon by the Europeans (Gakaara, 1952). He called upon the workers to demand for a pay rise and equity in payment. To the rich he had

the message that others were fighting for that very land that they owned and were therefore supposed to be involved. The poor were supposed to realise that the soil was their source of nourishment and he informed them that the land was their "mother and father" from which they fed from and lived on. Leaders too should realise that when their own people were being displaced, they too were being displaced from power (Gakaara, 1952).

Gakaara therefore urged people from all walks of life to be united and participate in the fight for freedom. He called upon the people to directly participate in politics by making monetary contributions and attending political meetings. He did not expect people to exempt themselves from political meetings on excuse that they had business, went to church, were employees, enjoying pleasures of life like beer drinking, watching movies or soccer. He urged them that political meetings were not frequent and moreover they were agitating for the good of all the blacks. Therefore, everyone had to avail themselves. Everybody was bound to benefit from politics because political parties like KAU fought for better life, education for the African child, land, freedom, pay rise for workers among other rights (Gakaara, 1952).

Gakaara urged the Agikuyu not to be afraid to speak for their justice. The employed were not expected to fear being sacked as Gakaara made them aware that the European employers were exploiting their ignorance to enrich themselves. Africans were expected to portray their love for their nation by attending KAU meetings since according to Gakaara, it was better to be sacked and achieve political freedom (Gakaara, 1952). He argued that everybody should participate in politics of fighting for freedom

not only in raising their voices in politics or writing but also in seeking to know what to do in order to contribute to the political freedom of Kenya.

Gakaara noted that nobody invited the Europeans to Kenya and added that it was a great shame that the Agikuyu were landless, ruled and subjected to the payment of tax to support European rule in their own country (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). He argued that the Agikuyu were not interested in conflicts but they should never be silent while their freedom and right to equality with the other free races of the world was being violated (Gakaara, 1971).

According to Gakaara, there was no good reason why Africans were not properly represented in the colonial government. He noted that the blacks were the majority in Kenya and they therefore needed to be elected but not nominated representatives in the ruling government (Gakaara, 1952). Gakaara could not understand why leaders were nominated for Africans, yet it was the Africans who were supposed to know who could best represent them. Kenya had enough educated people to be the majority in the decision making committees. That way, the Africans could easily outvote the Europeans (Gakaara, 1952).

Gakaara believed that before the Europeans arrived in Kenya, Kenyans already knew how to rule themselves. The Europeans were simply grabbers who craftily pretended to get Africans out of trouble. They used divide and rule method to ensure sharp divisions among Africans. Gakaara opined that the supposed enmity between the Agikuyu and the Maasai was misplaced. Before the colonialists imposed their rule in the country, the Agikuyu and the Maasai traded with one another peacefully and when conflicts arose

they knew how to reconcile themselves (Gakaara, 1952). The Maasai did not grab the Agikuyu land and vice versa. Therefore, the two communities coexisted peacefully and were happy with plenty of food and animals. They enjoyed wealth and had many brave men. The Europeans disrupted the peaceful co-existence and brought in poverty and unless the Agikuyu realised this, they would continue wallowing in poverty.

Gakaara wa Wanjau revealed to the Agikuyu what he believed to be the European objectives, that is to divide the Africans to be able to rule them and to lower their self-esteem so that they could easily accept European rule (Gakaara, 1952). The Europeans routinely made intimidating statements like; "Africans are poor" and therefore expected the Africans to be marveled by the Europeans' achievements and be afraid of them (Gakaara, 1952). He urged the Agikuyu not to be silent after knowing the European secret of ruling over their country. Unity of the Agikuyu was the biggest weapon to get the Europeans out of the country. The people should unite and work hard to become equal with the Europeans and rule themselves without external interference (Gakaara, 1952).

According to Gakaara, the Gikuyu country was worth fighting for since it was blessed by God with fertile land where they could get plenty of food out of their own farming. The Agikuyu should be proud and full of praise for their beautiful country endowed with fertile soil and big rivers (Kenyatta 1978). Therefore, whatever wealth the Agikuyu needed was to be found in their soil. In the fight for land, there was no need to fear the Europeans who were in everyway like them. The Agikuyu should realise that the fear they had for the Europeans was unreal. The Europeans had exploited that fear

to belittle them. African ignorance served to make them get exploited by the Europeans (Gakaara, 1952).

Gakaara wa Wanjau also exposed the European hypocrisy in enticing the Africans to ape European political and economic set up. According to him, the Europeans used trickery to make the Africans fall into their trap and then later on sneered and looked down on them. For example, Europeans told the Africans that they were strong when they needed their labour but then paid them very little and insulted them (Gakaara, 1952). When they needed African service in the Second World War, they considered that Africans were brave but during the war underpaid them and never honoured the promises they made to the Africans after demobilisation. They even sneered at the ex-servicemen with such words as “You stopped being soldiers when the war ended!” (Gakaara, 1971). Gakaara further noted that the Europeans' argument was that the land the Agikuyu claimed to be theirs once belonged to the Dorobo and that the Agikuyu were also land grabbers.

Gakaara advised the Agikuyu using the proverb, *kahiu gatemaga munoori* (The knife cuts the very person who sharpened it) (Gakaara, 1952). He advised the Agikuyu to use the same education provided by the Europeans to turn against them for it had raised the political consciousness of the Africans. With this kind of consciousness, they could seek justice against the colonialists. There was no reason why they could not get the Europeans out of the country since they now had black judges, famous teachers and doctors, people who could fight bravely in wars, ship captains and pilots. Africans were also good in arts and in sports like boxing and athletics. Black people could therefore do anything that Europeans did (Berman and Lonsdale, 2002). God created all human

beings equal, all they needed was awareness. Europeans continually hindered the Africans from getting rich but given the chance the blacks could also build storey buildings, build classic hotels, own big shops and cars and even aeroplanes to fly their children to overseas schools. What they needed was unity in their actions as described by Gakaara in the analogies of safari ants, the spider and birds. Like safari ants, Africans should be united in action (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). They should be brave enough to fight even to death. Like a spider that constructs its own dwelling place using its own substance, Africans should out of what they had; fight on until they attained their independence. The patience and the perseverance of a small bird constructing its own nest using just a beak should be a good lesson to the Africans. Africans with much brains and the ability to use body organs like hands and legs could do marvelous things if they were united on purpose (Gakaara, 1952).

Gakaara advised that it was upon everyone to unite with others and fight for land and freedom. He called on the Agikuyu to be alert as freedom was a matter of urgency with the proverb, *mbere no mbere na thutha no mugiano* (strike while the iron is hot). He also used the Gikuyu proverbs, *kamuingi koyaga ndiri na mageria nomo mahota* (unity is strength and practice makes perfect) (Gakaara, 1952). It was crucial to be united and they could not afford to stand by as spectators. All they needed was freedom and they had to fight for it using available individual means. It was crucial that every individual should play their role (Gakaara, 1952).

Therefore, Gakaara appealed to all blacks to stop being cowards and unite whether they were poor or rich, learned or not, disabled or able bodied, women or men. The unity was to be in the spirit of love for their country, fighting for it for the purpose of political

freedom (Gakaara, 1952). For the Agikuyu, unity meant partaking in the ongoing oath taking, which effectively made them members of the Mau Mau movement. This largely boosted the Mau Mau movement because the Mau Mau members felt obliged to fight for land and the political independence of Kenya.

#### **4.2.4.3 Gakaara's Political Creed; *Witikio wa Gikuyu na Mumbi* (The Ideology of the Agikuyu)**

The political creed was modelled on the Christian creed with the aim of reawakening and uniting the Agikuyu. It was perhaps the best known progressive booklet authored and published by Gakaara wa Wanjau. It was printed by ACME Printing Press in 1952 and widely distributed by Mau Mau activists. When the colonial government declared a state of Emergency in October 1952, one of the most respected Mau Mau fighters, Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi, was personally distributing about 15,000 copies of the *Witikio* in large baskets to the people in Rift Valley. It was printed on a four page card and sold at 25 cents (Durrani, 2006). The *Witikio* was first published in 1952 and was recited off head by the Mau Mau in meetings, forests and detention camps to strengthen their faith that their God of Kirinyaga would defeat their enemy, the colonialist (Gakaara, 1999). One of the respondents, Ngatia Ithanji, informed that the Mau Mau recited the *Witikio* as part of their prayers to *Mwene Nyaga* (God). All prayers including the *Witikio* were said while facing Mount Kirinyaga (Mount Kenya). Below is an analysis of the political creed;

Some verses in the Apostle's Creed were retained;

*Ninjitikitie Ngai ithe mwene Hinya wothe*

I believe in God Almighty



The creed affirmed that the Agikuyu had faith in the Almighty God. This was to counter the colonialist's claim that the Mau Mau oath taking was comparable to the European witchcraft. Wambui Otieno also emphasised that the Mau Mau were not atheists in her statement; "Make no mistake, Mau Mau believed in God. We held prayers facing Mount Kenya and regarded God as our shield" (Otieno & Presley, 1998).

*Mumbi waiguru na thi*

Creator of Heaven and Earth

The objective was to imply the equality of all races and to appeal to the self-esteem of the fighters in the forest. They felt that since Ngai (God) was the overall creator, no race in the world had a right to impose their rule over the others (Ngatia wa Ithanji, a respondent).

The verses on Jesus Christ were replaced with those on the Agikuyu's ancestral parents Gikuyu and Mumbi, the legendary era of Waiyaki wa Hinga and Mugo wa Kibiru's prophecy;

*Na ngetikia thiini wa Gikuyu na Mumbi*

*Aciari aitu a kihumo*

*Aria mombirwo ni Ngai mwene hinya wothe*

*Nimanyaririrwo ni mbari ya Nyakeru*

*Hingo ya Waiyaki wa Hinga*

*Kuringana na urathi wa Mugo wa Kibiru*

*Magitunywo waathani na ithaka ciao*

*Magituo ciumbe itari kiene*

*Makirutwo witikio-ini wao hari Mwenenyaga*

*Kuringana na mitugo yao ya kinduire*

*Maciara mao nimahingukire maitho*  
*Makiarahuka kuma ukomboini wa Nyakeru*  
*Magicokia aciari ao itiini ciairathimo ciao*  
*Ningi ninjitikitie magongona matheru ma Gikuyu na Mumbi*  
*Nangwataniro ya iruka ciothe cia thi*  
*O iria ihooyaga Ngai mutuura muoyo (Gakaara 1983).*

And I believe in Gikuyu and Mumbi  
Our dear ancestral parents  
Their children were persecuted  
In the era of Waiyaki  
By the clan of white people  
According to Mugo wa Kibiru's prophecy  
They were robbed of their government  
And their land  
And relegated to the status of humiliated menials  
Their children had their eyes opened  
They achieved the light of a great awareness  
And they fought to restore their parents to their seats of glory

Accordingly, Gikuyu land was a heritage given to them through their ancestral parents, Gikuyu and Mumbi, from antiquity. Mugo wa Kibiru had prophesied that foreigners would come and persecute the Agikuyu for sometime and then disappear. Later on Waiyaki wa Hinga had left a curse that nobody should ever give away, sell or just let the Agikuyu land get into the hands of foreigners (Gakaara, 1971). Wambui Otieno echoed this as she fondly wrote about her grandfather, Waiyaki wa Hinga, who she

believed was a Gikuyu hero brutally murdered by the colonialists on account of land. According to her, Waiyaki wa Hinga had admonished the Agikuyu; “You must not surrender one inch of our soil to foreigners, for if you do so, future children will die of starvation” (Otieno and Presley, 1998). The Mau Mau therefore felt obliged to fight for their land and freedom to escape Waiyaki’s curse and also as part of their duty to protect the community.

The traditional Gikuyu faith did not agree with the last verse of the Apostle’s Creed. It was replaced with;

*Namo mariika meeri ma wathani wa Mwangi na Irungu*

*Uthamakiini wa Bururi wa Kenya*

*Naguo uiguano murumu wa mihiriga kenda muiyuru*

*Nakio Gikuyu gitagathira*

*Thaai thathaiya Ngai Thaai* (Gakaara, 1983).

And the unbreakable solidarity of Mwangi and Irungu generations in the leadership of this country of Kenya

And the oneness of the nine full Gikuyu clans

And the everlastingness of the Gikuyu nation

Praise, Praise God, Praise

Gakaara appealed instead for the unity of the community which emphasised the importance of Mau Mau oathing (Ngatia wa Ithanji, a respondent). The everlastingness of the community would be possible if everyone played their role in the Mau Mau movement (Gakaara, 1989).

Gakaara's appeal in the political creed was an effective tool in inspiring the Mau Mau to continue fighting for land and political freedom. It made them feel like they were

brothers in the struggle for the liberation of Kenya. It was meant to unify the Agikuyu just like Christians were unified by the Apostle's Creed (Ngatia wa Ithanji, a respondent). It was also a call for patriotism.

#### **4.2.4.4 Gakaara's Collection and Publishing of Mau Mau Songs**

In November 1951, the colonial and white settler newspapers stopped covering KAU meetings. In order to overcome this challenge, Mau Mau militants started mouth to mouth "bush" radio information service. Songs were also composed as an oral method of conveying and recording information. Kinuthia Mugia of Olenguruone became a champion in the composition of new Gikuyu songs. The songs were able to break the monopoly over the colonial means of communication. They carried revolutionary and subversive messages and were sung by the old and the young (Durrani, 2006). Gakaara wa Wanjau and Muthee Cheche did a lot to collect the Mau Mau songs and put them into books (Kaggia, 1975). Gakaara then published *Nyimbo cia Gikuyu na Mumbi* (Songs of Gikuyu and Mumbi) and *Nyimbo cia Ciana cia Gikuyu na Mumbi* (Songs of the Children of Gikuyu and Mumbi) (Gakaara, 1971). Some of these songs featured in the Kapenguria trial and the prosecution relied on them alone for information about the aims and objectives of the Mau Mau movement (Kaggia, 1975),

Within a span of five years the Mau Mau produced most formidable political songs which were used as a weapon to politicise and educate the Kenyan workers and peasant masses. The songs were undeniable catalysts in the development and success of the Mau Mau movement (Durrani, 2006). They encouraged and united the Mau Mau fighters and sympathisers. Through them, it was easy to convince the illiterate fighters about the reasons for the fight (Wandai, 1990). Many of the Mau Mau members who had never been to school received political messages in the hymns. For some who had

accepted Christianity, the Mau Mau theology came from the independent churches. Many of the songs adopted Christian hymn tunes and popularised images found in Judaism. Through them, the Mau Mau followers were made to feel that they were God's people who had a direct relationship with him and doing his will. Songs also appealed to the prodigal son to return, implying the loyalists. The songs embraced the Gikuyu labour theory, which conformed to the Christian teachings like "God helps those who help themselves". To the Agikuyu, the songs warned that the lazy could expect no freedom (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002).

The Mau Mau songs sung during the Emergency years were of courage, hope and fulfilment. They were sung by virtually everybody among the Agikuyu in homes, Mau Mau gatherings, KAU meetings, in Gikuyu Independent Schools and Churches (Mirera wa Muriuki Thige, a respondent). The respondent said that he was a member of the African Independent Pentecostal church in his home village of Gikumbo, Karatina, and they would sing the songs there. In schools, the songs would be taught by old men and women to be sung when Jomo Kenyatta and other prominent politicians visited the Gikuyu Independent Schools (Mirera wa Muriuki Thige, a respondent). The colonial government banned African newspapers and the hymn books but it was impossible to ban the songs because they remained in the hearts and minds of the people (Wandai, 1990).

Since his school days, Gakaara was very good at learning and writing songs that were contemporary to him (Ruth Muthoni Muthigani, Gakaara's younger sister and respondent). Therefore, in 1952, it was natural for him to make a collection of Mau Mau freedom songs and compile them into hymnbooks. "Unfortunately people were

ordered to set these books on fire by the colonial authorities when Gakaara's books were banned" (Ruth Muthoni Muthigani, a respondent). However, even after the hymn books were banned and burnt, his songs orally circulated easily among the Agikuyu. Songs published by Gakaara were sung to mobilise the Agikuyu to claim their lost land and freedom. They included; *Hoyai ma Thai Thai ma* (Pray and Praise God). This song was originally sung by the Agikuyu who were exiled from the fertile land of Olenguruone to the rocky Yatta (Githui wa Jack, a respondent). The song constantly reminded the Agikuyu how those exiled from Olenguruone suffered in the hands of colonialists;

*Riria makinyire kuo mbura ni yaringire,  
Tukimaka ni marurumi.*

When they arrived, there was heavy rain in Yatta,  
And frightening thunderstorms.

This meant that they were exposed to harsh weather to which they were not accustomed to. They were in a foreign land and they did not own good shelters to protect them from rain (Githui wa Jack, a respondent). To the Agikuyu, the heavy rain to welcome their arrival signified blessings from God and also new beginnings. It implied that God was with them.

Babies too were not spared the colonial brutality;

*Maithori maitikire twanina nduku ithatu,  
Twona ciana ikiriranira.*

Tears flowed freely after three days,  
When he observed babies crying.

The children were the future of the community and it was the duty of the current generation then to ensure a bright future for them (Gakaara, 1971). It was also the duty of every circumcised man to ensure their security. Parents especially men therefore had the most dehumanising experience, observing their children suffering and were unable to help them.

*Muiritu umwe niakuire niundu wa kuhuhita,*

*Tondu wa kuria nyama cia mbogo* (Gakaara, n.d).

One lady died of food poisoning,

After consuming buffalo meat.

This stanza clearly exposed the inhuman nature of colonial rule. Food scarcity led to the death of a lady named as *Josibaini* (Josephine) in the song. European rule forced some like Josephine to eat what was allergic for them due to lack of alternative food. This was a serious matter due to the fact that the Agikuyu were basically farmers. The circumstances forced them to depend on wild game meat for survival.

The song also spread the political awareness that the Agikuyu had a leader who was concerned about their welfare;

*Thimu ni yakinyire yumite Githunguri,*

*Jomo amenye nitwakinyire* (Gakaara, n.d).

A telephone call came from Githunguri,

Jomo wanted to know whether we arrived. This demonstrated that they remained in contact with their political leaders like Jomo Kenyatta.

In another song, *Tukiuma Ringuruo* (As we were leaving Olenguruone), the Agikuyu were reminded of the grim period of colonialism when they were seemingly defeated.

As recorded in the song, the evictees left Olenguruone to Yatta through the populated areas of Kenya as a deterrent measure against resistance to colonial rule (Gakaara 1971). From Olenguruone, they were loaded onto trucks that passed through Nakuru, to Thika before the long journey to Yatta. They were ridiculed by the whites because, according to them, the Agikuyu resistance had been defeated. During this journey, plain water was their breakfast and weevils infested flour was the provision for their meals.

Even as the Agikuyu left the fertile Olenguruone land to the dry land of Yatta, they still had hope of ever getting back their land;

*Tukiuma Ringuruo twakoraga andu,*

*Magatwira riu thiii na wega, Na ithui tukamera tigwoi na wega,*

*Ni twathii kuoherwo mahiga mairu.*

*Mbari ya Nyakeru menyai atiri,*

*Muratuohera ithaka ciari ciitu,*

*Tugutura Kenya tene na tene,*

*Twatigiirwo ni Gikuyu na Mumbi (Gakaara, n.d).*

As we left Olenguruone we met people,

They bid us good bye,

We too bid them good bye,

That we were going to exile in Yatta.

You, the white race, should know,

You are exiling us because of our land,

We shall live in Kenya forever,

Our heritage from Gikuyu and Mumbi.



Their hope inspired others who had not suffered the same fate but were also in difficult circumstances under the same imperialists. If the Olenguruone evictees still had hope, then they too could continue having hope.

The chorus of the song kept reminding the Agikuyu that land occupied by the white settlers was rightfully theirs;

*Tugakena muno,*

*Nyumba ya Mumbi igicokerio ithaka* (Gakaara, n.d.).

We shall be happy,

We of the house of Mumbi as we get back our land.

The Agikuyu's claim to the lost lands dates back to antiquity, having been bequeathed to them by God through their ancestors (Kanogo, 1993).

In another song; *Ngai ni eruhagia irikaniro* (God renews his promises), the faith the Agikuyu had in their God that he would provide them with victory against the colonialists and also provide them with good leaders was invoked;

*Ni erire Kinyatta na kirooto,*

*Ni ukaingiha ta njata cia matu-ini,*

*Nduriri ikarathimwo niundu waku,*

*Nake Kinyatta akimwitikia,*

*Ngai akihita na uhoti wake* (Gakaara, 1952).

He told Kenyatta through a dream,

That you will increase like the stars of the sky,

Communities will be blessed through you,

And Kenyatta believed,

Thus God vowed with his mighty power.

In the song, Jomo Kenyatta was compared with the biblical Abraham, the ancestral father of the Israelites, one who would be a blessing to the nations. The Agikuyu believed that Kenyatta would provide political leadership not only to them but to the whole country whereby he would unite all the Kenyan communities. In the same song, Kenyatta was likened with the biblical David who provided good leadership in Israel. Like the biblical suffering servant of God, the messiah, Kenyatta was portrayed as the one destined to suffer for the sake of the nation. Through God, the Agikuyu would get justice in getting back their land and freedom (Githui wa Jack a respondent). The song inspired the Agikuyu to refer to Jomo Kenyatta as their *muthamaki* (our king). The song also influenced their thinking such that they viewed him as one anointed by God to lead Kenya into independence (Githui wa Jack, a respondent).

Another political song, *Ungiurio atia* (If asked) reminded the youth that they needed to be patriotic and united to be able to defend their country and drive away the colonialists;

*Kiugo kia mbere nainyui anake,*

*Mutungatagire Gikuyu...*

*Munyitanire muri hamwe,*

*Muhoote nyina karuigi na ithe* (Gakaara, n.d.)

Word for the youth,

Serve your people of Gikuyu...

Be united,

To defeat the colonialist.

There were also songs to encourage the Agikuyu to acquire modern education in order to enable them to have strong political leaders to fight for the justice concerning land and freedom. In the song, *Korwo ni Ndemi na Mathathi* (If it was the age of Ndemi and Mathathi), an important leader was the educated one;

*Korwo ni Ndemi na Mathathi,*

*Baba ndagwitia kirugu, Njoke ngwitie itimu na ngo,*

*Riu baba nguguitia githoomo* (Gakaara. n.d.).

If it was the age of Ndemi and Mathathi,

I would have asked for a feast from you, my father,

Then for a spear and a shield,

But now, my father, I ask for education.

Traditionally, a circumcised youth would demand a feast from his father to celebrate his transition from childhood to adulthood. Such a youth would be provided with a spear and a shield to arm him against the enemies of the community. The weapons could also be used against other communities to acquire cattle, goats and sheep (Gakaara, 1971). According to the song, the modern sign of maturity was not to wield a spear but to acquire a good education with which to fight for the lost land and freedom. Due to this kind of awareness, the Agikuyu sent their children to school collectively. The bright children whose parents were poor or were in detention were educated by the community through fundraisings (Githui wa Jack, a respondent). Such fundraising was witnessed in Nyeri for a certain Karani wa Muriuki who was going to study abroad. The Agikuyu turned out in large numbers and they made three files that stretched for more than half a mile as they went to make their contributions. All the while they were singing Mau Mau freedom songs (Gakaara, 1971). Jomo Kenyatta was also a beneficiary of community fundraising through K.C.A in 1928.

In the song, *Twambite kunyamarika* (After much suffering), the Agikuyu were being made conscious about the progress that KAU had made as a political party in colonial Kenya. The song raised the hopes of the Agikuyu that it would not take long before they got back their land and freedom. They were hopeful that they would be well represented by a person who had already acquired the modern education. The unveiled KAU flag by Kenyatta was much the same as the national flag that was used in Kenya after independence (Gakaara, n.d). The sight of the flag gave hope to the Agikuyu that soon they would get political independence.

In yet another political song, *Nuu wakwirire utuike muteti?* (Who made you into a politician?), an appeal was made to all the Agikuyu to be politicians in the sense that everybody was affected by the loss of land and freedom caused by the colonialists;

*Wee nuu wagutuire muteti?*

*Ni ruuo rwa ithaka rwanuire muteti* (Gakaara, 1952).

Who made you into a politician?

It is the pain of the loss of land.

Alongside land, they needed political freedom to do away with colonial discrimination which, according to the song, had turned them into mere slaves;

*I nago wiyathi wendaga niki?*

*Niundu ndiri ngombo bururini wakwa* (Gakaara, 1952).

Why do you want freedom?

Because I am not a slave in my own country.

In the song, the masses were urged to support KAU which was a party through which the Agikuyu hoped to attain political independence;

*Wiyathi na ithaka ikoima naku?*

*Twina ihooto ciitu kiama-ini gia KAU (Gakaara, 1952).*

From where shall we get land and freedom?

We have justice in our party KAU.

The song, *Andu aitu Gikuyu na Mumbi* (Our people of Gikuyu and Mumbi), appealed to the Agikuyu to work hard so that their birth right would not be stolen by the white race;

*Andu aitu Gikuyu na Mumbi,*

*Ni wega twirutanirie*

*Igai ritu ritigathii,*

*Na mbari ino ya Nyakeru (Gakaara, 1952).*

Our people of Gikuyu and Mumbi,

It is good to work hard,

So that our birth right is not stolen,

By the white race.

To the Mau Mau, hard work meant fighting with the purpose of driving the white race out of Kenya (Githui wa Jack, a respondent). The Agikuyu's birth right was their land which they believed was given to them by God. The song urged the Mau Mau to fight, otherwise they would be victims of Waiyaki's curse who they believed was agitated by the Europeans while he was fighting for the Agikuyu land;

*Andu aitu Waiyaki niakuire,*

*Na agitutigira kirumi,*

*Ng'undu ici tutikendie,*

*Na ithui no guciheana (Gakaara, 1952).*

Our people, Waiyaki died,  
And left us a serious curse,  
We should never sell out our land,  
And yet we are giving it away.

The important house of Wairera mentioned in the song was the College at Githunguri which was built through Mbiu wa Koinange's fundraiser. The completion of this KISA Teachers' College was a signal to them that European rule in Kenya would inevitably come to an end. The whites were considered to be only temporary visitors and the Agikuyu faith in God was used to console those in jails and detention camps (Solomon Wanjohi). The song was a wake up call for the Agikuyu to the fact that the colonial rule was full of injustices. They were therefore supposed to unite and chase the colonialist out of the country. Each one of them was expected to play their role irrespective of their status in society (Solomon Wanjohi, a respondent).

Before he died, Waiyaki allegedly said that *ni kirumi hari Mugikuyu o wothe kuheana, kwendia ona kana kurekereria tiiri wa Gikuyu uthii na nduriri ng'eni* (it is a curse to any Mugikuyu to give out, sell, or to let the land belonging to the community to be alienated from them by foreigners). After Waiyaki's death his curse was said to be effective to all the Agikuyu (Gakaara, 1971). Gakaara wa Wanjau and others would loudly sing the song, *Andu aitu Gikuyu na Mumbi*, to raise the Agikuyu's consciousness and particularly make them patriotic (Gakaara, 1971). They would always emphasise on Waiyaki's curse. The constant reminder on this curse was effective in arousing bitterness, anger, and hatred against the Europeans. These feelings fuelled the Mau Mau war against colonialism (Gakaara, 1971).

The song, *Ithaka Ciitu Andu Airu* (Our Land of Blacks) was a clarion call to the Agikuyu, particularly the young men who took up arms to fight for independence, not to be indifferent as the Europeans grabbed their land. They were not supposed to be silent as their children were exposed to an uncertain future (Gakaara, 1971). *Tutigakira ori ori* (We shall never be silent) meant to be active in the Mau Mau movement. This was the reason why the members of the Mau Mau movement included women, children and the old people who were obliged to help the Mau Mau fighters in any way that they could (Githui wa Jack, a respondent).

*Ithaka ciitu andu airu, niciarikirie guthii,*

*Naithui twina ciana ciitu twatura turiraga.*

*Tutigakira ori ori, tutari gwa kurima,*

*Na wiyathi witu kiumbe bururi witu Kenya* (Gakaara, n.d.).

Our land, the blacks was alienated from us,

We and our children were left crying.

We shall never be silent while we have nowhere to farm,

As long as we have no freedom in our country, Kenya.

The “never be silent” principle was applied even inside the detention camps where the Mau Mau were coerced to confess against the movement. Some gave in to the colonial trickery leading to the arrest and detention of more Mau Mau fighters. Others could not betray their movement and were brutally killed. Any time a Mau Mau knew that he was about to be killed, he would grab a handful of soil and die with it. This was a way of (never being silent), a message that the Agikuyu should be ready to die on account of their land which was the future of the coming generations (children) (Ndiritu Maricho, a respondent).

Inside the detention camps, others kept the principle of “never be silent” alive by educating others on the need to hold on with their fight for land no matter the circumstances. They would do anything to harden others against giving in to the colonial tactics of making them confess to betray their movement. They would lead others in Mau Mau songs meant for consolation and encouragement (Ndiritu Maricho, a respondent). In detention, Gakaara wa Wanjau kept the “never be silent principle” by writing letters petitioning for the detainees’ rights as the sample below portrays;



Manda Manda, Kenya  
Camp  
P.O. Lamu

24-9-54.

The Rt. Honourable,  
The Minister for Community Development and  
Rehabilitation,  
The Secretariat  
NATROBI.  
(AF MANDA)

Your Rt. Honourable,

We, Manda Detainees, humbly beg to  
petition your right honourable as follows:-

1. FOOD. That your petitioners' scale of food  
has been drastically reduced such as to render  
the same insufficient for the upkeep of  
normal health. In that the constituents of the  
scale go up to make only one meal per  
diem, mainly composed of carbohydrates.

2. WORK, REHABILITATION AND RELEASE. That your  
petitioners are unsuitably employed on projects  
not in conformity with their previous experiences  
and professional qualifications. Your petitioners

④

pray that they be employed on works in  
conformity with their several trades and  
callings make fit to take their places once  
more in their respective communities:

3. SICKNESS. Several of your petitioners  
are aged, some infirm, and others have  
contracted diseases of which they have not  
had the opportunity to acquire adequate  
environments and treatment. Two have  
died here in this way. Your petitioners  
pray that the aged ones, the infirm and

the incurably sick, be transferred to suitable environments within reach of adequate treatment and cure. Owing to lack of <sup>various</sup> important ingredients of foodstuffs, various of your petitioners have contracted loss of sight, impaired resistance to diseases and various other ailments.

4. CORRESPONDENCE COURSES. A certain number of your petitioners were allowed to incur expenses on correspondence courses. Your petitioners pray that they be helped to

③

continue their courses smoothly and be allowed to sit for their respective examinations when due.

5. CAMP STUDIES. Most of your petitioners are pursuing studies in the Camp, in an effort to combat illiteracy, and your petitioners pray that they be encouraged in the way of provision of time, books, stationery and equipment.

NEWSPAPERS. Some of your petitioners are pursuing courses in journalism. As you may be aware, suitable newspapers for the purpose are not allowed in the camps, and your petitioners pray that they be allowed to subscribe to the East African Standard, Nairobi for the same.

6. FAMILY MAINTENANCE AND COMMUNICATIONS. Your petitioners families and dependants were left desolate since two years ago, without provision. Your petitioners therefore pray that their destitute families be provided by Government with means of livelihood, education for their children and relaxation of restrictions on

③

communications.

7. CLOTHING AND WEARING APPAREL. Some of your petitioners have not been clothed since their detention, and the few clothed have been provided with inadequate and unsuitable blue drill, i.e. blouse and shorts. Your petitioners pray that they be adequately clothed with better

The colonial authorities branded people like Gakaara as “hardcores of the Mau Mau movement” (Gakaara, 1983). Below is a sample copy of a letter written against such hardcores;

ATHI RIVER DETENTION AND REHABILITATION CAMP.

Re: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject is a proved agitator who has been inciting others against confession or any other kind of co-operation. He has been spreading mau mau propaganda in the Camp. His behaviour has been highly unsatisfactory and is considered to be a thorn and a regular nasty type on the side of the Rehabilitation set-up.

If he remain here he will severely prejudice the future progress and it will be a blow to our prestige. I recommend that he be moved down the pipe-line.

Forwarded to the Special Branch Officer i/c., for concurrence.

LIAISON OFFICER,  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND REHABILITATION,  
ATHI RIVER CAMP.

DATE:

=====

SPECIAL BRANCH REMARKS:-

SIGNATURE:

SPECIAL BRANCH.

DATE:

*Ref Gakaara 1983*

In the same song, *Ithaka Ciitu Andu Airu* (Our Land of Blacks), the emphasis for the Mau Mau military struggle for land and freedom is portrayed to be for the purpose of their children's rights.

*Na nikio ithui twathamirio,*

*Tukiririra ciana.*

That is why we were exiled,

As we asked for our children's rights.

To the Agikuyu, *ciana* (children) was a word used to describe the upcoming generations. They had a right to inherit land and it was the duty of the current generation to defend this right. Failing to get back the lost land and freedom was equal to dooming the future of the Agikuyu's upcoming generations (Wanjohi Solomon, a respondent). A bright future of the upcoming generations therefore depended on the acts of the current generation.

The word *ciana* (children) could also be taken literally. Those arrested and detained included women who were confined in women's detention camps like the Kamiti detention camp where Mama Ngina Kenyatta was detained (Gakaara, 1971). In some cases, both parents were detained leaving children unattended. Even inside the detention camps they were not silent since they kept singing the Mau Mau songs to console themselves and raise their hopes. Some chose to die rather than betray the Mau Mau movement. Many of them were indeed hanged (Ndiritu Maricho, a respondent).

*Nainyui acukani aya, muthuire ciana cianyu,*

*Na mukenda onda cianyu, niinyui thu cia ruriri.*

And you loyalists, you hate your children,

And love your stomachs, you are the enemies of the community.

This portrayed the loyalists as self-centered people who had no welfare of the community at heart. As enemies and therefore a setback to the Mau Mau movement, they deserved to be eliminated by being killed (Githui wa Jack, a respondent).

The song, *Riria Kimathi Witu Ambatire* (When Our Kimathi Ascended) was composed by the Mau Mau fighters in the forest to eulogise Dedan Kimathi after he was hanged by the colonial government (Kariuki, 1976).

*Kimathi witu riria ambatire kirima-ini e wiki,*

*Nietirie hinya na umiriru, wa kuhota Nyakeru.*

*Nioigire makinya makwa mothe, maria nii ndagereire,*

*Noguo na inyui mukagerera mo, namunyuire ikombe icio.*

*Mwanyuira ikombe cia umiriru, iria nii ndanyuiriire,*

*Nicia ruo ningi cia thina na maithori na kieha.*

*Mutikamakio ni guthamano, kana guikio njera,*

*Kana gukua, kana kunyariruo, Ngai niwe uri tha na inyui* (Gakaara, n.d).

When our Kimathi ascended the mountain alone,

He asked for courage and strength to defeat the Whites.

He said, “my footsteps you will have to follow”,

And drink from the same cup I drank from,

If you drink from the cups of courage that I used,

They are painful, distressful, sorrowful, and full of tears.

Do not worry about being exiled or jailed,

Or being killed or persecuted, God himself is with you.

The song had a clear revolutionary intent by establishing a distinction between the white colonising entity and the colonised blacks. Likening Kimathi with the biblical Moses, who went up Mount Sinai to collect God's commandments, or to Jesus, who went up Mount Olives to pray, was a justification of the bloody Mau Mau war. Like the biblical Christ who went up Mount Olives to pray on the eve of his death for the salvation of man, (Luke 22:39-45), Kimathi warned the Mau Mau that they should expect hardships. Thus the song appealed to the Agikuyu to persevere as their political salvation would surely come, but it would be achieved through a bitter struggle (Githui wa Jack a respondent).

The song appealed for the unity of all the Agikuyu (nine full clans) in the fight against colonialism through the leadership of Dedan Kimathi and other Mau Mau generals like Munyui referred to in the song;

*Ihii ikiuma na Icaciri, ciari kenda muiyuru,*

*Na iria ingi ikiuma gwa Gicuka, cia kuhoota Nyakeru* (Gakaara, n.d).

Fighters came from the nine full clans in the rural areas,

And others from Nairobi, with the purpose of defeating the Whites.

Dedan Kimathi and Stanley Mathenge raised an army of more than 20,000 fighters who launched guerrilla warfare from their bases in Mount Kenya and Aberdare forests. They were committed to die to the last man and fought relentlessly to extirpate the Europeans from Kenya (Karimi, 2013). In the song, coded language was used whereby the word *ihii* (uncircumcised youths) was used to describe the Mau Mau freedom fighters. The word *ihii* implied security keepers in the Gikuyu culture. In every Gikuyu home, boys were held in high regard as they were relied on as providers of security and

as the inheritors of their fathers' wealth. Therefore referring to the Mau Mau as *ihii* symbolically meant that they were valued and indispensable security providers (Githui wa Jack, a respondent).

The song also appealed for faith in God who never deserted their leaders and warned the loyalists to rethink their political stand, otherwise they risked being killed (Ngatia Ithanji, a respondent). They were likened with barren trees that had no use in the farm. They only increased the population without adding any value to it. For the Agikuyu unity to be real, such people had to be eliminated by all means (Githui wa Jack, a respondent).

*Tukuhooya na mai na mata, ngaati ciinuke kwao,*

*Niamu muti utari maciaro nduhandagwo mugunda* (Gakaara, n.d).

We shall pray using every available energy so that the loyalists will repent,  
Because a barren tree should not remain in the farm.

Another song, *Twathiaga tukenete* (We were happy as we went) was meant to encourage the fighters by demonstrating that there would be victory at the end of the war. They were assured that their cause was not hypocritical, so they would be happy on their fighting missions. Everybody was expected to play their role, even the old men who were not actively involved in the war had a duty to keep their mouths shut when they sighted the Mau Mau. If they made any move likely to betray the fighters, they would be killed (Githui wa Jack, a respondent). The Mau Mau were referred to as *itungati* (rear-guards). This choice of name indicated their intention to fight a defensive war. It also connoted expectant service whereby they were expected to guard their leaders (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). The fighters also expected to be provided with

food. In the song, they ate plenty of food and even had more as *riigu* (reserve food). The Agikuyu drew their consolation from the fact that they outnumbered the enemy (Solomon Wanjohi, a respondent).

The most famous Gikuyu song writer, Kinuthia Mugia, vividly described the political use of songs. According to him, songs were an effective way of communication and were better than speeches as they were equally remembered and remained in the mind more lastingly. Songs were useful as prayers to God and according to Mugia “songs are a great prayer to God because he hears them quickly as a mother hears a loud cry from her baby ....” (Rosberg & Noltingham, 1966). Therefore, songs contributed to enhance the political faith of the Mau Mau fighters. They expected God, who gave the Agikuyu land to their ancestors Gikuyu and Mumbi, to be on their side as they fought to reclaim it. The songs were therefore able to fuel the spirit of fighting among the freedom fighters at a time when the African press and books were banned. In the villages and the countryside, the songs were sung with a lot of emotion and sadness particularly after the start of Emergency. Tears flowed from the eyes of the people as they sang them and as the deaths of many fighters were reported. At that desperate period of Emergency, the songs sustained everyone (Wandai, 1990). In spite of moving the people to tears as they sang, the songs instilled a lot of hope in all the people, the active freedom fighters and those in villages (Mary Gathigia Ngure, a respondent). Gakaara published the songs with the aim of preaching unity. The songs were a medium through which the minds of the Agikuyu would be directed into politics (Gakaara, 1971). He noted that the objectives of the songs were to; show the perseverance and challenges faced by the blacks, report the activities of the leaders, portray the objectives of the politics of land and freedom, advice on the importance of unity and show the importance of education.



Songs were among the most effective sources of information. The success of oral sources of information was proved when the highest level of confidential British information reached the Mau Mau before it became public knowledge. This happened, for example, when the colonial government declared the State of Emergency. The news reached the Mau Mau fighters in the forest even before the official announcement was made (Durrani, 2006). The collection and publishing of Mau Mau freedom songs played the role of raising the political consciousness of the Agikuyu by reminding them that each had an individual role to play in the Mau Mau quest for the return of their land and freedom.

Political consciousness played a large role in bringing about the unity of the Agikuyu. It was evident in the oath taking ceremonies where vows to invoke unity were increased, in burial ceremonies and in communal works (Gakaara, 1971). Gakaara reported that he witnessed unity when at one time a charcoal dealer from Nyeri died in Nairobi. Almost all the GEMA (Gikuyu, Embu and Meru Association) members from Nairobi attended his burial. Monetary contributions towards the burial expenses were made in all the street corners of Nairobi with *tuondo* (small baskets) (Gakaara, 1971). Unity was also observed when one of the Agikuyu, Karani wa Muriuki from Nyeri, had to be sent abroad to study. People turned out in large numbers and contributed generously. Women would also support each other with anything such that there was no unnecessary suffering among them. If anybody acted contrary to the Mau Mau oath, he or she would be cautioned by others before stern action was taken on them. The result of the awareness brought about by literary activists or otherwise, made the Agikuyu alert and ready to do anything for their Gikuyu country (Gakaara, 1971). The Mau Mau

songs were therefore a source of Mau Mau vigilance and the undying hope for the political independence of Kenya, despite the many atrocities they underwent under the British colonial regime.

#### **4.2.5 The Colonial Government's Allegations against Gakaara wa Wanjau**

On 20<sup>th</sup> October 1952, Gakaara wa Wanjau was arrested and detained at Kajiado Detention Camp and termed as the "Chief Mau Mau Propagandist" (Durrani, 2006). On 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1953, he was transferred to Manda Island Detention Camp without any notice or explanation. It was from Manda that Gakaara wrote a petition for his release dated 27<sup>th</sup> March 1954 as evidenced below;

COPY.

No. NBI.15 GAKAARA WANJAU

C3e Manda Is. Detention  
Camp,

P.O.  
LAMU.

27th March, 1954.

The Executive Officer,  
Advisory Committee on Detainees,  
Law Courts,  
NAIROBI.

Sir,

Petition on my release.

On 20/10/52 I was arrested and detained at Kajiado Detention Camp under the Emergency Regulations. Immediately after detention a Committee of interrogation saw me and asked me several questions on my life history, business, etc. etc. I answered them accordingly and hoped that they were satisfied. In March 1953 another Committee presided by Col. La Fontaine interrogated me on the same lines.

On 2/7/53 I was transferred to this island not being warned the whys of the transfer.

I should say that in all my civil life I was a good citizen of the H.M. Government and complied with all its orders. During Christmas 1952 my father, Ref. Johana Wanjau of C.S.M. Tumu Tumu was killed by the Mau Mau and I requested for the release so that I may go and serve my mother with her young sisters and brothers the reply of which has never come forth.

I owned a book business by the name Gakaara Book Service where I was publishing all kinds of Kikuyu literatures which I understand were all proscribed discriminatory. They were not perused one by one so that the ones found non-seditious could have been left free for sale. As I believe that my books were social dealing with tribal customs, love affairs, economics etc. I protested to the H.E. the Governor and prayed him to raise the ban.

As I feel that I have given enough evidence to my arrest and to my books which are the cause of my detention, I request that I now be released.

Please send me the list of the books published by me which are found to be non-seditious.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) GAKAARA WANJAU.

Sample Literaly Evidence 2: Ref: Kenya National Arhives, No.NBI.15 GAKAARA

## WANJAU

The Executive Officer of the Advisory Committee on detainees responded to Gakaara's petition through a letter addressed to him through the officer incharge of the Manda Island Detention Camp. Accordingly Gakaara was granted an opportunity to appear before the Advisory Committee on Detainees without a lawyer. He was thereby notified that the main allegations against him were to the effect that upto the time of his arrest, he was an active supporter of the Mau Mau and in particular:-

- (a) In November 1948, wrote and published a pamphlet entitled (in English translation) *The Spirit of Manhood and Perseverance for Africans* containing charges of a highly inflammatory nature against the European community; and
- (b) In 1952 wrote and published a booklet entitled (in the English translation) *The Belief of the Kikuyu*. Containing a "creed" which was a clear incitement to rebellion against the government (K.N.A, File no.5/5417).

Gakaara appeared before the Advisory Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1954 at Manda Island detention centre. His petition was referenced as "Petition No. 632: J. J. Gkaara Wanjau." His personal background was that he was a Kikuyu from Kirimukuyu in the Mathira Division of Nyeri District; Chief Francis; Headman Jacob; aged about 29; Editor, author and youth leader; proprietor of the Gakaara press Ltd; chairman of the Mathira Farmers and General Contractors Company Ltd; and in 1948 chairman of the Rift Valley Agikuyu Union which was formed in that year in Nakuru (K.N.A, File no.5/5417). The following allegations were laid against him from the Special Branch file;

In august 1946 he issued a notice calling a meeting of young men only to "discuss the British police".

In September 1946 Gakaara as the president of the Kikuyu Youth Association expressed his objective of social advancement by integrating the European and African customs (K.N.A, File no.5/5417).

He chaired a meeting in October 1946 in Karatina to raise funds to help a private soldier under military arrest for suspected political activities.

The police reported pamphlets, issued or about to be issued, from Karatina entitled *The African and his Freedom, Has war brought Equality and Liberty?* and *Colour Bar and the African in Kenya*. Gakaara's address at this point was African Book Writers, Karatina. At a later date he became the chairman of this company ( K.N.A, File no. 5/5417).

In January 1947 a Central Province police report named Gakaara and J.Wachira as the organisers of the Tumu Tumu Dramatical and Musical Society which was apparently a subsidiary of the Kikuyu Youth Association (K.N.A, File no. 5/5417).

Gakaara wrote and published a pamphlet entitled *The Spirit of Manhood and Perseverance for the African* in November 1948 in which he aired the usual Kikuyu grievances about land, wages, unfair treatment by the Europeans and the additional grievance that the Africans were not allowed to take part in sweepstakes (K.N.A, File no. 5/5417).

In December 1948, at a large meeting in Nakuru, the Rift Valley Agikuyu Union was formed with Gakaara as the chairman. Its objective was said to do away with prostitution. It passed a resolution to turn all prostitutes out of Nakuru within a fortnight. In the same month, Gakaara was reported to be in Nakuru though unemployed and was arrested and fined for being drunk and disorderly (K.N.A, File no. 5/5417).

In 1952 the Special Branch learnt that Gakaara wrote and published a "creed" entitled *The Belief of the Kikuyu* which the readers were exhorted to learn by heart. In the same

year the Special Branch obtained a booklet written by Gakaara containing a fable describing how a youth named Mugitiri rose against his oppressors with the help of warriors magically provided by an elder and ending with the refrain, “*Why do you wait?*” (K.N.A, File no. 5/5417)

On 27<sup>th</sup> October 1952 the D.C. Nairobi issued an order proscribing a number of Kikuyu publications some of which were written by Gakaara. In November the same year affidavits were taken from two Kikuyu children aged about 14 and 10 years, who said they had ran away from Gikumbo Independent School. The younger one stated that Gakaara was secretary of Mau Mau and editor of *Mumenyereri*, *Uhuru* and *Nyimbo* (K.N.A, File no. 5/5417).

In his reply to the allegations dated 21<sup>st</sup> July 1954, Gakaara did not deny authorship of *The Spirit of Manhood and Perseverance for the African*. He said it was about seven years since he wrote the pamphlet and therefore had forgotten its contents. He asked if he might be told what was objectionable in it. The chairman explained to him and Gakaara answered that the question of land had been talked about for a long time; when he spoke about it he had only wanted to speak the truth. In regard to wages, the problem was well known and he had not meant to cause trouble between the races. At that time the Africans were not allowed to join sweepstakes and he wanted to know why (K.N.A, File no.5/5417).

In regard to the “creed” Gakaara stated there was no mention of force in it. He admitted he was the proprietor of Gakaara Press Ltd and that he had published some of the books proscribed by the Nairobi D.C. but stated that he had never intended any subversive or inflammatory effect. He said he had published about twenty books out of which only

four were proved to be subversive. He asked why the rest were also proscribed. Gakaara also stated that he was never the editor of *Mumenyereri*, or *Nyimbo* and that he did not know *Uhuru*. He also said he had nothing to do with Mau Mau (K.N.A, File no 5/5417).

The Advisory Committee had the following opinion regarding Gakaara; He had a record of political sociological activities starting from 1946. The professed aims of the Kikuyu Youth Association presided by Gakaara were sociological rather than political and at the time, may well have been so. He was however taking part in politics as both a pamphleteer and an agitator. According to the Committee, Gakaara was probably a sincere fanatic of unstable mental balance. If set at large he might be very dangerous. The Committee advised that Gakaara should not be released before the end of the Emergency (K.N.A, File no. 5/5417).

The colonial government thought that Gakaara wa Wanjau played a prominent role in inciting the masses against the European community. The duration between his first political literary works in 1946 and his arrest in 1952 meant that he had influenced many people. During this period, several factors however combined to raise the political consciousness of the people. The colonial forces had already failed to have a monopoly in influencing the blacks. Resistance movements employed different methods to negate the colonial propaganda. For example, in the course of their struggle for independence, black workers and peasants had started their own independent schools, teacher training colleges, publishing houses and religious organisations (Durrani, 2006). In 1945, the politics of fighting for independence were not popular. The return of ex-servicemen and the formation of trade unions changed the political climate. Masses of Africans participated in politics and demanded radical changes. Between 1945 and 1952,

Africans became politically active (Kaggia, 1975). There is no doubt however, that alongside other freedom fighters, Gakaara impacted on the development of the political consciousness of the Agikuyu through his political literary works. He therefore deserves recognition as the chief Mau Mau ideologue that played a central role in the struggle for Kenya's independence.

#### **4.2.6 Conclusion**

The British colonial authorities were so alarmed at the influence of Gakaara's political literary activism that they arrested and detained him as the "Chief Mau Mau Propagandist" with the allegation that he was a strong supporter of the Mau Mau movement. The Mau Mau secret oath of unity proved to be a major weapon that reasonably challenged the British control of Kenya. About 90% of the Agikuyu took the oath and Gakaara wa Wanjau was among the leading nationalists who advised on the need to oath other Kenyan communities. To this end, an oath was developed with different wordings from that taken by the Agikuyu (Gakaara, 1971). A good number of the Akamba and a few Luo and Maasai people were consequently oathed. The colonial authorities reacted by developing propaganda that sought to alienate the Agikuyu, Aembu and the Ameru communities from the rest of the Africans (Clough, 1998).

Gakaara's vernacular political magazine, *Waigua atia?* (What's up?), was intentionally full of proverbial language to raise the curiosity of the Agikuyu. It became so popular that by 1952 it was selling at 12,000 copies per month. It basically reported on KAU politics, thus keeping the Agikuyu politically conscious. *Roho ya Kiume na Bidii kwa Mwafrika* (Spirit of Manhood and Perseverance for the African) enjoyed readership in Kenya and Tanzania. In 1952, Gakaara translated it into Gikuyu to specifically target



the Agikuyu and appeal to them to unite and fight for their land and freedom. He then authored *Witikio wa Gikuyu na Mumbi* (The Ideology of the Agikuyu) modelled on the Christian Creed with the objective of reawakening and uniting the Agikuyu. Gakaara also collected and published Mau Mau freedom songs which were used as a weapon to politicise and educate the Kenyan workers and peasant masses. The songs acted as catalysts in the development and success of the Mau Mau movement (Durrani, 2006). They appealed to both the illiterate and the literate on the need to fight for land and freedom (Wandai, 1990). They also instilled hope, perseverance and courage in the population. Songs were a source of Mau Mau vigilance and undying hope for political freedom. They were the most effective sources of information as they played the role that newspapers played in the West (Kenyatta, 1978). There is no doubt therefore that Gakaara wa Wanjau's literary activism was instrumental in influencing many Agikuyu into joining the Mau Mau movement and remain vigilant until the attainment of the political independence of Kenya.

### **4.3 Gakaara's Socio-Political Activities after Detention that determined his Relationship with Post-Colonial Governments**

#### **4.3.1 Introduction**

This part of research looked into Gakaara's socio-political activities in relation to the post-colonial governments' attitude towards the Mau Mau movement. This was traced from reliable opinions on what Gakaara stood for, his socio-political activities after independence, Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale's views, Joseph E. Karimi's opinion on Jomo Kenyatta's attitude towards the Mau Mau and why they were sidelined, Gakaara's portrayal of the Mau Mau as heroes of independence, his views in *Mau Mau author in detention*, the oral reports from different respondents on Gakaara's

relationship with post-independent governments and newspapers' articles related to Gakaara wa Wanjau's literary works.

#### **4.3.2 What Gakaara Stood for**

Gakaara wa Wanjau was a quiet man who firmly held onto the traditional Gikuyu culture as described by Munene wa Mari (Gakaara's personal friend after detention). Munene argued that politics was ingrained in Gakaara's life and there was no way he could be divorced from it although he never openly became a practising politician and never sought an elective position after independence. Most of the respondents described him as a reserved person but charming to those who got close to him. Reserved life was not peculiar to Gakaara but many others who became disillusioned by the actions of those who betrayed the cause. Close family members described him as one whose company was enjoyable but one who had difficulties in forgiving injustices. His sister, Ruth Muthoni Muthigani, noted that during family prayer meetings, Gakaara would skip the part in the Lord's Prayer that states; "forgive us our sins as we forgive those who trespass against us". To him forgiveness is accorded to those who repent their transgressions but not those who continued to oppress the citizens like the colonialists had done.

He lived through two post-independence governments headed by Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi respectively. During these two political eras, Gakaara stuck to his old career of writing and publishing books. In his literary works, for example in *Agikuyu Mau Mau na wiyathi* (Agikuyu Mau Mau and freedom), *Nyimbo cia Mau Mau iria ciarehithirie wiyathi* (Mau Mau songs that facilitated independence), and *Mau Mau author in detention*, he made clear his belief that the Mau Mau veterans were heroes of

Kenya's independence. Gakaara was also a staunch believer in the preservation of Gikuyu culture and language. Even after the political independence of Kenya, he stuck to the Gikuyu traditional faith, something that tended to alienate him from his extended family that was largely Christian (Wanjau Gakaara, a respondent and son to Gakaara wa Wanjau). As noted earlier, he felt that the Christian faith had made his father to be alienated from his family and possibly the result of their predicament. Gakaara blamed the Christian faith for the death of his father. The Mau Mau had no option but to eliminate those they regarded as the enemies of their movement, especially those who refused to take their oath (Gakaara, 1971).

#### **4.3.3 Gakaara's Socio-political Activities after Independence**

Gakaara wa Wanjau was released from detention on 20th August 1959. He however lived under restriction until 19<sup>th</sup> May 1960. When the restriction order was revoked, Gakaara collected freedom songs which people used to sing in detention camps, prisons and forests. In June 1961 he went to Nairobi and for a brief period joined Pio Gama Pinto, George Githii and Joe Kadhi and other staff in publishing *Sauti ya KANU* (Voice of KANU), a newspaper which was championing for the release of Jomo Kenyatta to come and assume leadership of the nationalism forces in the drive to independence (Wanjau & Njoroge, 1988). He left *Sauti ya KANU* to work as an independent publisher and writer. In the late 1960s he went to Karatina and set up the Gakaara Book Service. It was later changed to Gakaara Press when he got his own printing press (Njogu, 2001). This retreating of Gakaara to rural life instead of remaining in Nairobi could have contributed to his economic undoing in this competitive world. Joseph Wango'mbe Ngatia, (Gakaara's bosom friend before and after independence), alleged that Gakaara was advised by the former president Mwai Kibaki, who was then a cabinet minister, to acquire a loan and establish his own printing press in Karatina to aid the economic and

social development of the people of Nyeri. He took a loan with the Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation (ICDC) which has not been cleared to date (Wanjau Gakaara, a respondent). However, though Gakaara was able to establish his own press along Ragati Road in Karatina, he never completed the highrise building. However, the completed ground floor served the intended purpose although it made Gakaara sink into the debt that he was never able to clear according to his sister, Ruth Muthoni Muthigani.

Gakaara's relationship with post-colonial governments could be referred to neither as hostile nor cordial. Understandably, Jomo Kenyatta as a national leader could not allow the "birth pangs" of the nation to be borne by one single community (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). This partly explains why he distanced himself from the Mau Mau movement, why the movement remained outlawed during his tenure in office and why he could not offer the educated Gakaara a government job.

As mentioned earlier, Gakaara wrote and published several books after independence. They included; *Agikuyu, Mau Mau na Wiyathi* (Agikuyu, Mau Mau and Freedom), *Nyimbo cia Mau Mau iria ciarehithirie wiyathi* (Mau Mau freedom songs that facilitated independence), *Mwandiki wa Mau Mau ithamirio-ini* (Mau Mau author in detention), *Ugwati wa muthungu muiuru* (The danger in being a black colonialist), *Kwarahura muhoere wa Gikuyu na Mumbi* (Rejuvenating the Gikuyu and Mumbi way of worship), *Thoma Gikuyu Kiega* (Read proper Gikuyu) *Ngoro ya Mugikuyu* (The Mugikuyu mind), *Witikio wa Gikuyu na Mumbi* (Faith of Gikuyu and Mumbi), among others. He also authored and published *Witikio wa Gikuyu na Mumbi* (Faith of Gikuyu

and Mumbi) booklet and the monthly *Gikuyu na Mumbi* (Gikuyu and Mumbi) magazine which serialised the fictional adventures *Kiwai wa Nduuta* (Kiwai son of Nduuta) which tackled social, economic and political issues of the 1970s. The *wa Nduuta* series added to forty two in number. Other books published by Gakaara Press limited included; *Mawendo mithemba ikumi na ithathatu* (Sixteen types of love), *Uria mbiacara iharaga* (How businesses go bankrupt), *Marua ma mutumia na mwari* (Mother and daughter's letters), *Gategithimo ga P.C.E.A* (P.C.E.A's catechism book), *Gategithimo ga A.I.P.C.A* (A.I.P.C.A's catechism book), *Twenty three letters*, *Murimu wa muiigiriio* (A habit is a disease), among others.

*Ugwati wa muthungu muiuru* (The danger in being a black Eurocentric) was a warning against neo-colonialism. In this book, Gakaara gave a vivid description against mental slavery of black Kenyans. The colonialist had left Kenya but what Gakaara referred to as *nguku ya mukoroni* (colonial cock) was still tactfully 'crowing' in the African mind. The African was as good as chained to the colonialist. According to Gakaara the *muthungu muiuru* (black Eurocentric) was characterised by the following;

1. Some blacks were speaking in English unnecessarily. A Mugikuyu conversing with another Mugikuyu in English thought that this was prestigious. Gakaara argued that a Briron with another Briton use English, an Arab with another Arab use Aramaic and an Indian with another Indian use Hindu. According to Gakaara, deserting one's mother tongue was equal to deserting one's culture.
2. English and Kiswahili languages were being used in government offices. Gakaara opined that if the people interacting were from the same ethnic group, then it was proper to use their mother tongue.

3. In schools, colonial mentality was entrenched in the young minds because it was compulsory to learn and speak in English. Learners were not supposed to be proud of their mother tongue. Gakaara recommended teaching in vernacular in primary schools and making it examinable in primary schools' national examinations. He however commended the Ministry of Education for starting the policy of vernacular learning in lower primary schools from 1970. He said this was a good way of driving colonial mentality from the minds of Kenyan children.

4. Christianity was another tactic to make colonial mentality stick in the African minds. Gakaara asserted that believing in the Agikuyu God and praying under a *mugumo* (fig) tree was not wrong. Doing away with baptismal names was alright. The Agikuyu should respect the God of Gikuyu and Mumbi the way the Europeans respected the God of Abraham and Isaac.

In 1980, Ngugi wa Thiong'o who was making his transition to writing in Gikuyu contacted Gakaara and this marked the beginning of their long association. Ngugi assisted Gakaara publish his detention diary, *Mwandiki wa Mau Mau ithamirio-ini* (Mau Mau author in detention) (Njogu, 2001). This book won Gakaara the Noma Award, which was awarded in Harare, Zimbabwe, on 29/8/1984. He was awarded for being the best writer on the African Struggle for political freedom (Njogu,2001).

The book captured life in Mau Mau's colonial gulags. It attempted to tell the Mau Mau side of the story with the objective of informing Kenyans about the role of the Mau Mau in the struggle for independence. It also exposed the colonial atrocities in the detention camps the evidence of which the colonialists were careful to conceal through burning down of some files. Gakaara was also concerned that the upcoming generations

might be mis-educated through the bigoted and skewed Eurocentric historiography (Gakaara, 1983).

It was not easy to write and keep such a diary during the hostile colonial times but Gakaara managed through his creativity and encouragement from fellow detainees. Former KCA members arrested with Gaakara like James Beuttah told him; “Son of Wanjau, you should never allow these happenings to go unnoticed”. He wrote in 16 pages exercise books which he carefully sealed at the bottom of his wooden box where nobody suspected. This box was successfully delivered to his wife in 1957 from Athi River Detention Camp. She managed to take care of it until Gakaara’s release.

Gakaara admitted that he could not capture everything and that some of the detainees’ experiences that he penned down were reported by fellow detainees. From my book review I was able to gather the following atrocities that caused the detainees both physical and psychological torture;

1. The method used to transport detainees to various detention camps was dehumanising. Gakaara explained that after their arrest on the night of 20<sup>th</sup> October 1952, they were put into prison trucks the following morning at 5 A.M. The truck’s sides were made of mesh wire. They were handcuffed in twos and then chained in groups of six. Each prison truck was manned by four armed soldiers. It was extremely traumatising for some thirty men and two women who were rounded up in Nairobi by surprise and had no idea where they were being taken.
2. Colonial negative propoganda made some of the Kenyan communities have very negative ideas about the Mau Mau. Gakaara revealed that when he and fellow Mau

Mau detainees landed in Lamu Detention Camp, they had a very difficult time trying to prove that they were ordinary human beings; “We tried to convince Lamu residents that we are not cannibals”.

3. The Mau Mau detainees were from time to time subjected to inhuman interrogations. To extract information from them, they were subjected to corporal punishment. In the process of interrogations, many men were castrated; others were maimed while some lost their lives. During such interrogations, the detainees would be cramped in filthy cells without any food. In the cells, they used pails to answer the call of nature and they slept in the midst of the stench of their own shit. They also slept on mats on floors in perpetual fear of being bitten by scorpions

4. They received poor medical attention. Due to poor sanitation, poor diet, inadequate clothing and inhuman mode of interrogations they contracted diseases of which were rarely treated.

5. The detainees were forced to work but they were underfed. Food rations were very small and nutritionally unbalanced. They were fed only once a day and if they failed to complete a day’s work, they would get no meal. At times they were denied food, water and fuel supplies for unexplained reasons.

6. Occasionally, detainees would be subjected to inhuman inspections. These inspections included body searches and they had to strip naked. This was embarrassing since some detainees were quite elderly. Personal items like pens and spoons would get lost in the process.

7. Brainwashing was done so that the Mau Mau detainees could turn against their own cause. Between 1956 and 1957, in the Athi River Detention Camp, Gakaara and others were made to perform anti-Mau Mau plays (Gakaara, 1983).



Gakaara wa Wanjau also recorded some Mau Mau survival tactics in the detention camps. Some managed to befriend some detention wardens who smuggled for them letters in and out of the camps. This helped to keep them informed of what was happening outside the camps. The uncooperating wardens were dealt with ruthlessly wherever a chance availed itself. In Manda Island Detention Camp, a warden was drowned in the Indian Ocean. In the same camp, the detainees were denied flesh water supplies and they dug a secret well inside the camp that saved them from sure death by dehydration. They also tried to minimise illiteracy levels by having Gakaara as their teacher in detention (Gakaara, 1983).

The book landed him in trouble when he was arrested in 1986 for alleged association with *Mwakenya*. According to Wanjau, (Gakaara's son), Gakaara was followed by the Special Branch officers to Harare. He was allegedly carrying a note, which had been handed to him in Kenya, and the contents of which he claimed he did not know, which he handed to a certain Gacheche wa Miano who was allegedly an insider of the *Mwakenya* group. Gakaara went back to writing after his release. He authored several books that not only captured historical development but of local languages. He published works from other authors fostering the development of their languages such as Luo, Kamba, Meru, Kalenjin and Kiswahili (Njogu, 2001).

Gakaara was also a member of *Urumwe wa Ukuria wa Gigikuyu* (Unity for the Development of the Agikuyu Culture), abbreviated in Gikuyu as UUGI. As a writer, educationist, editor and publisher, Gakaara advocated a language policy that made him

politically suspect before and after independence (Njogu, 2001). As the Patron of UUGI, Gakaara opined that there was no danger of national disunity in the propagation of African vernacular languages and varied African Cultures. He argued that Switzerland was united and yet it was multilingual with four national and official languages. To Gakaara, acculturation only succeeded in causing an identity crisis and social disorder in Africans. Gakaara was therefore committed in chasing out what he referred to as “colonial mentality from the mind of the African” (Gakaara, n.d). Moi’s government could not tolerate such kind of commitment and literary activities in African languages.

#### **4.3.4 Bruce Berman and Lonsdale’s views on Jomo Kenyatta’s attitude towards the Mau Mau**

The Mau Mau movement was an underground organisation known to the Agikuyu primarily as *Uiguano wa Muingi* (The unity of the community). It intended to force major concessions from the colonial government by provoking a crisis. Oaths were used to achieve unity and commitment in the struggle for freedom. The Mau Mau also referred to themselves as *Itungati* (*Gitungati* in singular) a word that meant rear-guard. This indicated their intention to fight a defensive war. It also connoted that they expected service from the rest of the population. According to Berman and Lonsdale, the rising and suppression of Mau Mau “were the forcing house of the country’s freedom from the British rule and settler power”. However, the Mau Mau memories divided Kenyans. That is why Jomo Kenyatta proclaimed the nation building myth that “we all fought for freedom” (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). The Kenya’s first president could not permit the pangs of the birth of a new nation to appear to be borne by one

heroic minority, the Mau Mau fighters alone. Kenya had to have a nationalistic history that included all Kenyans.

Mau Mau membership was almost entirely from the Gikuyu speakers and their closest historic partners, the Embu and the Meru peoples and, to a lesser degree, from their nearest neighbours, the Akamba and the Maasai. The settlers and the colonial government had portrayed the Mau Mau at independence as terrorists. Jomo Kenyatta therefore did everything to disassociate himself from the movement (Berman & Lonsdale, 2002). His government was therefore not willing to reward people like Gakaara who were Mau Mau diehards even after the political independence of Kenya. Furthermore, some Mau Mau leaders threatened to return to the forest to wage war against Jomo Kenyatta. Additionally, firebrand ex- Mau Mau leaders like J. M. Kariuki died after challenging the government of ten millionaires against ten million poor (Charles Muhuni, a respondent).

#### **4.3.5 Joseph E. Karimi's views on how the colonialists ensured that the Mau Mau were sidelined**

Joseph Karimi's views gave a background against which it was clear that Jomo Kenyatta's government could neither recognize nor reward Gakaara wa Wanjau as a nationalist. According to his research results, Jomo Kenyatta was compromised by the colonial government through promises of top leadership of Kenya in exchange for his commitment to protect the loyalists and the interests of the European minority. Jomo Kenyatta entered into secret deals with the British government while he served his prison sentence at Lokitaung and later restriction order at Lodwar (Karimi, 2013). Bildad Kaggia corroborates Karimi's findings by stating that he and fellow detainees

like Fred Kubai could not hold serious anti colonial discussions when Kenyatta was around (Kaggia et al., 2012). According to Karimi, the motive was to protect the British interests in Kenya under a possible Kenyatta rule. This in principle betrayed the very purpose of what the Mau Mau Land and Freedom Army fought very hard for. Their main objectives were to force the Europeans out of the country and to usher in an African government comprising of indigenous Kenyans to run the affairs of the nation.

According to Bildad Kaggia, James Beuttah was an educated freedom fighter who was let down by Jomo Kenyatta's government. He worked for KCA for years as an employee of the Post Office. For a long time Beuttah was the only educated member of KCA, thus he was referred to as the "brain" behind the party (Karimi, 2013). He was actually the one that KCA had chosen to go to London to present the African grievances directly to the British government. Beuttah could not leave Kenya for personal reasons and Jomo Kenyatta therefore went in his place. Later on when KAU was formed, Beuttah became both the chairman of the Murang'a branch and the party's vice president in the then Central Province (Kaggia et al, 2012). He was among the first leaders to be arrested on the night of 20<sup>th</sup> October 1952. Kaggia opined that very few if any freedom fighters did more for the political liberation of Kenya than Beuttah (Kaggia et al., 2012). However, Jomo Kenyatta's government did not bother to elevate him to a political position of authority or at least give him back his economic rights after detention. Beuttah retired during the colonial days but when he was arrested and detained his pension was stopped. After independence the government did not give his pension back even after visiting every office he could think of in Nairobi.

Karimi alleged that during Jomo Kenyatta's presidency, British Multi-nationals eager to do business with the new republic, pushed for Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi to be the next president. A group of white settlers known as "Capricorn society" headed by Humphrey Slade, met under the umbrella of the East African Association to strategise for Moi's appointment as vice president, groomed for the presidency. Kenyatta obliged and Moi went on to succeed him in 1978 (Karimi, 2013). The British were thus assured of a firm grip on the political and economic growth of the young Republic. The Kenyatta and Moi's governments apparently abandoned and isolated the Mau Mau remnants condemning them to poverty. The outgoing colonial government therefore achieved its goal of handing over power to those loyal to them. Ironically, Kenyatta and Moi on occasions of Kenyatta Day celebrations thanked the poor ex-freedom fighters for their sacrifice and selflessness in the fight for independence without extending material gain to them (Karimi, 2013). Others like Bildad Kaggia were rigged in elections to check their influence. Kaggia was a Kandara Member of Parliament on a KANU ticket from 1961. In 1966, he joined Kenya Peoples Union (KPU) and became its vice chairman upto 1969. During the 1966 campaigns, Jomo Kenyatta personally went to Kaggia's constituency to campaign against him. He was allegedly rigged out. For many years Kaggia was taunted by Jomo Kenyatta as a man who fought for independence yet had no material wealth to show for his contribution (Kaggia et al., 2012).

Jomo Kenyatta often spoke of the need to "forgive and forget" and called on "burying the hatchet" (Karimi, 2013). His government was indeed good in forgetting the past where it applied to the Europeans, and ex-colonial government supporters. Former European DCs and African homeguards were criminals, according to Kaggia, but were

retained in the government service (Kaggia et al., 2012). He acknowledged the role the freedom fighters played in the struggle for independence but he never made a public pronouncement that conceded them any rights or compensation. Karimi opined that Jomo Kenyatta did not believe they should be rewarded. He however feared their dissenting voices. Asked about Mau Mau, Kenyatta retorted, “We shall not allow hooligans to rule Kenya. Mau Mau was a disease which had been eradicated and must never be remembered again” (Karimi, 2013). Bildad Kaggia also believed that Jomo Kenyatta did not recognise the role played by the Mau Mau fighters. Instead of seeing them as freedom fighters, his government treated them as terrorists just like the British colonial government had done (Kaggia et al., 2012).

About the whites in Kenya after independence, Kenyatta said that the country needed their skill, that his was a gradual Africanisation policy. Before independence, Jomo Kenyatta promised Africanisation of the economy. Africanisation was indeed one of the most emotive slogans because the Europeans dominated agriculture while the Asians dominated commerce and trade. The blacks also expected their land back to them (Mutie, Mang’oka, Chemwei & Kitonga, 2015). Former freedom fighters like Bildad Kaggia expected drastic changes for the blacks to enjoy the fruits of *uhuru* (freedom). He felt that during the armed struggle, the Mau Mau had suffered a great deal and thus their expectations were a return of all their land confiscated during the Emergency period, a return of the land stolen by the European settlers without any compensation and a replacement of the colonial chiefs and headmen (Kaggia et al., 2012). Kaggia felt that the Mau Mau were patriots who continued with their armed struggle while leaders like Jomo Kenyatta were confined in detention. According to

Kaggia, the ex- Mau Mau deserved gratitude which could be shown through helping them get back to their feet again especially by giving them back their land which was unfairly confiscated from them during the Emergency period.

At independence, the white settlers requested a meeting with Jomo Kenyatta. The meeting took place in a hall in Nakuru and Kenyatta took Dr Njoroge, then a government advisor, with him. Dr Njoroge's advice was that the whites must leave quickly and land must go back to the blacks. To this, Jomo Kenyatta allegedly answered, "yes, yes, yes". Dr Njoroge was surprised to hear Jomo Kenyatta say "we are going to forgive the past". Kenyatta also told the settlers, "calm down boys, I am not going to slit your throats. If you behave yourselves and don't throw your weight around there is a future for you here" (Mutie et al, 2015). Jomo Kenyatta did not Africanise the economy as expected but retained the services of European officers and his call to forgive and forget became the keynote of his government. Anybody who spoke about revenge was loudly rebuked (Mutie et al., 2015). Jomo Kenyatta's leniency and protection of the whites in Kenya was termed by Bildad Kaggia as "The betrayal of *uhuru*". Kaggia opined that during the freedom struggle it was a foregone conclusion that independence would automatically mean the return to African ownership all land occupied by European settlers (Kaggia et al., 2012).

Therefore, the independent Kenyan government under Jomo Kenyatta sidelined the vocal Mau Mau veterans despite their active role in driving away the British colonialists. He viewed the ex-Mau Mau fighters as a destructive lot harbouring revolutionary ideas. The Africanisation policy created the development of financial institutions to nurture the entry of Kenyans into big businesses via subsidised credit.

The state controlled institutions that extended cheap credit to top civil servants and the political elites of the day. Unfortunately, the exercise benefitted Kenyatta's cronies and those loyalists who took the instruments of power. The rest who included ex-Mau Mau detainees were reduced to mere spectators. They watched in disbelief as persons who had not raised a finger at the oppressive white settlers took large chunks of land. They were labeled "anti-government" even as they became frail with want and age (Karimi, 2013).

In his book, *Mau Mau Author in Detention*, Gakaara wa Wanjau aired his sentiments on how the ex-Mau Mau fighters were sidelined by the independence government. The imperialist settlers, who Gakaara felt had robbed land from blacks, never had the same land seized from them for restoration into the hands of their rightful owners. The settlers who felt they could not live under an African government were asked to sell their land and property. It was unimaginable among the Mau Mau to think of blacks paying money to the settlers in order to acquire rights to their own land unjustly seized from them in the past. Unfortunately the ex- Mau Mau had no money to buy land. They could only sit as spectators while the former loyalists and the rich class of political elites took over thousands of acres of farms from the outgoing settlers. Many Mau Mau fighters, some of them crippled during the war, were left living in deprivation in colonial created villages until some of them later managed to make contributions to land-buying companies which planned to settle them on former colonial settler farms (Wanjau & Njoroge, 1988).



The ex-Mau Mau just watched as political power and office changed hands to the loyalists. Those “very good servants of colonial administration” were readily absorbed into Jomo Kenyatta’s government. It became an offence to refer to these people as homeguards or traitors. Gakaara painfully remembered that these same people had taunted the Mau Mau fighters that “We will fight against you now under the British and when self-government arrives we will rule over you”. In this great historical sacrifice Gakaara wa Wanjau felt that the Gikuyu proverb, *Murimi tiwe murii* (It is not the farmer who eats the food he has grown) also came true. Gakaara wrote that the Mau Mau fighters made great sacrifices for land and its people but ultimately they were made into a sacrifice (Wanjau & Njoroge, 1988).

Therefore, Gakaara being a vocal ex-Mau Mau detainee could not be among the favourites of Jomo Kenyatta’s Government. In his works, Gakaara was full of praise for the first president of the Republic of Kenya. However, the president never rewarded him in anyway probably because he continued to praise the Mau Mau as freedom fighters who won the independence of the country.

#### **4.3.6 Gakaara’s portrayal of the Mau Mau as heroes of independence**

Gakaara wa Wanjau was one of the Mau Mau leaders arrested on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1952. The then governor of the Kenya colony, Sir Evelyn Baring, facilitated the enactment of laws that led to the arrest of Jomo Kenyatta, his assistants and other leaders associated with Mau Mau. The “Operation Jock Stock” was thus prepared and it led to the arrest of more than 80 leaders in the midnight of 20/10/52 and to their deportation to the arid areas of Kenya (Gakaara, 1971).



*How Mau Mau arrests were conducted at gun point.*

*(Ref: Gakaara, 1971).*

Gakaara wa Wanjau gave a categorised list of KAU members, suspected by the colonial government to be the Mau Mau leaders, arrested on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1952 (Refer to Appendix vi). They were all arrested under a law, signed by the governor, which was referred to as “Governor’s Detention Order” (GDO). Each individual had an arrest number prepared before hand. Gakaara's number was GDO-B-15 (Gakaara, 1971). The list of the names of those suspected to be radicals was referred to as the “black list”. It included KCA and KAU leaders, independent schools and church leaders, trade union leaders, publishers and those suspected to have been oath administrators and the drivers of the blacklisted leaders. The blacklisted were arrested by four to five armed Kenya

police reserves. However, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta was arrested by eighty armed police officers ferried by trucks. On the morning of 21-10-1952, the colonial government made an official announcement that the Mau Mau leaders were arrested in the night. Therefore the State of Emergency was declared by Sir Evelyn Baring and Kenyatta's assistants arrested and deported. The Emergency law required that no unauthorised person would enter or leave the Gikuyu, Embu and Meru areas (Gakaara, 1971).

By writing that he was blacklisted by the colonial government, Gakaara was practically



*The arrest of Jommo Kenyatta*

*(Ref: Gakaara, 1971)*

declaring that he was a hero of Kenya's independence. This fact could have influenced Kenyatta's government attitude towards him since the president already harboured a dislike for the Mau Mau. However, Gakaara did not pose any threat to the stability of the nation and so Kenyatta personally had no problem with him and he therefore was never harassed in anyway by the Jomo Kenyatta's government. However, he was kept in the political and administrative cold. There is no evidence that he ate the fruits of independence.

#### **4.3.7 Gakaara wa Wanjau's views in *Mau Mau Author in Detention***

This was Gakaara's detention diary in which he explained that he championed the cause of the Mau Mau revolt. The book revealed that the British committed atrocities on a sample of Mau Mau leaders, including himself, who were arrested on 20/10/52 when the State of Emergency was declared. These leaders were taken to various detention camps which Gakaara listed as follows;

1. Kajiado (Isinya) Detention Camp in Kajiado.
2. Marsabit Detention Camp in Marsabit.
3. Manda Island Detention Camp in Lamu.
4. Manyani Detention Camp in Voi.
5. Athi River Detention and Rehabilitation Camp in Nairobi.
6. Mackinnon Road Detention Camp in Taita.
7. Mageta Island Detention Camp in Kisumu.
8. Sayusi Island Detention Camp in Kisumu.
9. Takwa Detention Camp in Manda, Lamu.
10. Lodwar Detention Camp in Northern Frontier District (NFD).
11. Malingat Detention (Exile) Camp in Rift Valley.
12. Hola Detention (Exile) Camp in Tana River.
13. Kwale Detention Camp in Tana River.
14. Kamiti Women's Detention Camp in Kiambu.
15. Mkogondo Detention Camp in Laikipia.
16. Mwea Detention Camp in Embu (Gakaara, 1983).

As mentioned earlier, Gakaara admitted that he was not able to record every happening, but he believed that he managed to capture the major significant events in the detention camps. He lamented that the colonialists put to the flames many documents and files that bore witness to the war crimes that they committed against the Mau Mau fighters. According to Gakaara, the colonialists destroyed evidence that would have earned them international shame and defamation due to their acts of murder, plunder, robbery and acts portraying crimes against humanity (Gakaara, 1983). He believed that his book would bear witness to some of these acts which the British imperialists committed against the African freedom fighters in Kenya. By compiling his detention diary into a book, Gakaara hoped to quench the thirst many people had especially in schools and universities of seeking knowledge on the Mau Mau movement (Gakaara, 1983).

The book also gave credible evidence that he was a Mau Mau leader since he included sample copies of the *Witikio wa Gikuyu na Mumbi* (The Ideology of the Agikuyu) and *Mageria nomo mahota* (Success comes after repeated efforts) that he authored and published. Due to them, the colonial government termed him "The Chief Mau Mau Propagandist". In the book was also a list of KCA, KAU, KISA and EATUC leaders. He also exhibited a copy of a letter written against those who proved to be Mau Mau radicals during confessions against Mau Mau, a copy of colonial government propaganda against Mau Mau, a letter issued to those cleared from detention, an agitation letter by the Mau Mau in detention to the minister of community development and rehabilitation, a sample of his own handwriting as he wrote down the diary and the warrant of his arrest (Gakaara, 1986). The publication of the book after the 1982

abortive military coup led by radicals who called themselves ‘People’s Redemptive Council’ led by Ochuka drew him to intelligence machinery.

In the book, Gakaara expressed his desire that the young people who included university scholars would take an interest in recording the history of Kenya and expose the cultures and value of the Kenyans (Gakaara, 1983). According to him, it was for the endeavour of self-realisation that so much blood was shed in the country. He asserted, “A nation which does not know its own history is a dead nation” (Wanjau & Njoroge, 1988). The Moi administration felt threatened by this new wave of radicalism. To thwart anti government radicalism he co-opted some former Mau Mau detainees like Kariuki Chotara, a detainee who nearly killed Jomo Kenyatta at Lokitaung (Karimi, 2013).

#### **4.3.8 Oral Reports from different Respondents on Gakaara and his Relationship with Post-independence Governments**

1. Wanjau wa Gakaara (son to Gakaara wa Wanjau) remarked that his father never sought a government job but the government also did not offer one to him. He commented that the first M.P for Mathira, Hon. Wamuthenya, rose to a position of an assistant minister though he was semi-illiterate. Wanjau however noted that his father was not in active politics and never got into trouble with Jomo Kenyatta’s government. Gakaara too did not harbour any grudges against the government. His peaceful relationship with the government was interrupted in 1986 when Moi’s government associated him with *Mwakenya* and detained him. The suspicion arose as he interacted with *Mwakenya* suspects when he went to collect the Noma Award for African writers

in Harare, Zimbabwe. After his release, Gakaara went back to writing and did not get into any more trouble with the government.

2. Joseph Wangombe wa Ngatia, (related to Gakaara by marriage and also his bosom friend), described Gakaara as a bitter man through out his life. According to him, the missionaries denied Gakaara a father figure since he was most of the time away from home as a church minister, the colonialist denied his people land and freedom, Kenyatta's government rewarded the loyalists who never fought for independence and his own family members "mbari ya Gikuyu" rejected him after detention on account of ancestral land. During Kenyatta's reign, Gakaara's passion for KANU died because he wondered why the loyalists were rewarded with key jobs and big chunks of land. In local public gatherings Gakaara would air such sentiments as *Kai wiyathi waheirwo uu?* (Who was granted independence?) According to Gakaara, it was *Thu cia wiyathi* (The enemies of Mau Mau or loyalists) who were enjoying the fruits of independence. Those who fought for it were sidelined. To Gakaara, this was a betrayal to the freedom fighters. Though Kenyatta's Government never harassed Gakaara, he got into trouble with Moi's government because his friends included Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Maina Kinyati and others who were considered to be radicals against Moi's regime.

3. Raphael Maina Matheri alias Njagi wa David claimed that Jomo Kenyatta's government did not employ the likes of Gakaara because of neo-colonialism. Accordingly the loyalists were to be protected and rewarded with key jobs since they would ensure the British continued control of Kenya albeit indirectly. According to Njagi wa David the colonial government had put a condition to Kenyatta while still in detention. Njagi said that he was a witness that the post independence Rift valley

Provincial Commissioner by the name Isaiah Mathenge and his counterpart in the Coast province, Mr Eliud Mahihu were former loyalists. The Mau Mau fighters felt let down by Kenyatta, who did not offer him a key Government job as they expected. Njagi did not show any evidence that Gakaara was interested in any Government job.

4. Samuel Mutahi Kimaru emphasised that Gakaara wa Wanjau could not be offered a key government job since the Europeans plan before they left Kenya at independence was to reward the loyalists. Their plan succeeded since Mutahi was a witness that the loyalists were the ones elevated into headmen and chiefs. After independence, the loyalist group was rewarded with key government jobs and provided with means to buy the land belonging to the departing European settlers. Mutahi sited the former late chief in Mathira by the name "Chief Karangi Murigu" as one of the loyalists who benefited with large chunks of land.

5. Another respondent, Ngure wa Kimotho, alleged that Jomo Kenyatta's advisors misled him into believing that the ex-Mau Mau freedom fighters from Nyeri were not faithful to him and could not be trusted with the country's leadership. According to Ngure, it was mainly Mau Mau from Nyeri that held leadership positions in the forest. These included the likes of Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi, General China (Waruhiu Itote), General Stanley Mathenge among many others. There was the general feeling that the former Mau Mau fighters from Nyeri might revenge against the former Kiambu loyalists. Therefore, there was the issue of *kamwene* (protecting one's own or favouritism). Since Gakaara wa Wanjau hailed from Mathira in Nyeri, there was all the likelihood that Kenyatta's government would not offer him a job and indeed it didn't. Ngure



however argued that General China, who also hailed from Mathira, was rewarded because he became a close friend to Jomo Kenyatta while in detention. Waruhiu Itote, alias General China, was shot on January 14<sup>th</sup> 1954 and he surrendered to the colonial authorities. He was interrogated by Senior Superintendent Ian Stuart McMaster Henderson. He cooperated fully to save his neck from the gallows. According to Henderson, General China's confession was like the singing of a canary bird (song bird) and the main problem was to keep up with all that he was revealing. He actually betrayed the Mau Mau movement at a time when secrecy was paramount for the survival of the freedom fighters in the forest. General China joined Jomo Kenyatta in Lokitaung. It was at Lokitaung that General China saved Jomo Kenyatta from Kariuki Chotara who was strangling him (Karimi, 2013). They remained good friends after this incident.

6. According to Joseph E. Karimi, Nyeri was the heart beat of the Mau Mau. The prime leadership of Mau Mau was entrusted to General Stanley Mathenge and Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi Wachiuri. These leaders raised an army of more than 20,000 fighters who launched guerrilla warfare from their bases in the Aberdare and Mount Kenya forests (Karimi, 2013). These young patriots were ready to die to the last man and fought relentlessly to liberate Kenya from the Europeans who had taken up all the fertile lands and relegated the poor Africans into the hilly and unproductive "native reserves". Their eight years of guerrilla warfare culminated into political freedom in 1963. However just before independence, Kenyatta had entered into secret deals with the British

government to protect the loyalists and white settlers after independence (Karimi, 2013). Kenyatta kept his word since after independence the loyalists were rewarded with land, which was availed to the political elite through cheap loans. To the ex-freedom fighters, it seemed that with Jomo Kenyatta the Mau Mau objectives of fighting for land had not been achieved. Gakaara was among those ex-freedom fighters who were not recognised by the post independence governments.

Land alienation originated from the confiscation of land from the indigenous Africans to the British settlers. The former African land holders hoped that they would be given back the alienated land after independence. Unfortunately, this land was taken by the politically powerful personalities relegating the Africans to landlessness. As many settlers were returning to Britain, Jomo Kenyatta and his cronies formed the Settlement Transfer Schemes (STFS) and asked the British government for a loan to the Kenyan government to buy off land from the colonial settlers returning to Britain. The British government was reassured that those settlers still wishing to stay in Kenya would not have their land repossessed. The loan would be used to buy settler land that was officially sold into the Kenyatta's initiated STFS (Karimi, 2013).

7. Charles Muriithi Muhuni asserted that the political freedom of Kenya was won by the Mau Mau writers and their associates from other communities. The armed Mau Mau struggle was defeated militarily but the writers updated the international community on the British land grabbing, murders, confiscation of African property and an unwarranted attack on their culture. The British colonialists were using excessive force on poorly armed Kenyan communities.

The British government after sensing lack of support from the international community and fearing trade sanctions, gradually started land consolidation, planning towns among other developments to show the world that they were preparing Kenya for independence. Bildad Kaggia claimed that these changes effected by the British colonial government were a direct result of the Mau Mau's armed struggle (Kaggia, 1975).

According to Muhuni, Gakaara was never granted a government job because Jomo Kenyatta sided with the ex-loyalists during his reign. Gakaara remained pro-Mau Mau. During Moi's reign, Gakaara was a reserved quiet man who never engaged openly in politics. He was a simple man who concentrated on his work as a writer and publisher of books but would occasionally discuss international politics. He was a firm believer in the preservation of African culture and was not a Christian since he believed in the effectiveness of traditional worship. His involvement in uplifting vernacular language and traditional culture probably made the Moi government to associate him with *Mwakenya* and arrested him in 1986.

8. Ruth Muthoni Muthigani (Gakaara's sister) also observed that Gakaara went back to his career of writing and publishing after detention. He was a bold writer and in local public gatherings was not afraid to air his opinions. This made him appear as if he belonged to the opposition. Muthoni reasoned that Gakaara was not offered a government job by Jomo Kenyatta because of what she termed as "Kiambu and Nyeri factors". In 1969, Jomo Kenyatta invited the Agikuyu to

what came to be referred to as *Chai wa Kenyatta* (Kenyatta's tea party). This turned out to be a series of oathing ceremonies to unite the Agikuyu against the backdrop of the growing Oginga Odinga's popularity and opposition after the death of Tom Mboya. The different Agikuyu factions were made to swear that Kenya's political leadership was never to leave *Nyumba ya Mumbi* (The House of Mumbi or the Gikuyu Community). However, it is claimed that a clause was added for the Agikuyu from Nyeri to denounce the Mau Mau movement. This led to suspicion between the Nyeri and Kiambu Agikuyu whereby there was the popular belief that Kenyatta did not want political leadership to be anywhere "beyond Chania river" as alleged by Muthoni. According to this kind of setting there were complaints all over Nyeri with claims, though unsubstantiated, that Jomo Kenyatta supposedly favoured the loyalists particularly from Kiambu. Gakaara being a pro-Mau Mau in his writings was among the people, according to Muthoni's allegations, Jomo Kenyatta could not offer key government jobs. Asked about Gakaara's relationship with the Moi's government, Muthoni replied that Mr. Moi was not friendly with those who went around making others conscious of what was going on in the country.

9. Esther Wangechi Munyu believed that Gakaara wa Wanjau was a true Mau Mau fighter because he compiled song books whose contents were remembered long after independence. After independence, some ex-Mau Mau were dissatisfied with the fact that the loyalists were rewarded and the true freedom fighters were denied land. Some of them opted to go back to the forest from where Jomo Kenyatta engaged the government security forces to flush them out. Wangechi

could clearly remember some loyalists from Nyeri who were rewarded with land and jobs. They included Chief Murigu Karangi of Mathira, and Muhoya Kagumba of Tetu who were elevated into the position of chiefs. People like Gakaara could not understand why the loyalists benefited from the land and freedom that the Mau Mau fought so hard to achieve. Many of the ex-freedom fighters were thus bitter and some were even ready to sabotage the independent government. Jomo Kenyatta was aware of the bitterness and could therefore not offer key government positions to the ex-Mau Mau from Nyeri unless he was very sure of them. It seemed like Kenyatta was not very sure of Gakaara although he did nothing to sabotage the government.

10. William Ngotho Kogi also reasoned that Gakaara could not be granted a key government job since he was a former hardcore Mau Mau freedom fighter who continued to identify himself with the movement after independence. Word was going round that the ex-Mau Mau fighters were largely from Nyeri and thus they deserved a good reward in the form of land and key government posts. There was a general dissatisfaction that this never happened and these dissenting voices must have reached Kenyatta. The Mau Mau remnants formed an organisation known as *Muingikii* (Unanimous decision). This was later corrupted to *Mungiki*, a vigilante group that posed political threat to the government and advanced the Agikuyu way of life. The organisation was basically looking for justice in land allocation in post independent Kenya. The dissatisfied ex-Mau Mau fighters and their offsprings made a unanimous decision that Kenyan struggles were far from over if the land problem remained

unresolved. They were bitter that the former loyalists to the colonial government were the ones entrusted with the issuing of land title deeds after independence. Kogi had in mind personalities like the late Chief Karangi and Chief Muhoya who allocated large chunks of land to themselves. According to Kogi, Gakaara was never openly in politics but was very popular among the people in Nyeri.

11. Milka Wanjiru Home thought that “Mau Mau was basically a Nyeri thing” but also acknowledged that Kiambu leaders played a significant political role in fuelling the growth of the movement. Great politicians like Jomo Kenyatta and Peter Mbiyu Koinange hailed from Kiambu while conspicuous Mau Mau fighters like Field Marshal Kimathi and General China hailed from Nyeri. Wanjiru also mentioned *Chai wa Kenyatta* (Kenyatta's tea party) oath taking initiated by the late president Jomo Kenyatta and stated that the Nyeri faction of the Agikuyu were among other things forced to discredit and disown Mau Mau. According to her, Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi pledged to *Kufuata Nyayo* (To follow Kenyatta's footsteps). He therefore did not want anything to do with the Mau Mau movement.

12. Charles Miano wa Kibororo claimed that after Kenya's independence, the late Kenyatta's government could not see eye to eye with the ex-Mau Mau fighters. It was a government that favoured the former loyalists and neglected the ex-fighters from Nyeri, Murang'a and Meru. According to Miano, *Kamwene* (favouritism and nepotism) continued to destroy the country even into Moi's

era. Gakaara in particular was harassed by Moi's government after he was suspected of belonging to the *Mwakenya*. Kibororo however added that it was probably Gakaara's stand of supporting the preservation of traditional culture that won him this kind of persecution from Moi's government.

#### **4.3.9 Newspapers' articles related Gakaara wa Wanjau's literary works**

Mwarigu, 20 Oct. 1996.

Ciugu Mwarigu referred to Gakaara as a "pioneer man of letters" and also as "one who rubbed political authorities the wrong way before and after independence". According to Mwarigu, Gakaara rose into prominence in 1984 soon after being awarded the Noma prize for literature because of his book *Mwandiki wa Mau Mau ithamirio-ini* (Mau Mau author in detention). The publication of the book as well as the award attracted the attention of security agencies in Kenya and soon Gakaara was arrested and accused of being involved in *Mwakenya* activities. He was released three weeks later in April 1986, but only after making a statement, which suggested that Ngugi wa Thiong'o and his associates like Micere Githae Mugo and Maina wa Kinyatti had been instrumental in ensuring the writers' diary was not only published but also awarded the Noma award.

Illieva, Nov17, 1996

Prof. Ilieva Emilia V. who was a lecturer at Egerton University in her article; "Critic under-estimated Gakaara's contribution" stated that the publication of Gakaara's diary in Gikuyu in 1983 and later on translation into English in 1988 was encouraged and assisted by Prof. Ngugi waThiong'o, the champion of the growth of literature in

indigenous African language, Maina wa Kinyatti, Prof. Micere Mugo and the translator Ngugi Njoroge. Their efforts were gratefully acknowledged by Gakaara himself.

Njogu, 15 April 2001.

In an article entitled “Tribute to literary icon” Dr. Kimani Njogu who was teaching Kiswahili at Kenyatta University described him as a great Kenyan writer and publisher who led a simple life. Kimani Njogu acknowledged Gakaara as a man with a strong sense of nationalism who contributed immensely to literature and culture. Kimani Njogu worked closely with Gakaara in his attempts to standardise and modernise the Gikuyu language. He described him as a literary icon who would be remembered for his contribution in writing in vernacular since the 1940s. According to Njogu, Gakaara was detained without trial by the colonial government on account of his writings and in post independence Kenya, detained again without trial for a month and tortured because of his intellectual work on language and culture. At the time of his death, he was a patron of UUGI; the Gikuyu language committee committed to the standardisation and modernisation of African languages.

#### **4.3.10 Conclusion**

Immediately after his release from detention, Gakaara wa Wanjau joined *Sauti ya KANU* (Voice of KANU) newspaper staff which campaigned for the release of Jomo Kenyatta. He however became an independent author and publisher in 1961 (Njogu, 2001). He authored several books that expressed his staunch belief in preserving traditional language and culture. By the time of his death in 2001, he was the patron of *Urume wa Ukuria wa Gikuyu* (Unity for the Development of the Agikuyu Culture). In



the same line, he published works from other authors fostering the development of their languages such as Luo, Kamba, Meru, Kalenjin and Kiswahili (Njogu, 2001). His language policy made him politically suspect even after independence.

Socially, Gakaara was described by his family members and acquaintances as a quiet but a charming man. Joseph Wang'ombe Ngatia, a respondent related to Gakaara by marriage and also a bosom friend, explained that Gakaara's quietness could be attributed to his bitterness. After independence he wondered why the Mau Mau freedom fighters were not adequately rewarded. According to his sister, Ruth Muthoni Muthigani (a respondent), Gakaara had such a serious problem in forgiving injustices that he would skip the part of the Lord's Prayer that states "forgive us our sins as we forgive those who trespass against us".

Gakaara never openly vied for a political seat although politics was deeply ingrained in him (Munene wa Mari, a respondent and Gakaara's personal friend after detention). He had high profile friends in the government like Mwai Kibaki who personally attended his burial in 2001. It was upon Mwai Kibaki's advice that Gakaara acquired a huge loan with which he established his own printing press in Karatina (Joseph Wang'ombe, a respondent).

Gakaara authored and published books like *Agikuyu Mau Mau na Wiyathi* (Agikuyu Mau Mau and freedom), *Nyimbo cia Mau Mau iria ciarehithirie wiyathi*, (Mau Mau songs that facilitated independence), and *Mwandiki wa Mau Mau ithamirio-ini* (Mau Mau author in detention) that clearly brought out his belief that the Mau Mau played a

central role in the struggle for independence. This partly explained why the Jomo Kenyatta who distanced himself from the Mau Mau movement could not offer the educated Gakaara a key government job. However except for the two weeks Gakaara was detained in 1986, he had a peaceful relationship with the two post independent governments which never interfered with his work in publishing. He even contributed in lower primary school vernacular learning where he published the *Wirute guthoma* (Learn to read) book series for standard 1 to 3. . By the time of his death in 2001, he was the patron of *Urume wa Ukuria wa Gikuyu* (Unity for the Development of the Agikuyu Culture). In the same line, he published works from other authors fostering the development of their languages such as Luo, Kamba, Meru, Kalenjin and Kiswahili (Njogu, 2001). His language policy made him politically suspect even after independence.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study aimed at examining Gakaara wa Wanjau's literary contribution to the politics of freedom struggle in both colonial and post-colonial Kenya. Based on a qualitative analysis of the collected secondary and primary data, the researcher was able to make an informed conclusion that Gakaara wa Wanjau was the Chief Mau Mau Ideologue who majored on decolonising the African mind through his literary works.

The research results indicate that his socio-political experiences shaped his political consciousness. This was traced as far back as from his childhood. Gakaara's father, a Presbyterian Church minister, wanted to give his son the best education possible. Upon doing well in his KPE in 1939, Gakaara was admitted in Alliance High School but was

expelled in 1940 on disciplinary grounds by Carey Francis who was a strict disciplinarian of European descent. Gakaara considered the expulsion as unfair and racism. He thereafter joined the second world war as a senior army clerk where he witnessed European discrimination. He later secured a job with the Kenya railways in Nakuru where he experienced colonial economic exploitation on Black Africans.

Gakaara's bitter experiences of European discrimination and exploitation shaped his political thought and influenced his literary activism against colonial rule. Among his most outstanding anti colonial literary works that influenced the Agikuyu into the Mau Mau movement and maintained the vigilance of the Mau Mau movement were; (i). *Waigua atia?* (What's up?) (ii). *Mageria nomo mahota* (Effort brings success). (iii) *Witikio wa Gikuyu na Mumbi* (The ideology of the Agikuyu) and (iv). The Mau Mau freedom songs. These literary works were banned and produced in court as evidence against Gakaara. The ban did not stop their circulation since some of them like the freedom songs and the Mau Mau creed were already learnt by heart and could be recited offhead. They sustained the Mau Mau movement through the Emergency years. They could be recited wherever they were applicable and remained their source of hope that the colonialist would eventually leave Kenya.

Gakaara did not relent in his quest to decolonise the mind even after the political independence of Kenya. In his book *Ugwati wa muthungu muiro* (The danger in being a black Eurocentric) he wrote that the colonialist left his cock crowing in the mind of Africans. He thus advocated for the retention of important aspects of African culture which he claimed did not endanger national integration and cohesion at all citing Switzerland as the best example (Gakaara, n.d.). Gakaara published books from other authors fostering the development of languages such as Luo, Kamba, Meru, Kalenjin and Kiswahili (Njogu, 2001).

The study effectively demonstrated that though Gakaara wa Wanjau did not go to fight in the forest like Dedan Kimathi, Waruhiu Itote alias General China, Bildad Kaggia among other celebrated Mau Mau heroes he fought through the barrel of the pen and the title, “The Chief Mau Mau Ideologue” suits him. This contributes toward enriching Mau Mau historiography.

The study recommends;

1. A comprehensive study on the literary contribution to the achievement of the political freedom of Kenya and
2. A study on exposure of colonial atrocities through an analysis of the anti-colonial songs and memoirs of Kenya’s freedom fighters.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX I**

#### **Gakaara wa Wanjau**

He was born in Gakandu-ini village in Tumu Tumu, Nyeri County. His father, Johana Wanjau, was a Presbyterian Church minister and keen on giving his son the best education possible. Gakaara schooled in Tumu Tumu primary school where he was always among the top pupil's. In 1939, he joined Alliance High School where he was a classmate to Paul Ngei, Jeremiah Nyaga and Ronald Ngala who became future ministers in the postcolonial government. However, in 1940, he was expelled after he and other students were involved in a demonstration against their new schoolmaster, Carey Francis.

In December 1940, he got a job as a clerk in the colonial army in Ethiopia. According to him, this was a job like any other because he knew very well that Africans were not fighting their war. During this war, he witnessed the maltreatment and discrimination against African servicemen. In the course of his work, he met many Africans from the

then British colonies, such as Nigeria, Gold coast, Tanganyika, Uganda, Nyasaland and Southern and Northern Rhodesia. He learned much from these people about the hunger and yearning for independence of the colonized people (Gakaara, 1983). The experience in Ethiopia developed Gakaara's attitude against the colonial administration in Kenya (Pugliese, 1992).

In 1946, Gakaara was back to Kenya and he joined the newly formed K.A.U. In the same year, he and a group of friends founded the "African Book Writers Limited" which was the first company of writers in Kenya. He then wrote his first Gikuyu fiction *Uhoru wa Ugurani* (Marriage Procedures) which sold about ten thousand copies. The popularity of this book made him feel that he was a good writer and it therefore motivated him into his career as writer (Pugliese, 1992).

In 1948, Gakaara moved to Nakuru to work a clerk for a British firm. He experienced colonial exploitation and oppression which motivated him to write a political pamphlet to denounce the situation. He wrote *Roho ya Kiume na Bidii kwa Mwafrika* (The Spirit of Manhood and Perseverance for the African). This marked his entry into political activism. He moved to Nairobi, the centre of militant politics, in 1951.

In 1952, he was actively involved in the Mau Mau and took his first oath in March 1952 and a second one in September. He dropped his Christian name Jonah and resorted to his Gikuyu ones. Gakaara Book Service was also registered in 1952 and he translated and published *Roho ya Kiume na Bidii kwa Mwafrika* into Gikuyu, *Mageria nomo*

*Mahota* (Success comes after Repeated Efforts). Gakaara also wrote and published carefully crafted and paraphrased Christian hymns to fuel the independence struggle, *Nyimbo cia Gikuyu na Mumbi* (Songs of Gikuyu and Mumbi) and *Nyimbo cia Ciana cia Gikuyu na Mumbi* (Songs of the Children of Gikuyu and Mumbi). He also wrote and published *Witikio wa Gikuyu na Mumbi* (The Faith of Gikuyu and Mumbi). His political literature led to his arrest on October 20<sup>th</sup> 1952 when the State of Emergency was declared. His name was among those blacklisted by the colonial government. He was among the first to be picked during the Operation Jock Stock that saw the Kapenguria six get into detention. Those arrested on the night of 20<sup>th</sup> October 1952 had an arrest number each prepared earlier. Gakaara's number was GDO-B-15.

Gakaara was released from detention in 1957 and in 1960 he joined Gama Pinto, George Githii and Joe Kadhi on the staff of the then KANU newspaper, *Sauti ya KANU* (The voice of KANU), which championed the release of Jomo Kenyatta. In 1961, he left *sautiya KANU* to work as an independent publisher and writer. Gakaara went to his home town, Karatina and founded Gakaara Book Service which was later changed to Gakaara Press when he got his own printing press.

In the 1970s, Gakaara started the *Gikuyu na Mumbi* (Gikuyu and Mumbi) magazine which serialised the popular *Kiwai wa Nduta* as the main protagonist. In 1980, Ngugi wa Thiong'o contacted him and this marked the beginning of their long association. Ngugi assisted Gakaara to publish his detention diary *Mwandiki wa Mau Mau Ithamirio-ini* (Mau Mau author in detention). This landed him the prestigious Noma

award in 1984. The publication as well as the award attracted the attention of security agencies in Kenya, and soon Gakaara was arrested and accused of being involved in *Mwakenya* activities. He was released three weeks later in April 1986, but only after making a statement which suggested that Ngugi waThiong'o and his associates Micere Githae Mugo and Maina wa Kinyatti had been instrumental in ensuring the writer's diary was not only published but also awarded the Noma Award (Mwarigu, 1996).

Through Gakaara Press, he published numerous books in Gikuyu, Dholuo, Kalenjin, Kiswahili and many other Kenyan languages. At the time of his death, he was the patron of UUGI. He used his meagre resources in the advancement of knowledge. To him, language could not be meaningfully abstracted from the forces of social history. He had no doubt that language was active in the reconstruction and retaining of suppressed memories. He could be described as a political intellectual because his political and literary activities were well thought out (Njogu, 2001).

## **APPENDIX II**

### **The Noma Award for publishing in Africa.**

The Noma Award for publishing in Africa was established in 1979 as an annual prize for an outstanding new book in Africa. It was open to authors indigenous to Africa and restricted to locally published works. The Award was founded by Soichi Noma who was the president of Kodansha Ltd, a renowned Japanese publishing house. Mr. Noma's life was dedicated to the promotion of books and readership in developing countries.

The managing committee of Noma also acted as its jury. Its members were African scholars and book experts, as well as representatives of the international publishing community. Soichi Noma died in 1984 and the Award ended in 2009 after the Noma family ceased its sponsorship (Illieva, 1998).

### **APPENDIX III**

#### **The Oath of the Unity of the Community as described by Gakaara wa Wanjau**

Traditionally, oath taking was done only on very serious issues among the Agikuyu. The parties involved in oath taking had to have serious talks before they could undertake it. It could never be administered on women and uncircumcised boys as they could not be trusted to keep secrets. Moreover, those taking the oaths had to be brave. Any oath taken had to be agreed upon before by the clan elder and age-set leaders. There were public and secret oaths. Public oaths were taken in the open where people took vows after various agreements. Secret oaths were taken between individuals to agree on some secret deals.

From 1924, the KCA started administering oaths to ensure the unity of the Agikuyu. The oaths were secret whereby the Agikuyu vowed with the soil to defend it against the whites. Oaths to fight for land and freedom started gradually in 1948, in Kiambu, motivated by the Olenguruone victims who had portrayed acts of bravery emanating from secret oathing. The oaths had helped to unify the Agikuyu in Olengurune who were forcefully evicted from there by the colonialists.

To bring the Agikuyu, Aembu and Ameru communities together in the fight for land and freedom, a governing council known as parliament was created to oath men, women and youths. This came to be referred to as *Muma wa Uiguano* (Oath of Unity). This parliament was moulded in Githunguri, Kiambu, following the advice of ex-senior chief Koinange. Members of this parliament were from the already banned KCA General Council, Karing'a group, (Orthodox Gikuyu group) K.I.S.A and age-set leaders.

In 1949, the secret oath administration spread to Nairobi and Thika. In 1950 some KAU leaders, trade unionists and some Nairobi residents formed a council on oath administration and called it *Muhimu* (Important). The *Muhimu* later became the Mau Mau Central Committee. It was made up of three representatives from Nairobi and two each from Meru, Embu and Gikuyu districts who had to be residents of Nairobi. The representatives of the Mau Mau Central committee included; Fred Kubai, Bildad Kaggia and Eliud Mutonyi from Nairobi, James Njoroge and Isaac Gathanju from Murang'a, Hiram Kinyeru and Kanyeki Waithaka from Nyeri, John Mbiyu Koinange and Charles Munyua Wambaa from Kiambu , Willy George Njue Kamumbu from Embu and J.D Kali from Ukambani.

Although a few people in Murang'a, Nyeri and the Rift valley had taken the KCA oaths, the Mau Mau oaths were taken in large numbers from mid 1951. In Embu and Meru, oath administration was largely done by the end of 1951 to 1952 and after the declaration of the state of Emergency. In Ukambani, oaths had been administered before the Emergency among some people in Machakos town, Kangundo and Kilungu. The oath taking had already started spreading to the Maasai and the Abaluyia. The wording of the oaths was different according to the different communities.

The Agikuyu oath had the following wording;

“I vow before God that I am now a true follower of the Unity of the Community that is discredited by the name Mau Mau.

I vow to fight for our land of Gikuyu robbed from us by the white clan.

I vow before God that I will work closely with the freedom fighters and with the Unity of the Community’s Council.

I vow to be contributing as required of me by the Unity of the Community Council. I vow to be going wherever I am sent to serve by the Council at any time I am called upon, whether during the day or in the night.

I vow never to betray my community of Gikuyu and Mumbi or reveal the secrets of this oath.

Finally, if I go against this vow, may this oath kill me”

After oath taking, candidates were secluded and given comprehensive education. Accordingly they were henceforth a host of Gikuyu and Mumbi fighters and members of KAU, ready to die or live fighting for land and freedom. Henceforth, it was the responsibility of all those who had taken the oath to ensure that many other members of their community were oathed. Coded language and greetings were taught to identify the members of the movement. They left the oath taking ceremony knowing who their leaders were and the need to be brave members of the community. Nobody would witness the oath taking ritual and fail to take the oath. They were required to either take the oath or die (Gakaara, 1971).



## APPENDIX IV

### Origin of the tag Mau Mau

Several people have tried to attach some meaning to the word Mau Mau as the abbreviation for *Muzungu Aende Ulaya, Mwafrika Apate Uhuru*. Other arguments have been advanced. For example, the origin may have been childhood puns and anagrams for common words. A child would say, *ithi, ithi* instead of *thii, thii* meaning “Go, go” and *mau, mau* instead of *uma, uma* to mean “Come out, come out”. So one evening in a house in Naivasha where Mau Mau oath was being administered, a guard on the look out gave the childhood anagram *Mau Mau* so that those in the house could escape. This was a clear warning to them but the enemy would not understand. The police arrived and found no one, only the paraphernalia of oath administration. When they reported back to the police headquarters, they said that they heard the word *Mau Mau* as they approached but on arrival at the house saw nobody, only the evidence of *Mau Mau* oath administration. From then on, the oath of unity was given the name *Mau Mau* (Kariuki, 1976).

In another explanation, the name *Mau Mau* could be traced to a Special Branch police Officer. On May 12 1950, the officer in the company of others caught a Maasai man immediately after a successful oathing ceremony of a group of farm labourers and squatters. The Maasai squatter, Maburungi, was arrested. He was scared of the police on one hand and the oath administrators and all that appertained to the ritual, on the other. Words barely left his lips when the police took to interrogating him. The best he could do in the circumstances was to invent a lie. So he proceeded; “We were eating meat of a sheep called *Mau Mau Mau Mau Mau*”. Maburungi had been overwhelmed

by the murmuring of the oath administrators and of the recipients; *Urorio ni muma uyu ungikaumbura..... ndirorio ni muma uyu ndinguikaumbura.....*(May this oath kill you if you ever betray the cause and purpose of this Movement ...Let the oath kill me should I ever make it public...). The words *muma* were repeated several times. It was Maburungi's answer that prompted the white inspector to record that the group had gathered for the purpose of *Mau Mau*. Thus the illegal oathing and recruitment of freedom fighters came to be known as *Mau Mau* (Karimi, 2013).

In yet another explanation, the word *Mau Mau* was a disguise of the word *muma* (oath). When a white person tried to pronounce it he said "Maw Maw". Thus the word *Mau Mau* was in reference to *Muma wa Uiguano* which was a secret call of unity against the colonial masters (Pugliese, 1992).

According to Gakaara wa Wanjau, *Mau Mau* was a name invented by those who administered the oath meant for the unity of the community against colonial rule. To protect themselves from arrest as the oathing progressed, they would keep a guard to be on the look out to alert them in case of an approaching enemy. The guard was under instruction to shout the word *uma* (come out) inversely as a warning to those involved in the oathing to escape. The guard would then shout "*mau mau*" instead of "*uma uma*". Thus the colonial authorities named it the *Mau Mau* oath.

## **APPENDIX V**

### **The Recognition of Mau Mau as a Legal Entity**

The colonial government banned the Mau Mau movement in 1950 because it challenged the British control of Kenya. It was declared to be “a society dangerous to the good government of the colony” (Karimi, 2013). The ban was lifted fifty four years later, in 2003. Thus Mau Mau became a legal entity after having been a “terrorist movement” for more than half a century. The Kenyan government started to officially recognise the Mau Mau as freedom heroes and heroines who fought to free Kenya from colonial rule. The government, under the leadership of President Mwai Kibaki, unveiled a life-size bronze statue of field Marshal Dedan Kimathi Wachiuri on February 22, 2007, at the junction of Kimathi and Mama Ngina streets in Nairobi. The British government gave an official apology to the Mau Mau in 2012. On Friday, December 14, 2012, Kimathi University College of Technology was given a charter, making it a full fledged university in honour of the Mau Mau freedom fighters.

Members of the Mau Mau War Veterans Association led by Gitu wa Kahengeri led a petition seeking compensation from the British government. The British government not only compensated some of the *Mau Mau* remnants but also a reconciliation process was started. In this line, former members of the *Mau Mau* were invited in Nairobi on 12<sup>th</sup> Sept 2015 where a *Mau Mau* monument was unveiled. It cost the British government some 12 million shillings. It was a sign of a real reconciliation between the Mau Mau and the former colonial masters. The British government acknowledged that the *Mau Mau* were tortured and the monument was to act a symbol of reconciliation

and that there was need to move on after a grim past (Live KTN news, Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015) (Heroes and villains).

## **APPENDIX VI**

### **The List KAU Leaders Arrested on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1952**

Jomo Kenyatta - the KCA's Secretary General, KAU Chairman, *Muigwithania's* (Reconciler's) editor and KCA's representative abroad.

George K. Ndegwa - KCA's Secretary General and *Muigwithania's* (Reconciler's) editor while Kenyatta was abroad.

Job Mucucu, the KCA's treasurer.

Willie Jimmie Wambugu Maina - KISA's chairman and treasurer to KTC Githunguri.

James Beuttah - KCA, KISA and later KAU Chairman in Murang'a. He also facilitated the coming of a bishop consecrate KISA Churches.

Samuel Koina Gitibi - KCA leader in Rift Valley and Ex-Chief Olenguruoni.

Joseph Kang'ethe - KCA Chairman Murang'a.

Amos Wagaca - KAU leader, Limuru Division.

Giitwa Ndimu - Ex-Chief Mukogondo and KCA leader, Nanyuki.

Musa Muturi - KCA leader, soloist *Muthirigu* dance and Manager to Gikuyu Club in Pumwani, Nairobi.

John Mbugua Kamotho - KCA leader, Kiambu.

Kung'u Karumba - KCA, KISA and later KAU Chairman, Cura Division, Kiambu.

Johana Kiraatu - KCA and Ex-Chief Pumwani, Nairobi.

James Njoroge - KCA leader, businessman in Nairobi and the first black Kenyan driver.

Paul Thiong'o - KCA leader and later KISA Chairman, Rift Valley.

Henry Wambugu Gathungu - KCA leader and later KAU Vice-Chairman, Nyeri.

Johana Karanja - KCA leader and later KKSA Chairman.

Paulo Gicaana - KCA leader in Githunguri, Kimbu.

Mariko Kaambui - KCA leader in Ndeiya, Kiambu.

Bongwe Ichau - KCA leader in Cura, Kiambu.

Solomon Meemia - KCA and KISA leader, Kiambu.

Cege Kiraka – KCA and KISA leader and also Chairman KTC Githunguri, Kiambu.

George Waiyaki Wambaa - KISA leader and engineer incharge of KTC construction.

Minyaru Kahia - KCA leader and Ex-Headman Ndeiya, Kiambu.

Tandeo Mwaura - KISA Chairman, Murang'a.

Peter Gatabaki Mundati - KISA Chairman, Kenya.

Stephen Ngure Gichugu - KCA leader in Cura, Kiambu.

Samuel Kihara - KISA Chairman, Kiambu.

Rev. Arthur Gatung'u - KCA and KISA leader, Kiambu.

Rev. Peter Kigonde - KCA, KISA leader and he was the one who gave Kenyatta a Christian oath as he was sent by KCA abroad.

Rev. Stephano Wacira - KISA leader, Nyeri.

Rev. Ephantus Waithaka - KISA leader, Kiambu.

Peter Karanu Kahoro - KCA, KISA and Church leader in Gatanga, Muranga.

Daniel K Mugekenyi - KISA and church leader Gatundu, Kiambu.

Nehemiah K Kibuuthu - KISA and Church leader in Aguthi Location, Nyeri.

Arthur Mahiga Kimani - KISA and church leader in Marira, Murang'a.

Joram Waweru - KISA leader in Gatundu, Kiambu.

Solomon Mwiricia - KISA leader, Meru.

Benson Gatonye - KISA and church leader in Kiricu, Nyeri.

Henry Kahoya - KISA and church leader in Kigumo, Murang'a.

Danstan Kiboi Wariua - KISA leader in Othaya, Nyeri.

Crispus Mwaniki - KISA leader and a teacher in Githunguri, Kiambu.

Rebeka Njeri - KISA and women leader in KTC Githunguri, Kiambu.

Harrison Waciira - KISA leader in Othaya, Nyeri.

Ngarama Wagakura - KKSA leader in Muguga, Kiambu.

Girshon N. Tharau - KISA leader in Kirenga, Kiambu.

Johnson Rugio - KISA and church leader in Weithaga, Murang'a.

Philip Ngugi Muibu - KISA leader in Mang'u,  
Kiambu.

C. Mwaura Marite - KISA leader in Kanyariri,  
Kiambu.

Fred Kubai Kibuuthu - KAU Chairman, Nairobi and EATUC Chairman, Kenya.

Anderson Wamuthenya - Chairman KAU, Nyeri

Joel K. Weerehire - KAU Chairman, Eldoret.

Josaphat Mburati - KAU Chairman, Embu.

Philip Gicoohi - KAU Chairman, Nanyuki.

Onesmas Gacoka - KAU Chairman and "Tribunal Court" Chairman, Thompson Falls.

Achieng' Oneko – KAU Secretary General, Nairobi.

John Adala - KAU Chairman, Kakamega.

Paul Ngei - KAU National Vice Secretary General and *Wasya wa Mkamba*  
(The voice of a Kamba) organiser.

Bildad Kagia - KAU Secretary General, Nairobi, writer *Inooro* (The whetstone)  
magazine and EATUC leader.

Isaac Kitabi - KAU Treasurer, Nairobi.

John D. Kali - KAU Executive Committee member and one of the writers of *Sauti ya*  
*Mwafrika* (The African voice).

Mwinga Chokwe - KAU National Executive Committee member.

John Mbiu Koinange - KAU Executive Committee member, Kiambu.

Charles M. Wambaa - KAU Executive Secretary, Kiambu.

Gitahi Waciira - KAU Executive secretary, Nanyuki.

Samuel Kiragu - KAU Executive Secretary, Nyeri.

Romano Njamumo Gikunju - KAU Executive Secretary, Embu.

Jackson Angaine - KAU Executive Secretary, Meru.

Ndeng'era Muriithi - KAU Executive Secretary in Mathira, Nyeri.

Kahugi Gituro - KAU Treasurer, Kiambu.

Gacuuru Ngorono - KAU Treasurer, Nyeri.

Daniel Waweru - KAU Chairman in Elgon, Nyanza.

Mburu Mugwira - KAU Executive Committee, Nairobi.

Wahome Kihia - KAU Vice-Chairman in Mathira, Nyeri.

Ngunjiri Kimondo - KAU Executive Committee member in Kiricu, Nyeri.

B.M. Kamau - KAU Executive Committee member in Githunguri, Kiambu.

David Nyamu - KAU Chairman in South Tetu, Nyeri.

Josaphat Wandimbe - KAU Treasurer in North Tetu, Nyeri.

Mungai Gachugu - KAU Executive Committee member in Limuru, Kiambu.

Paulo Nduru Ndekere - KAU Executive Committee member, Nanyuki.

Mwangi Thabuuni - KAU Executive Committee member, Murang'a.



Njoroge Mbugua - KAU Executive Committee member in Njoro, Rift Valley.

Victor Murage Wokabi – writer to the weekly *Muthamaki* (The King).

Nyamurwawa H. Mworira - writer and editor to the weekly *Mumenyereri* (The Care taker).

Gakaara wa Wanjau - writer to the monthly *Waigwa Atia?* (What's Up?) and also a publisher.

John Cege Kabogoro - writer to the weekly *Wiyathi* (Freedom).

Greggory Mbiti - writer to the weekly *Mugambo wa Embu* (Voice of Embu).

Isaac Gathanju - writer to the weekly *Wihuuge* (Be alert) and *Muramati* (The caretaker).

Morris MwaiKoigi - writer to the weekly *Mwaraniria* (Conversationalist)

MwanikiMugweru – author to *Wiyathiwa Andu Airu*(Freedom for the Black People) and *Kamuingi Koyaga Ndiri* (Unity is Strength).

Cege Kiburu – Chairman to Domestic and Hotel Workers Union, Nyeri.

John Mungai - Chairman to Transport and Allied Workers Union, Murang'a.

George N. Kamumbu - Chairman to Night Watchmen Union, Embu.

Peter Mutabi - Chairman to Domestic and Hotel Workers Union, Machakos.

Nyamu Marea - Chairman to Transport and Allied Workers Union, Embu.

James Wainaina - Chairman to Transport and Allied Workers Union, Murang'a.

Wamuti Muhungi - Chairman to Transport and Allied Workers Union, Kiambu.

Dishon Kahiato - Chairman to Commercial and Food Allied Workers Union, Nyeri.

Isaia Muricu - Town council employee in Othaya,  
Nyeri. Elsaban Murigu - Town council employee in  
South Tetu, Nyeri

Joel Waruui Njuguna - Ex-Welfare officer, Nakuru Town.

Timothy Maina - Town Council employee and teacher Kangima, Murang'a.

Sera Serai - Women Counsellor and Nairobi city council employee.

Simon Mbacia - Restaurant Proprietor, Nakuru

Harrison Karume - Businessman, Nyeri.

Kihara Wandaka - Businessman, Nairobi.

Fred Mbiu Koinange - Businessman, Nairobi.

Kagiika Kuhutha - Doctor, Nairobi.

Gerald Gachau - Businessman, Nyeri.

Mwangi Macharia - Businessman, Kiambu.

Jackson Waigera - Businessman, Nairobi.

Wallace Waciira - Businessman, Nairobi.

Kamau Mweru - Businessman, Muranga.

Maina Munene -Businessman, Kiambu.

Ng'ang'a Kanja - Businessman, Kiambu.

Nahashon Itati - Driver Githunguri, Kiambu.

Mwangi Baaru - Taxi driver, Nairobi.

Karuuru Mureebu - Taxi driver, Nairobi.

Gacangi Gikaru - Taxi driver, Nairobi.

Ndibui Waweru - Taxi driver, Nairobi.

Mburu Njoroge - Taxi driver in Ndeiya, Kiambu.

Mutahi Kibiri - Taxi driver, Nairobi.

Muiru Kinogu - Taxi driver, Nairobi.

Ngari Kigeca - Taxi driver, Nairobi.

Maina Kahuumbi - Taxi driver, Nairobi.

Daudi Wanyee - KAU Youth Wing leader, Dagoretti Corner, Kiambu.

Mwangi Wamweya - KAU Youth Wing leader, Murang'a.

Njenga Thagicu - KAU Youth Wing leader, Dagoretti Corner, Kiambu.

Ndua Thiong'o - KAU Youth Wing leader, Dagoretti Corner, Kiambu.

Ndegwa Njoroge - KAU Youth Wing leader, Gikondi, Nyeri.

Wang'ombe Gaceru - KAU Youth Wing leader, Nanyuki Township.

Mutonga Karuri - KAU Youth Wing leader, Riruta, Kiambu.

Thuu Thagicu - KAU Youth Wing leader, Dagoretti Corner, Kiambu.

Ng'ang'a Kibobo - KAU Youth Wing leader, Githunguri, Kiambu.

Kibeera Gathuku - KAU Youth Wing leader, Riruta, Kiambu.

Kihoro Muriithi - KAU Youth Wing leader, Aguthi, Nyeri.

Maara Gatundu - KAU Youth Wing leader, Ndeiya, Kiambu (Gakaara, 1983).

## **APPENDIX VII**

### **The Role of Orchestrated Propaganda to Kenya's National Cohesion and Integration**

#### **Abstract**

Tussling with ethnic animosities is a glaring challenge in Kenya's national politics. This is despite the persistent calls for unity, in our rich but diverse cultural heritage, by Kenyan leaders across the socio-political and religious divides. The main objective of this paper is to explore the connection between orchestrated positive propaganda and the attainment of the so desired national unity. This paper is informed by the Propaganda Model of Media Control Theory which states how propaganda works in a mass media. This model tries to understand how the population is manipulated and how the social, economic and political attitudes are fashioned in the minds of people through propaganda. The paper borrows a leaf from the Chief Mau Mau Ideologue, Gakaara wa Wanjau, who was detained by the British colonial government from 1952 to 1959 because of his anti-colonial propaganda that threatened to unify the blacks against the minority white rule in Kenya. The application of positive propaganda by the Catholic Church, the ancient Greece and the government of the United States of America serve as good examples that a people's opinion can be controlled for a worthwhile purpose. Historical research design is applied in the composition of this paper. Primary and secondary data collection and analysis leads to a reflection and subsequent conclusion

that it is possible to piece together even a highly polarised society. National cohesion and integration are achievable through skillfully orchestrated positive propaganda in ways that are conversant to each individual ethnic group, even in vernacular where applicable. Negative propaganda can equally be destructive, the Nazi propaganda and the Rwandan genocide are cited as good examples. The paper therefore recommends that the Kenyan government should make a deliberate effort to fund anthropological research on each of the distinct ethnic groups. This should be towards an effort to come up with positive propaganda to make them patriotic and proud that they belong to the single Kenyan entity.