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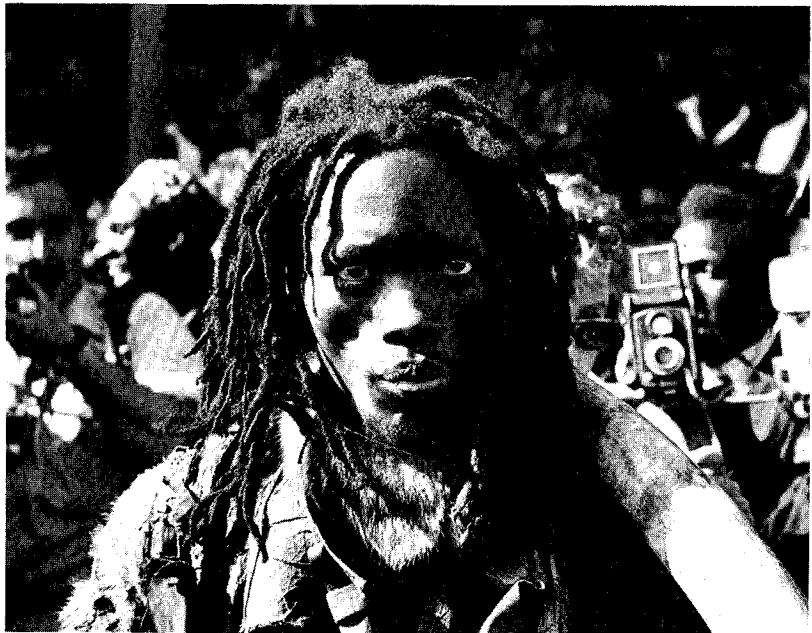
JS-10  
Mau Mau's Final Chapter

P.O. Box 5113  
Nairobi, Kenya  
30 Dec 63

Mr. Richard H. Nolte  
Institute of Current World Affairs  
366 Madison Avenue  
New York 17, New York

Dear Mr. Nolte:

It was really a day of days. As we drove north to Nyeri through the crinkled kikuyu country, the air seemed to sparkle in the cloudless sky. The flat-bottomed gray clouds of the short rains had vanished as if some giant force had given the atmosphere a vigorous shake, dusted it, and then polished it to a high sheen. Ahead of us, Mt. Kenya and the Aberdare Range stood out crisply against a pale blue background. On this pure day it was easy to understand why the Kikuyu people



"out of the forests"

venerate Mt. Kenya as the home of their God, Ngai. Its broad shouldered bulk dominates the landscape from the time you leave Nairobi and begin to climb northward. As you come closer, the long slopes on either side seem to disappear and you are conscious only of the powerful, stern, white peaks. It is an aloof mountain, usually hidden in clouds. On the rare occasions when the whole mountain is clear, you see it in profile, as if it is looking away from you, not caring whether you are there. It is a mountain that invites entreaty, propitiation, and fear.

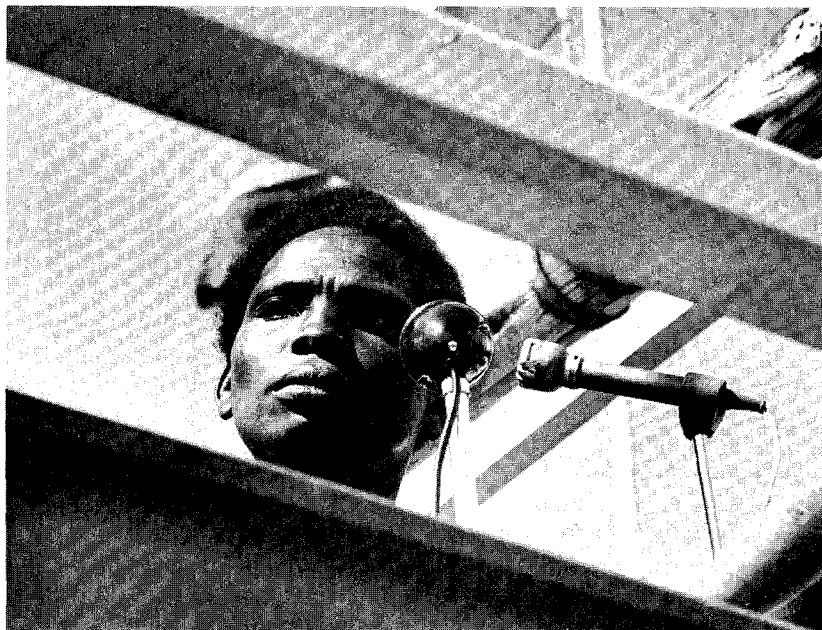
We were driving to Nyeri to see the last Mau Mau forest fighters come out of the mountains where some of them had hidden since 1950. Early in November, the Government declared an Independence amnesty for all the Mau Mau and Land Freedom Army people still in hiding. On December sixth, the Prime Minister, Jomo Kenyatta, held a meeting with leaders of the old Mau Mau War Council

and Kikuyu Central Association, and with other local politicians from the Central Region, the home of the Kikuyu. He accepted their pledge that they would maintain peace in their areas and told them that, in return for the amnesty, his Government expected the forest fighters to emerge from hiding and surrender their arms on 16 December. This surrender would mark, in effect, the close of the Mau Mau era.

A few miles outside Nyeri, we turned off the main road and bumped our way through the throngs at the edge of Ruringu stadium, a famous rallying place in the days before the Emergency was declared. We could hear the hubub of a large crowd as we hurried around the side of the stadium, looking for an entrance. We crept through a hole in the bush fence and saw before us a multi-colored mass of some 40,000 people. Umbrellas to ward off the sun sprouted like black mushrooms through the crowd and everywhere green, red, and black Kanu flags twisted in the breeze. Right before us, a speaker on a white platform strung with pennants, shouted into two microphones.

Kanu Youth Wingers in tricolored, garrison caps formed a barrier between the crowd and a covered grandstand reserved for special guests. We saw Joshua Nkomo, the Southern Rhodesian leader, three Russian observers and many Kenya politicians. The Russians sat in the middle where their unsmiling faces made a dour white island in a sea of laughing brown. A Kanu drum and bugle corps marched up to the stand and, after a discordant fanfare announcing, it seemed, nothing more than themselves, stood at defiant rest. Chanting bands of old men wearing ancient Army greatcoats shuffled by the platform, waving flywhisks, followed by a clanging and thumping ragamuffin band. Just in front of us,

ten Kikuyu women dancers sat down on the ground, dressed in bright orange, their shaved heads shining in the sun, seeming to pay no attention to the bustle and commotion all around them.




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Mrs. Dedan Kimathi

A roar from outside the stadium signalled the arrival of the Prime Minister and soon we could see his cream-colored Lincoln Continental glide up behind the grandstand. The crowd stood, shouting, as Mr. Kenyatta, followed by five of his Ministers, and several aides, climbed heavily onto the platform. A Kikuyu clergyman, his arms extended, delivered a lengthy, high-pitched blessing while the bored crowd stirred, waiting for the show to begin. Mr. Koinange, the Minister for Pan-African affairs, spoke next; then, accompanied by ululations, the shaking of rattles and a great bellow from the crowd, the Prime Minister stood up to speak. He briefly urged his audience to sympathize with the forest fighters who "had been hunted down like antelopes because they were fighting for Kenya's independence."

As Mr. Kenyatta finished, the moment for which the crowd had impatiently waited all day finally arrived. I first noticed a stirring on the platform, and then suddenly a figure appeared beside the Prime Minister. He wore a dirty, brown sheepskin over his head and waved a homemade rifle. This was "General" Kahonaki, the first to surrender. To the delight of the crowd, the unwashed "General" embraced Mr. Kenyatta, who appeared to flinch slightly, and gave



"Field Marshall" Muthoni



"led by a small boy born in the forest"

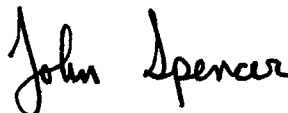
him the rifle. Next to join Kahonaki on the platform was a woman, "Field Marshall" Muthoni Ngatha, dressed in furry skins, a fur cap, and shoes made from car tires. Her two companions, "Field Marshall" Kaafote and "General" Sukumambebe, followed, also skin-clad, but holding large, wide-brimmed, circular hats made of what looked to me like bongo skin. Their hair hung down below their shoulders in a tumble of thin braids. Behind them, led by a small boy who was born in the forest, appeared two men, each carrying an elephant tusk over his shoulder.

These, then, were the valiant "freedom fighters" whose war had cost the British and Kenya Governments £60,000,000. But as the little band clothed in skins stood in the open glare of the sun, surrounded by tumultuous crowds, they seemed bewildered rather than brave, more pathetic than proud.

During the week that followed, several hundred more Mau Mau trooped out of the forest. Since then, they have sat in camps or in the reserves waiting to hear what the Government has in store for them. The Central Regional Assembly said that it would raise funds, but so far they have received no money and must subsist on the generosity of the local Kanu branches. Not all the forest people have surrendered, however. Some 500 from Nyeri and Fort Hall are still in the Aberdare Mts. waiting for their leaders, Stanley Mathenge, once Kimathi's right-hand man, and Mbaria, to lead them out. They see the plight of their comrades and do not want to leave the forest until the Government guarantees them land to farm and training to help them catch up with the world they have been out of for ten years. Some Mau Mau who surrendered recently have returned to the forest, disillusioned by the treatment they received from the Government.

At the moment, it seems as if the forest fighters have a legitimate complaint against the Government which apparently has made no provision for them beyond their surrender. The fanfare of their arrival has died away and the forest people are growing restless. It would be unfortunate if the new Government, in trying to solve one security problem, had merely created another.

Sincerely,



John Spencer

Pictures courtesy of East African Standard and Daily Nation