

NATION Friday magazine

"We wanted to win the war and anything that could make us win was acceptable. We had a purpose to make the revolution come true."



Former Mau Mau leader, Stanley Kinga, during our interview at his home in Nyeri.

— Pictures by TONY MBUGUSS

By JEMIMAH MWAKISHA

Even at 70, he is articulate and has a memory that recalls vivid and dramatic images of his past. But Stanley Kinga is hardly known in Kenya despite his crucial role in the events that led to the attainment of *uhuru* in this country.

As the director of an intelligence unit for the Mau Mau and its representative in Njoro area, Nakuru District, Kinga was among the people who in 1954 recommended the burying alive of a Nyeri white settler — Gray Leakey.

Today, Kinga looks back to that occasion not with a sense of regret for achievement but as a fulfilment of duty necessitated by the events of the time.

He says: "We wanted to win the war and anything that could make us win was acceptable at the time."

But the freedom fighters also revered their gods and they knew any "order" that came from them, through a Mau Mau prophetic, had to be obeyed. "We feared our gods and we wanted the purpose for our revolution to come true," Kinga says.

He says the Mau Mau had nothing personal against Gray Leakey but he happened to be the "best" of the white settlers and fitted well with the demands of the gods.

Kinga, who was born in Othaya, Nyeri, knew Leakey well.

Why we buried Leakey alive

Former Mau Mau recalls what led to the tragic event

He had a reputation for treating his workers and the local people kindly, Kinga says.

He says the gods, mad with the trend of war between the Mau Mau and the colonial government, had given a "directive" that a *Mzungu* (white man) be sacrificed so that they could win the war. The man had to be the best from the white race.

It is in this light that Agnes Leakey Hofmeyer, the author of *Beyond Violence*, refers to Kinga as one of the Mau Mau committee members who recommended the death of Gray Leakey, her father.

According to her, Leakey was

abducted from his Kiganjo farm house and buried alive in the Mt Kenya forest. His wife, Mary, and his cook were murdered and the cook's son followed the team to see the cruel ending.

Kinga says the burial took place in the forest, somewhere between Kiganjo and Mt Kenya.

Doesn't haunt him that he took part in such a decision? "No, it doesn't because the whole thing was necessitated by the events of the time," he says. "We also knew that the incident would contribute in scaring away the white man and that was what mattered then."

Kinga was among the hundreds

of Kenyans who went to fight in Burma during the Second World War. When he returned home, he, like many of his African war colleagues, became one of the agitators for *uhuru* through an organisation called Nyeri District ex-Servicemen African Friendly Association, (NDESAFA). He was the general secretary.

The organisation had business initiatives, but it turned political and the members who had been politically awakened by their experiences in the war turned strategists for the Mau Mau.

Soft spoken, humorous and a good talker, Kinga is a likeable fatherly figure that one can listen

to for hours. He is now a small-scale farmer and happy to be leading a quiet life at his Kamakwa home in Nyeri. He is a father of seven.

But it is the ease with which he remembers details and dates of major incidents in his life that is amazing. In 1940, he was in Somalia among the servicemen who accompanied the British soldiers during the Second World War.

A year later when the British beat Italians in Somalia, he moved to Ethiopia along with the fighting contingent, where the Italians were driven out of that country. He then proceeded to Burma.

Recalling the burial alive of Leakey, Kinga says the gods had been angry for a good reason. There was killing everywhere in Kenya at the time — whites killing blacks and vice versa. Mau Mau were also killing fellow blacks loyal to the whites.

Mzee Jomo Kenyatta and a few other nationalist leaders were already in detention. Young people between the ages of 25 and 35 had gone into the forest to fight the colonialists. Many had been servicemen and had learnt a few tricks about war.

They organised ways of getting food, getting information and anything that helped their struggle.

In return, the administration continued to hunt for nationalist Mau Mau leaders. But the more they searched, the more the movement thrived. The Mau Mau had an intelligence unit and many educated Africans worked for it in various places in disguise.

Kinga, who was a graduate of Alliance High school, was a crucial person in the unit. He worked for a fertiliser company in Njoro, a place with no intense Mau Mau activities. But the movement had made it so to deliberately avoid government suspicion because it was here that Lord Egerton had a gun factory. The Mau Mau knew they would stealthily get guns from there.

At night, like all other loyal

TURN TO PAGE 1V

Why we buried Leakey alive

FROM PAGE 1

workers, Kinga would carry the duties of a homeguard, protecting the master and the workers from the Mau Mau invasions. But unknown to the master and part of the workers, Kinga and a few others would steal the guns and food while the master was asleep.

They effectively did this by organising their working schedules in such a way that they kept vigil in certain hours.

"This of course would be the time that we took food from the farms and guns from the factory and pass them over to the men in the forest," he recalls.

'In our days, leaders and fighters expected no rewards. Today, it's different.'

Kinga was arrested soon after the death of Gray Leakey and detained for three years until 1957. He then worked for Gailey and Roberts company in Nakuru as a stock controller until 1960. When the Government allowed district and regional political organisations, he became the secretary-general of the Nakuru Congress Party.

He led the party to the famous Kiambu conference where all parties agreed to form Kanu.

It was while he was in Nakuru that a friend invited him to at-

tend a Moral Re-armament, MRA, conference in Caux, Switzerland. He attended it and was impressed by the four moral standards that the movement upholds. These are absolute honesty, purity, love and selflessness.

He has since remained a member and it was during one of the meetings years later, that he met Agnes Leakey Hofmeyer.

"I told her the part I had played in the death of her father, something that really shocked her because she did not think she would ever meet anyone who had been part of that tragedy," he says. He and Agnes are today good friends.

Kinga says he helped to translate into Kiswahili an MRA movie, *Freedom*, which was shown to Kenyans just before independence.

But why has he avoided politics in post independent Kenya?

He says he became a civil servant soon after Kenya became independent and worked for the Ministry of Lands and Settlement where he rose to become an estate manager. He later worked for the refugee services in Kenya for four years before retiring.

But although he says he felt he had given his adequate share of the struggle, one can tell he has reservations about the trend of politics in this country. "In our days, the leaders and the fighters expected no reward for the struggle," he says. "Today it is different."

His involvement in MRA has also given him a lot of fulfilment, he says. He feels there is a great need for people to be morally upright.

"I think what we need now are leaders not fighters, who will guide the country into economic and social growth," he says.