

THE MARK OF THE MAU MAU

This, in his own words, is a report from Pathe News cameraman Bill McConville in Nairobi: Today, I journeyed thirty miles north of the city to Githinguri, where trials are being held of Mau Mau suspects. Before the court opened, a guard of honour, mounted by Ascaris, was being inspected by the Judge, Mr. Justice de Lestang.

The defence and prosecuting counsels chatted outside, among them Miss K. P. Hurst, the first practising woman barrister in Kenya, who is representing the accused. Inside the courtroom, the evidence was being sifted. The trial was for the Lari Massacre in which about a hundred loyal Kikuyu were brutally done to death in a single night. Identity numbers were issued to the accused men. They sat in their wire compound sullen and very quiet. They knew that if the prosecution proved their case, there could be but one penalty.

Loyal Kikuyu are to be used to pick out members of their own tribe, for experience has proved that they can identify Mau Mau men with uncanny accuracy.

One had to admire Miss Hurst. She went in among the prisoners without a second thought.

Women who escaped certain death in that dreadful night waited patiently to tell their stories to the court. Then the prisoners were marched to the courthouse and for the first time, I felt some pity for them (even if they were guilty) as they shuffled, handcuffed together towards the dock. Later, when I had seen the victims of the Lari Massacre for myself, there was no pity in my heart.

As the proceedings got under way, I left and went on to the King George the Sixth hospital just outside Nairobi. These who had survived the slaughter had been brought here, most of them to have their wounds treated. Many have since died.

It was not a pleasant sight: men and women with their bodies scarred forever by clubs and knives and fire.

Officers were checking details of the massacre while I was there. The stories the wounded told were terrible to hear: of the whole village set ablaze and of the savage butchery that followed. Yet the survivors, I suppose, must be counted as "the lucky ones."

Each day, at King George's Hospital, many Kikuyu come to give their blood to aid the wounded - and they do this with the knowledge that the Mau Mau have vowed to kill all who help the white people in any way.

Close by one of the wards, I came across a tiny baby - both her parents had been murdered.

Nurses told me that, for one old lady, there was little hope of recovery.

Upon the children too, the Mau Mau had laid its evil mark. The lucky ones? I wonder.

No, there was no pity in my heart. If these were the murderers, then I, like all in Kenya, would expect swift justice. Too long has this proud and faithful land suffered from the Mau Mau's crusade of evil. Justice must, and will, be done.