

# Criminal Justice And The Making Of Langata Maximum Women Prison, 1960-1965

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*Abstract: Ending in the 1960s, the postcolonial reformatory laws established separate women's facilities with some recognition of the gendered needs of women. After the 1960s, the custodial and reform models merged, combining elements of their two styles with differing results throughout the British colonies. The legacy of these movements continues to shape prisons for women. First, with the exception of a relatively few "corrections" experiments that housed women and men together with common programming, most prisons in the 1960s were single sex. Second, Women's prisons were shaped by the ideologies of domesticity and ideals of motherhood, focused on restoring female and maternal qualities. Women required saving twice, firstly from their criminality and then from their deviance from anticipated female behaviour. For this reason, the policy of Africanisation in Kenya, the transformation of colonial service introduced the idea of the Langata Women Prison. Therefore, this article seeks to assess the evolution and impact of the Africanization process on Langata Women Prison between 1960 and 1965.*

**Keywords:** Women, prisons, punishment, gender, Africanization, incarceration, correctional services

## I. INTRODUCTION

From 1945 there was rise of nationalism in Kenya which had a significant contribution to the process of de-colonization. Colonial rule and policies became the black man's area of discontent. Women joined nationalistic movements to promote their economic status in the community. They wanted to gain admittance in the political process to assist return of their alienated land. Women's involvement in political activities was criminalized by the state. Europeans jailed many women because they were armed combatants as well as noncombatants who performed support functions for rebels. Women engaged in campaigns of sabotaging the colonial activities. Use of divisive songs, acts of violence against chiefs, settlers and their property created a state of the insecurity in central Kenya. Where Mau Mau activities had taken root, chiefs loyal to the colonial state became a target of Mau Mau attack. The colonial state embarked on incarcerating women in villages and

concentration camps. The British sought to break the unity of Mau Mau men and women during the last year of the war.

In 1952, the British colonial state in Kenya declared a state of emergency. Colonial military forces were mobilized in an effort to quash a rebellious band of guerrillas known as Mau Mau. The guerrillas organized themselves into militant bands, cementing their devotion to the anticolonial cause by way of powerful oath-taking ceremonies. Militant Mau Mau bands were reportedly responsible for the maiming of cattle, slaughter of women and children and bodily mutilation of those unsympathetic to their cause. The hardcore *Mau Mau* women went through Langata detention camp after the screening process were then detained at Kamiti and Gatamayu detention camp. Kamiti detention camp was the main site of women incarceration. Approximately 8,000 women were detained by the colonial state. Due to the influx of detainees in Kamiti, the colonial state established the second women detention map at Gatamayu in 1958. The move was aimed at the British struggle to contend with the hardcore Mau Mau

women in the final years of the emergency period. The increasing number of women who participated in Mau Mau perplexed the colonial administration.

A lot of tension was created between legal, political and medical officials. The colonial state classified Mau Mau women as insane. It was a strategy of covering up the abuses in Kamiti and Gatamayu detention camps. Female detainees faced trouble and atrocities while in the camp. For example, the British secretary of state for colonies received complaints from them. On 13 February 1959, Sir Alan Lennox Boyd wrote a letter to the then governor of Kenya, Evelyn Barring informing him of the complains. They narrated their experiences at Gatamayu detention camp. Gatamayu was only three miles from Kamiti. They complained that they were screened and beaten by force.

Women were hurt and lame they could not walk. Violence surfaced in many detention camps. Opposition members of parliament in the house of commons raised their concerns about the British actions in Kenya. Due to the concerns raised, Lennox Boyd requested Evelyn barring to investigate the treatment of these women. Gatamayu acted as a home of "hardcore" female Mau Mau from June 1958 to 1959. It acted as a satellite of the Kamiti prison. It was intended to facilitate rehabilitation of the hardcore Mau Mau woman who had remained in detention within Kamiti.

The two detention camps were part of the "pipeline" of the core detention camps established under the emergency powers. The pipeline was a rehabilitation programme established by the colonial state. It was intended to purge detainees of their support for and affiliations with Mau Mau movement. It should be noted that the forest war against Mau Mau came to an end by the end of 1956. It took the British nearly four years more to clear the pipeline of the thousands of detainees still detained.

The pipeline was also meant to compel inmates to confess their crimes. The construction of Gatamayu and Kamiti women detention camp was characterized by gendered stereotypes. There was an assumption that women were soft and malleable and could easily be persuaded away from Mau Mau activities. It is clear that colonial state had to deal with more than 80,000 detainees held in Kenya's extensive systems of prisons and internment camps. The state of emergency was a period of penal extremes. Kenya witnessed the highest rate of incarceration in any British colony and also the highest number of capital sentences.

Women were not left behind, their involvement in Mau Mau was the apex of women's political involvement. In our previous discussion, it was clear that they played a significant role in the decolonization process. The British government never expected women would pose a threat in the Mau Mau rebellion. As discussed previously in this thesis the colonial state embarked on the policy of villagization as a tactic of continuing women. Detention orders were issued.

Initially, Nairobi's Kamiti prison was set up as the only women detention camp. Some 8000 women passed through Kamiti. Gatamayu was later built to cater for the number. It was used as the interrogation and treatment of hardcore Mau Mau women. From among the community incarcerated at Kamiti. They were the only detention camps exclusively for female detention. The detained women had to go through a

rehabilitation process. Maendeleo ya wanawake was constituted even in the detention camps. Rehabilitation of women at Kamiti was shaped by the British assumptions about women's domestic nature.

The scheme was drawn between 1954 and 1955 considerable emphasis was placed on women's positions as mothers and homemakers. Women were classified like their male counterparts. Through the screening, those perceived as most committed and active in Mau Mau were hardcore, they were candidates of Kamiti detention camp. The "white" and "gray" who could easily reform were less deviant. They were sent to work camps to be released after a period of labour for the government. Once in Kamiti, the hardcore were further screened and profiled into five compounds *Hiti, Mburi, Njau, Mori and Ngombe* they were graded from the most to the least deviant. Those who confessed to being Mau Mau were recruited into the rehabilitation programme. Women in the programme received basic literacy and civic education as well as agricultural training. Through the Maendeleo ya wanawake their training focused in training in hygiene embroidery gardening, cooking tailoring cubing farming and animal husbandry.

The colonial state relied on genders stereotypes in the rehabilitation programme since women were assumed to be passive and soft. They believed that Mau Mau women had been influenced into the movement by their husbands and would be easily influenced to abandon the movement. For example, Thomas Askwith the proponent of Maendeleo ya Wanawake noted:

The women have, of course, far less knowledge that the men and have been easily swayed by the Mau Mau leaders he also noted that it may safely be assumed that women will in due course follow obediently the dictates of their husbands as they have done hitherto.

Mau Mau women detainees at Kamiti were hardcores. Rehabilitation of these women was extremely hard. Eileen Fletcher an expert in social work and psychiatry was appointed to assist in the female rehabilitation policy. From 1957 the female detainees were confronted by the violence and aggressive prison regime that compelled them to obey orders and carry out instructions. From 1957 there was the implementation of "dilution technique" the technique allowed the use of compellingly force to ensure compliance. This was passed in a conference dubbed the hardcore detained that was held in Nairobi in 1957. It involved all the officers involved in the rehabilitation programme. This policy was implemented in Kamiti and Gatamayu women detention camp. It was aimed at eliminating the detainee's contribution to Mau Mau and break their allegiance.

Hardcore detainees were isolated into smaller camps. This was the rationale for the establishment of Gatamayu women detention camp. Those who were reluctant were condemned using tropes associated with extreme female deviancies such as murderers and witchcraft. Kamiti held some of the women that were a threat to the colonial state. For example, Bruce Lockhart observes Sara serai was a politically active woman who was aligned with the "worst Nairobi criminal elements" she was detained after authorities found out that she was in possession of a large quantity of proscribed publication, drugs,

KAU, and Mau Mau documents, knives and belts in her home. She was a threat to general security and crime of the city.

On 14/16 July 1960, A National Conference of the Prison Department was held. It was attended by all senior prison officers in the county Hall Nairobi. It was chaired by Mr. W.J.W Burton the Commissioner of Prisons. The Commissioner of the prisons had convened the conference to ratify regulations for use in prisons in Kenya. They included New prison ordinance, Rules made under the ordinance. The Commissioner of Prison noted that classification of prisoners and prisons was essential for progress in prison administration and proper treatment and training of prisoners.

In order to reorganize the prison administration African officers were to undergo courses at the United Kingdom Prison Service Staff College at Wakefield. The commissioner said that any prisoner who was serving a sentence of under three years was eligible for remission and any prisoner serving a sentence of three years or more was eligible for release on the license when he had served three-quarters of his sentence. The minister for internal security and defense A.C.C. Swann noted that there was a state of insecurity in the colony. This was likely to lead to an increase in the prison population.

This state of insecurity during the Emergency necessitated the establishment of Langata women prison to cater for the increasing number of women criminals. He noted that one group of criminals "political thugs" who had caused an adverse effect on the prisoners were ex- Mau Mau. He noted that the colonial state was faced with the challenge of overcrowding in prison. From our previous discussion, there were only two women prisons in Kamiti women prison and Gatamayu women prison. Out of the conference, it was resolved that the following legislation be accepted.

From the 1960 January to mid-April the department was in under the Deputy Commissioner Mr. N.A Cameron. The new Commissioner of Prison Mr. W.J.W Burton M.B.E took charge on 12 April and Mr. Cameron left Kenya to take up his new post as Commissioner of prison Uganda. These changes were as a result of the recommendation of R.D Fairn committee that was invited by the secretary of state to investigate the Hola Massacre. It should be noted that the same year there was the rise of the second wave of feminism in the United States of America that advocated for the civil rights of women. Mr. O.V Garratt C.B.E the Secretary of State's adviser on penal Administration in overseas Dependent territories visited Kenya in June and spent three weeks inspecting the various penal establishment. A report from Mr. Garratt was subsequently submitted to the Minister of Defense.

The Commissioner and a number of senior officers of the department attended a conference for commissioners of prisons in East Africa, Mauritius, and Aden at Kampala Uganda in July. The conference was under the chairmanship of Mr. Garratt and was addressed by his excellency the acting Governor of Uganda. The commissioner attended the second United Nations Congress on the prevention of crime and treatment of offenders in London in August. The year 1960 may be described in general terms as one embracing the introduction of a more up to date approach to the treatment and training of prisoners. A break away from negative security conditions and a period of enlightenment in such systems as

the progressive stage systems, earning scheme, classification of prisoners and prisons and a more constructive relationship between prisoners and staff. Progress was made in regard to the training of prisoners by obtaining approval for all prisons building work to be undertaken by prisoners and building teams. Senior superintendents of prison (buildings) and a building officer were appointed to implement this scheme.

As a norm policymaker under the United Nation on Crime Prevention Criminal Justice was convened from 18-19 August 1960 in London. The congress focused on crime including juvenile delinquency that resulted from social changes accompanying rapid economic development. The congress reviewed the implementation of the first congress on the Standard Minimum Rules for treatment of prisoners (SMRS) which covered the general management of penal institutions. They were applicable to all categories of prisoners, criminal or civil. It was noted that their development and adoption of the Standard Minimum Rules for the treatment of prisoners had an immeasurable impact on the treatment of prisoners worldwide.

During the conference, it was noted that it was the concern of human rights, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to determine the treatment of prisoners. Over one thousand participants converged in London for the 1960 congress. There was a declaration on the protection of all persons from being subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The congress made a recommendation on female criminality. It is worth noting that the second congress was held in London, the headquarters of the British colonies. The Kenyan Commissioners of Prison were in attendance. The recommendation had to be adopted in Kenya. It was not a coincidence that Langata women prison the only women prison in Kenya was established.

The second Congress was building upon the first UN congress of 1955 that was held in Geneva. In the conference, Standard Minimum Rules for the treatment of prisoners were adopted. There was a concern about what was happening in the European colonies in Africa. It was believed that the set-out rules were accepted as good principles and practices on the treatment of prisoners and the management of the penal institution. During this period the state of emergency that led to massive detention of Mau Mau fighters was coming to an end. The United Nations in recognizance of the legal, social-economic and geographical conditions in the world enacted rules that were capable of application in all the nations. The United Nations signatories like Britain had to endeavour to implement the minimum conditions which were accepted as suitable by the United Nations. Part one of the rules covered general management of penal institutions and was applicable to all categories of prisoners, criminal or civil, untried or convicted, including prisoners subject to "security measures" or corrective measures ordered by the judge. Part two of the policy of the United Nations was applicable only to special categories dealt within each section. It was resolved that there was to be a separation of categories of prisoners in penal institutions.

Different categories of prisoners had to be kept in separate institutions or parts of institutions taking account of their sex, criminal record, the legal reason for their detention and the necessities of their treatment. The colonial state in

Kenya did not implement this resolution in the treatment of Mau Mau detainees in various detention camps. Part 8 (a) of the policy:

Indicated men and women shall so far as possible be detained in a separate institution: In an institution which receives both men and women, the whole of the premise allocated to women shall entirely be separated. In the accommodation aspect the policy indicated in schedule 9(1) that when sleeping accommodation in individual cell or rooms, each prisoner shall occupy by night a cell or a room by himself. If for a special reason such as temporary overcrowding it becomes necessary for the central reason administration to make an exemption to this rule, It is not desirable to have two prisoners in a cell or room. Schedule (2) when dormitories are used they shall be occupied by prisoners carefully selected as being suitable to associate with one another in these conditions. There shall be regular supervision by night in keeping with the nature of the institution. The policy endeavoured to make the living conditions of the prisoners better. All accommodations provided for the use of prisoners and in particular all sleeping accommodations shall meet all the requirements of health, due regard being paid to climatic conditions and particularly to cubic content of air, minimum floor space, lighting, heating, and ventilation.

The colonial state in Kenya used the prison conditions to punish the hardcore Mau Mau fighters. The detention camps were overcrowded, Detainees were infected with diseases and the entire prison conditions acted as punishment:

In women institutions, there shall be special accommodations for all necessary pre-natal and postnatal care and treatment arrangements. Arrangements shall be made wherever practicable for children to be born in a hospital outside the institution.

The colonial state which was internationally acclaimed for embracing human dignity and human rights violated the values resolved in the first United Nation Congress on the treatment of prisoners. The failure was by design in order to deal with Mau Mau hardcore in Kenya. From our above discussion, it is clear that there was an international concern on the treatment of prisoners and crime prevention. The colonial state in Kenya implemented the categorization of inmates indiscriminately this was only implemented at the end state of emergency in 1960.

In 1960 when Langata women prison was transformed as a women prison was a unique year in the development of the histories of women in the world. There was the rise of the “second wave” of feminism, a women liberation movement and civil rights organization in the United States. Women across the world have the equality and opportunities that they have today because of the sacrifices of the feminists during this period in time. It was a year that signified the beginning of women liberation. The political climate in Kenya then was also influenced by international development. This wave also led to the establishment of its first social movement organization of the National Organization for Women (Now).

During the period the major target was the relationship between women and men. This debate linked ways in which sexuality was political, with the understanding that sexuality was both producing and produced by social relations of power. This led to the establishment of Langata women prison.

Feminists of this period asserted that male-female relations were political, not “natural” and they politically interrogated sexuality. This is supported by the fact that all the detention camps and prisons in Kenya established by the colonial state were constructed with the males in mind. They were constructed exclusively for male prisoners. The architectural designs did not cater to the needs of women prisoners. The colonial state in Kenya discriminated women’s sexuality until 1960 when the colonial state employed a feminist agenda in the women imprisonment.

In 1959 and early 1960 Nairobi was faced with serious security problems. Serious rioting took place between Asians and Africans in the Duke Street. The government had announced its initiative to bring the Emergency to an end. The population of Nairobi had been substantially controlled through the passbook system which had excluded a large number of Kikuyu from the city. There was no doubt that with the removal of passbooks Kikuyu would flock into the city. Most of them had close links with Mau Mau who added to the general security risk in Nairobi. The colonial state expected outbreak of violence due to the delegates who were returning from Lancaster House Conference in hundreds. There was great public excitement and this caused great violence. In the 1960s the prison Department was greatly concerned with a large number of prisoners who were sent to prison for short sentences. There was a release of a large number of cap 80 detainees on the 26 January in 1959.

Langata prison was established as a women prison in 1960. It was established through the prison headquarters circular issued on 26 November 1960. Langata constituted of two parts. The lower part was used for the accommodation of convicted remanded women and the upper part was used as a mental hospital for women suffering from a nervous disorder. It was the intention to transform very long-term women prisoners to Langata women prison. A full-time chief officer who was a woman was taken to Langata. A second officer of this rank was appointed at Nakuru prison. It was a result of making Nakuru the central women’s prison for the Rift valley and neighbouring Districts. In 1960 a superintendent of Prisons (women prison) Mrs. M.P. Rochfort was transferred from Uganda Prison. She was expected to visit all the prisons where women prisoners were detained and assess their conditions. Langata women prison was placed under the category of Central Prison for women Mrs. M.P Rochfort, Superintendent of Prison from Uganda was the first female prison superintendent. On arrival in Kenya, she began a programme for the recruitment and training of women staff. The establishment of separate central prisons for women at Langata (Nairobi) and Nakuru with facilities for training of staff did much to improve the low standard of women officers.

Three thousand one hundred and one women were sentenced to imprisonment in 1960 as compared with 4,693 in 1959, 5776 in 1958 and 7472 in 1957. The total number of women prisoners admitted during the year was 4205 as compared with 5934 in 1959. The following table shows the number of admissions and their classification.

Admissions	1957	1958	1959	1960
Convicted	7472	5976	4693	3101
Unconvicted (Remands)	1384	1324	1295	1104

	8856	7300	5988	4205
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Table 1: The number of admissions and their classification

The daily average population in women prison was 447.76 as compared with 495.02 in 1959, 549.22 in 1958 and 948.83 in 1957.

The offenses for which women were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment were as follows:

Penal Code	1957	1958	1959	1960
Local Law	631	467	526	379
	6841	5509	4167	2722
	7472	5976	4693	3101

Table 2: Women convicted

All women prisoners sentenced to terms of six months or over-served their sentences at Langata women prison. The central women prison at Langata was supervised by a European women superintendent of prison and a European women Chief officer. There was considerable progress at Langata women prison because there was an introduction of hobbies and handicrafts for women prisoners. And tailoring a workshop was opened at Langata. Improvements were made in the arrangements for the treatment of children of women prisoners. A creche was established at Langata, where there was a full-time nurse. Children of women prisoners were clothed.

There were two principal events which characterized the year 1962, enactment of the new prison legislation and the emphasis placed throughout the whole year on the rapid localization of the service. At the end of 1962, the officers in charge of 23 prisons were local officers. Two noteworthy features of progress in localization were: the appointment of the first African women Assistant superintendent of prison Mrs. Phoebe Asiyo. She was posted to Langata women prison. Mr. Andrew Kisa took up his appointment as senior superintendent Rift Valley Province. In April 1962 the prison service was transferred from the Ministry of Defense to the newly created Ministry of Social Services since it was considered that the former Ministry was inappropriate as the controlling authority for prisons.

## II. DEVELOPMENT OF LANGATA WOMEN PRISON, 1963-1965

On 1 June, Jomo Kenyatta became the first prime minister of self-governing Kenya. At midnight on 12 December 1963 at Uhuru Stadium, amid world leaders and a multitude of people the Kenya flag was unfurled and a new nation was born. A year later on 12 December 1964 Kenya became a republic within the commonwealth, with Kenyatta as the president. In his inaugural address, he promoted a concept that would eventually become an official motto *Harambee or let us work together* in building a free nation. At the time of Kenya's independence in 1963, the new Nation inherited the existing resources and infrastructure as well as challenges. Just before and immediately after independence, there was an unlimited influx of African population into the city following the relaxation of the colonial rule of restricting Africans to the city. Between 1962 and 1969, the population of Nairobi increased at a very high rate of 12.2% further complicating the urban problems and challenges of the city.

Attainment of independence was supposed to be the beginning of political and economic emancipation; the start of respect for the rule of law, human rights, and dignity and the laying down of the foundations and tenets of democracy. These expectations never materialized. The infrastructure, role, and operation of prisons remained unchanged. Even though, Kenyatta's government attempted to improve the prison conditions by introducing reforms. These targeted the rehabilitation of offenders which were still inadequate. Kenya inherited the penal system from the British colonial government at independence. At that time, there were 86 prisons accommodating 13,000 prisoners in the country.

Langata women prison acted as a destiny of all women that faulted the post-independent laws. At independence, the government was modelled on the west minister system with a dual executive. Jomo Kenyatta regime adopted forgive and forget strategy in his governance. Kenyatta in *Harambee*: The prime minister of Kenya's speeches 1963-1964 observes "it's the future, my friends, that is living and the past that is dead."

Ogot also notes that Kenyatta's policy of forgetting the past resulted from his belief that national reconciliation was more important than the recognition of roles played or not played by certain sectors in the liberation of Kenya. In other words, Kenyatta saw history, particularly the Mau Mau episodes as divisive and against the spirit of national cohesion expected of a new nation in the making. Jomo Kenyatta attempted to suppress then manipulate Mau Mau's history. Telling the Kenyan people to forget the past led to a conflict between him and Bildad Kaggia his fellow detainee and later political opponent. Bildad Kaggia was pro-Mau Mau populism.

Kenya's independence saw the end of colonial administration. It was an important break with the past. The post-independent regime inherited a centralized state characterized by institutions administered by men. Most of these men were appointed by the office of the president. A clique of these men acted on behalf of departed white elites. Kenya was in a fixed orbit of dependency around the West. Some optimistic observer argued that Kenya was to be a model for the rest of Africa, a black ruled, multi-racial, gender-sensitive state simultaneously around dedicated to social justice, individual rights and economic growth. However, this was never to be.

The independence constitution was founded on the west minister Model of parliamentary sovereignty, with a formal division between political blocks each intending to seize complete power over the state with a major addition a regional system of provincial assemblies with their own designated areas of authority. The Kenyatta regime was characterized by the patriarchal disposition of the state, disempowered women as it empowered men, the spill over which created gender hierarchy and subordinated women. After independence, there was centralization of power and multiparty democracy that lasted only for a year. Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) was a party that was formed by Bildad Kaggia and others who were dissatisfied by the style of rule of president Kenyatta of consolidation of power to his ethnic affiliation. KADU collapsed and members joined KANU a de facto single-party state.

The year 1963 may perhaps be described as one of the satisfying achievements in the Prison Service in Kenya. The new Prison Ordinance providing inter alia for proper classification, a staging system, an earning scheme parole compulsory supervision, extra moral penal employment and a youth collective training Centre which was passed by the legislation canal in December 1962s came into force on the 1 February 1963. The radical reorganization of the prison system incorporating reforms in prison administration prepared in the light of advances in penology throughout the world localization of the senior ranker of the service continued by the end of the year the senior ranks of the service were filled with local officers and the great majority were under the command of local officers. In September 1963, an African Deputy Commissioner Mr. A.K Saikwa was appointed.

The total number of persons convicted and sentenced to imprisonment in 1964 decreased. It should be noted that this was after Kenya got independence from the colonial state. The following table shows the number of convictees.

Year	Convicted persons
1963	32,398
1964	29,112

Source: KNA/Treatment of offenders Annual Report

Table 1: The number of convictees

There was a decrease of 3286 the year 1964 was noteworthy because of the appointment of the first local Commissioner of Prisons. There was continued localization of the prisons service. At the end of the year, the great majority of the prison were commanded by local officers and it was a matter of considerable pride that the transference of authority from expatriate to local staff proceeded without any loss of standards and without occasioning any particular problem. At the end of the year, Langata women Maximum prison was the only Central prison for women in Kenya. In 1964 3,317 women were sentenced to imprisonment of whom 21 were juveniles, and the three were sentenced to death compared with 4,131 in 1963 4,206 in 1962 and 3,123 in 1961.

	1961	1962	1963	1964
Convicted	3123	4206	4131	3320
Unconvicted (Remand Debtors)	2759	3078	2253	2241
Total	5882	7284	6384	5561

Source: KNA/Treatment of offenders annual Report 1966

Table 3: Women admission in prison

Five thousand, three hundred and eighty-eight women, of whom four were sentenced to imprisonment and five were sentenced to death in 1965 compared with 3320 in 1964 and 4206 in 1962 the total number of women prisoners admitted during the year was 9134 of whom 5 were juveniles compared with 5561 in 1964. In 1966 six thousand six hundred and eighty-seven women of whom were juveniles were sentenced to imprisonment and one was sentenced to death. In 1966, compared with 5388 in 1965, 3320 in 1964 and 4131 in 1963. The total number of women prisoners admitted during the year was 11043 of whom three were juveniles compared with 9134 in 1965. In 1967 seven thousand nine hundred and ninety-five women of whom seven were juveniles, were sentenced to imprisonment and three were sentenced to death. In 1967, compared with 6687 in 1966, 5388 in 1965 and 3320 in 1964. The total number of women prisoners admitted during the year

was 12867 of whom seven were juveniles compared with 11043 in 1966.

On the 2 November 1960, all-women staff and prisoners were moved from Kamiti prison to Langata Central prison for women. On 25 November 1960 women remand prisoners were also transferred from Nairobi remand to Langata women prison. Langata women prison was established as a central prison for women. There was a need to recruit staff with high standards of education so that they could be trained in written work and rehabilitation of prisoners. The daily average population for the year 1960 was 94 of these prisoners who were convicted for less than three months. Most of the women prisoners at Langata were star class prisoners and only very isolated cases were reduced to ordinaries. On 4 November 1961, the Vagrants at Langata were transferred to Kamiti and took over the Camp thus was known as women prison Kamiti.

Due to the politics of KANU and KPU, the 1960s was characterized by power by the executive. President Kenyatta's policy as expressed on 20 October 1967 had been equivocal. The KPU he said had a plan to bring about a revolution in Africa but the plan had fortunately been discovered. The president accused them of accepting bribes from foreign powers. "He declared that he would refer to followers' snakes and he said it emphatically whenever you see a snake you should beat it" Kenyatta's regime was hardened by constitutional and political problems in the 1960s.

Kenya's future during the Kenyatta regime was influenced by the turbulent and violent politics of 1969. The political murder of Tom Mboya; the suppression of the opposition party; the suspicious bitterness between the two old comrades in arms, Jomo Kenyatta and Oginga Odinga as well as the renew of Kikuyu oathings and the open discontent of students these were all significant pointers to the Malaise into which Kenya had fallen despite its promising reforms and optimistic spirit. All the years troubles – students demonstration at University of Nairobi oathings, the assassination of Tom Mboya, the outlawing of KPU, the bitter struggles for power within KANU, all into a clear pattern when they are related to the power group struggles going on in the country. The political situation made Kenyatta embrace the use of prisons as instruments of control and domination, prison conditions became worse so as to punish inmates especially the political dissidents. Langata maximum women prisons condition deteriorated.

In 1970, all detained KPU leaders were released except Odinga himself. Achieng Onoko (one of those that were tried and detained with Kenyatta) and four others. In most cases the release meant a recantation by the former detainee and a ritual-like return to KANU. The government was tough on crime lawlessness is encouraged by the overall low living standards and unemployment set amidst a pocket of relative affluence. Kenyatta found it necessary in his 20 October 1970 address to condemn gangs of thieves and robbers who did not work but stole other peoples property. He linked them with the drift to the towns and repeated his call for people to go back to the land. Prisons were fully utilized to incarcerate all lawbreakers and urban dwellers who brew liquor.

During this regime, the place of women was in the kitchen women were not supposed to hold public office and even the few like Margaret Kenyatta and Jane Kiano among

others, who were appointed to head the women's bureaus and the Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization (MYWO) owed their allegiance to the president or his close allies. This is what was called the feminization of neo-patrimonial politics. Women's issues were not integrated into the national agenda. They remained relegated to the periphery especially in the political sphere. Before 1975 Kenya's development policies were gender insensitive. All development was assumed to benefit men and women alike. It took the provocation of 1972. International Law Organization (ILO) report on employment income and equality for the Kenya Government to make its position known on the women question in the country. It associated the disadvantaged position of women with poverty, education, training, and employment. It recommended that with regard to rural women measures be taken to improve the living conditions and reduce workloads.

### III. CONCLUSION

This article has presented a revisionist history of Langata Women's Prison which brings to the forefront the relationship between gender and colonial and postcolonial policy. We have examined women's imprisonment in Kenya drawing attention to the detrimental effect of what orthodox closed prison can have on women and penal reform. We have seen the clash between what was conceptualized as desirable prison policy and the actual implementation and implications of such a penalty on the prisoner. It challenges previous claims made about the invisibility of women prisoners in historical penal policy, and provides an original narrative of the open prison, taking Langata Women Prison as a case study, where the history of such an initiative is explored and debated. As such, it is clear that the colonial state in Kenya established Langata Women prison in 1960 as a way of reacting to feminist agenda associated with the period of the 1960s which was an explosion in the United State of America in matters like civil rights, sexual liberation health welfare, and Education. There were an international concern and pressure to implement liberations agenda on women or the call for equal rights for women which resurfaced in the 1960s alongside movements for civil and human rights. The end of the state of emergency and the attainment of independence in Kenya led to rapid Africanization. The entire administrative cadre was filled by Africans. Shortly after independence Kenya boasted of an African civil service even though this service was British in outlook and behaviour. The Kenya administration inherited colonial prisons. Africanization was legitimized with the adoption of African socialism sessional paper no 10 of 1965.

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