

**TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL****CONSEIL
DE TUTELLE**T/PET.2/40/Add.1
23 January 1948

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

TANGANYIKA

PETITION FROM MR. MARIUS FORTIE

DATED 14 JANUARY 1948

The Secretary-General has received a communication dated 14 January 1948 from Mr. Marius Fortie concerning the Trust Territory of Tanganyika. This communication, which is a supplement to the previously submitted petition set forth in Document T/PET.2/40, by the same petitioner, is transmitted herewith to the Members of the Trusteeship Council, in accordance with Rule 85 of the Rules of Procedure for the Trusteeship Council.

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Washington, D.C., January 14, 1948

The Secretary-General
United Nations
Lake Success, N.Y.

Reference: 1503-4-6

TANGANYIKA TERRITORY

Sir:

I beg leave to submit through you to the Trusteeship Council the following information to supplement my petition of October 15, 1947, reproduced as Unrestricted Document T/PET.2/40. The specific purposes of this supplement are:

1. To add to the constructive suggestions offered on pages 11, 15 and 16, 24, 37, 38 and 39 of Document T/PET.2/40.
2. To correct certain impressions which that document may have created.

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It would not be reasonable to submit suggestions covering every one of the thirteen points listed in Document T/PET.2/40 without a previous study of the administrative machinery available in Tanganyika, a machinery of worth and efficiency. I must limit myself to a few important additions.

LAND OWNERSHIP -- Travelers and geographers have described Tanganyika as a land of oases, as a land with relatively few fertile well-watered spots suitable for permanent settlement, and with large arid or semi-arid areas similar to some "bad" sections of Arizona and New Mexico. Taking advantage of what we call lack of title among people to whom land ownership was unknown, we are gradually depriving the Natives of thoses oases as a start toward making them landless. We are pledged to teach the Natives to stand on their own feet, but a landless native population will have no feet to stand on. We whites still have vast and more suitable lands for exclusive white settlement in both Americas, in New Zealand, in Australia. We cannot justify alienating even one acre of Tanganyika land to white settlers.

NATIVE HOUSING -- The art of building has decayed among the Natives of Tanganyika, in our towns and in their villages, because we have made it increasingly difficult for them to obtain the familiar materials in the use of which they have acquired skill and efficiency; also because we set before them false standards by building for them and wanting them to build for themselves structures agreeable to our styles and mode of living, but largely unfit for Africans and Equatorial Africa.

The Natives must be encouraged to improve and elaborate their own styles and types of structures, far more suited than ours to native needs and habits, to land and climate. This could be done by making again the best familiar
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materials easily available to home builders; by stimulating originality, emulation and pride with frequent exhibitions, contests and prizes; by requiring native chiefs and sub-chiefs (jumbe, watware, wanangwa) to build their residences according to the best native specifications and standards as models for the communities under them.

On page 1642 of his "African Survey", published in 1935, Lord Hailey says that "compared with other administrations (sic), British officers in Africa appear to be unduly occupied with routine work." Administrators, both white and black, not unduly occupied with routine work, especially those in bush posts (Maswa, Ngudu, Kiberege, Mbulu, Biharamulo, Ngara - to name six out of sixty), might find ample time to educate a growing number of native communities to original, graceful, durable, comfortable and sanitary dwellings befitting land and people; find time to generalize a simple type of latrine; to endow village after village with a permanent supply of good water - two vital requirements persistently neglected outside the few towns. We should adjust our sights to an African focus, and find a middle course between Bantu waterhole and western waterworks with pumps, filters, tanks, pipes, and all the fixtures.

EDUCATION -- One main cause of political and economic difficulties, and of the growing ills afflicting the Tanganyika Natives, is our set assumption that our way is the best way, nay, the only way of doing anything and everything anywhere and everywhere, at the poles, at the equator and in-between. This assumption is not applied to waterholes and waterworks alone; it is applied to education to such an unreasonable degree in Tanganyika that the bulk of the native population, after sixty years of European rule, is still left without any education whatsoever because it is clearly impossible to educate even one-tenth of them according to our methods and curricula. To make matters infinitely worse we are rapidly destroying tribal and family authority, discipline and prestige; robbing the young of the culture, experience, lessons and restraints of their elders and of their native society; giving to most of them in exchange mills, mines, prostitution - and jails.

The Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish governments have assured to the "primitive" Lapps complete enjoyment of their liberties and modes of life, practically urging them to follow the traditional lines of their own culture. Nomad schools do fine work in that direction. Something similar can be planned and developed in Tanganyika to kindle originality, to awaken in the Native the pride he lacks or has lost. It is a great loss to mankind that we whites should force that cheerful and vigorous people to ape us miserably and unsuccessfully in everything, even in skin and hair.

There are scattered throughout Tanganyika hundreds of public structures called baraza in Swahili, court houses to us. Some are thatched sheds of
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native timbers; some solid buildings of stone or concrete, handsome iron-roofed arcades with built-in masonry seats, benches, a rostrum, and usually a room or two in which native officers and clerks transact public business, in which I have often camped when on safari. The business is mostly litigation, the trying of petty offenders, and tax-gathering. A dispensary in charge of a native dresser is usually attached to the baraza. The government uses the baraza to spread information regarding taxation, agriculture, live stock, health, sanitation.

The baraza can be made the starting point and core of a system of country-wide free village education in Swahili; an education without religious labels - Bantu, Christian or Moslem - labels that always drive large numbers of Natives away from educational activities; an education conceived along slowly and carefully modified native tribal lines to nourish native minds and meet native needs in a native way; an education in which the Three R's might be reserved for itinerant (nomad) or permanent native teachers as they become available, but which would make immediately full use of what might be called local talent: of chiefs, sub-chiefs, male and female elders; also of government officers on circuit, travelers, and the like. The government can begin at once to use the baraza to acquaint the rank and file of the native population with the fact, aims and terms of the Trusteeship, and thus build up throughout the land groups of loyal, informed, intelligent co-operators.

This kind of education, which I suggest be extended at once to a large section of the native population, young and old, male and female, will require for a beginning neither schools nor teachers as we whites understand those establishments. It will require only a fuller use of the existing physical and cultural resources; and particularly a more general use of the greatest cultural asset, the Swahili language, which spells literacy, culture, union, progress to the Tanganyika Natives. And it should be the live colloquial Swahili of the home, of the market place, of the routes of travel; the Swahili used in buying and selling, in scolding and praising, in quarreling and in love-making, rather than the artificial, stilted, lifeless, bookish Swahili affected by government, schools, and missions under the influence of the Inter-territorial Language Committee. The English press of East Africa frequently upbraids and ridicules the Committee for tampering with Swahili, for debasing the currency of the language with spurious tokens of its own forging.

Document T/PET.2/40 was not intended to convey the impression that I, or any of the Tanganyika native groups for whom I speak, dislike the British /administration,

administration, and would wish the Trust Territory transferred to another Power. Large numbers of Natives still living remember, as I do, the ruthless German rule; others know what goes on under other Powers elsewhere in Bantu Africa. They prefer their present guardians, and so do I. The second paragraph on page 31 of Document T/PET.2/40 takes for granted the continuation and anticipates a worthy culmination of British rule. Older people, Natives, Europeans, Indians, may sometimes be heard to regret what they call the good old German days, but I know that they are really regretting their youth - I am an older person myself.

The British government of Tanganyika is a good government, but it can be improved. I see, however, disquieting tendencies; by which I mean tendencies unfavourable to the Natives. Those Natives responded promptly and loyally to Britain's call in September 1939; throughout the war years they gave freely services, commodities and lives with far less expectation of reward than the Europeans under whom they toiled and fought, than the Asians who seemed to carry on business as usual. The black Tanganyika soldiers were still nursing the wounds suffered in Burma when Britain drew up White Papers Colonial Nos. 191 and 210, both likely to weaken the guarantees pledged in the Trusteeship. On page 9, second paragraph, of Document T/PET.2/40 I point to an alarming difference in wording between the Covenant of the League of Nations and the United Nations Charter. It is a fact that every deviation from that Covenant, every change in the economic and political setup of the British Dependencies in East Africa weakens the status of the native populations.

I have already quoted Lord Hailey as saying that British officers in Africa appear to be unduly occupied with routine work; and on page 9, last paragraph of Document T/PET.2/40, I stress that such is increasingly the case in Tanganyika. I do not believe that the trend of which Lord Hailey complains can be checked in that Trust Territory without injecting into the Colonial Civil Service a new spirit, a new outlook, new aims; without a reversal of attitude toward the Natives. I suggest that the new attitude should be that those Natives, the Blacks of Tanganyika, our wards, are not savages, not inferior, not backward; that they must be considered to stand on a level, on a par with Whites, Browns and Yellows, as equals among equals in a common progress which, to all appearances, has hardly begun. Instead of being kept down "in their places", as we like to say, they should be assisted to a consciousness of dignity as a people, as a nation - the nation that will learn from Britain to stand on its own feet.

As a first step, they should be made to feel secure in the possession of their lands, secure that Tanganyika is theirs, their own home land. The government should receive a new orientation mainly and chiefly directed to

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encourage and help its black wards to develop in peace and security their peculiar gifts for their own welfare and happiness, for the advancement and delight of mankind as a whole, rather than be forced into hats, collars and neckties. Let them be taught to develop themselves and mainly for their own use the resources of their land, instead of being forced to toil without intelligent co-operation or appreciation, without receiving an equitable share of the fruits of their labours, as has always been and still is the case.

I am convinced that such a new orientation, especially as it would affect the way of thinking of administrators and educators, would regenerate in a few years the government of Tanganyika from top to bottom, from white governor to black messenger, and convert it from the bureaucracy criticized by Lord Hailey into a genuine Trusteeship; and that it would heal the government of a disease also mentioned by Lord Hailey on page 1624 of his "African Survey", namely lack of continuity, excessive turnover in administrative personnel. I have seen much of that turnover as due to frustration. A good faithful servant cannot be kept long at an ambiguous task; cannot be made to go on paying lip service to the high aims and ideals of a trusteeship, and be expected at the same time to countenance and connive in flagrant continuous violations. But if the task is clear and clean cut one way or the other, earnest, enthusiastic, tireless workers will always be found, let the task be the destructive autocracy of a Nero, or the constructive democracy of a Lincoln.

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Document T/PET.2/40 was not intended to convey the impression of being purely and exclusively the expression of my own personal opinions and feelings, although, technically speaking, it is true that I have acted on my own in the sense that I do not carry what we call commissions or credentials from native groups openly organized and recognized in our western sense. As one result of ages of oppression and exploitation, Negroes nearly everywhere, and also in Tanganyika, do not generally feel that they have sincere brothers in European, Arab or Indian; nor do they generally feel that they have toward us moral obligations involving a full measure of trust and truthfulness. They do not yet feel that it is safe for them to conduct openly many of their religious, social, familiar, or fraternal activities. Missionaries are still found who will go about the villages to destroy the humble shrines and graves that mean to the Natives, in their terms, what Westminster Cathedral and the Arlington National Cemetery mean to us, in our terms.

It is, of course, a fact that native organizations are active in Tanganyika as they are in all Bantu lands including Jamaica and Haiti; and as the Germans suddenly realized when overtaken by a Nemesis of their own conjuring, the Maji-Maji insurrection of 1905, which they called a rebellion. Then, when the

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German soldiery met burnings with burnings and killings with killings, many asked why during long years humble petitions had been met with arrogant rebuffs; why pleas for equity, justice and redress had been ignored; why the Kaiser had failed to protect the Natives of his East African Protectorate against extortion, injustice, cruelty.

During over twenty years of close relations with the Natives of Tanganyika I did more than just trade with them, than just enjoy their boundless hospitality. In my far-flung safaris, during which I must have marched at least ten thousand miles crisscrossing the land on foot in every direction, I was often forced to use and even join native groups, sometimes to help myself, sometimes to help my hosts, the Natives whom I endeavour to help now with my appeals to the Trusteeship Council.

Although divided, and kept divided by agencies allegedly imported to help them, the Natives of Tanganyika are increasingly aware and resentful of injustice, unfair discrimination and ingratitude. I will give one instance out of many. A Burma veteran, a chauffeur, employed as night watchman, complained to me: "With my savings and discharge money I bought a bus to run a passenger service. I was refused licence because I am a black man, and the licence was given to a Sikh convicted twice of fraud. I had to sell my bus to that Sikh at great loss. Why does the government help the Indians, who are wageni, strangers, against us, the wenyeji, the natives of the land?"

When the black soldier spoke thus to me, a white man, I leave it to the Council to imagine how he must have spoken to his fellows day after day and, worse, in their secret meetings night after night. If there had been legitimate reasons for refusing him the licence, they had not been made clear to him. He was convinced that they were mere evasions and tricks to keep him down with his fellow Negroes, to keep him poor. I appeal to the Council to act toward making the Natives of Tanganyika know that they have in the United Nations sincere and disinterested friends who want to lift them up, to educate them, to make them prosperous and happy.

Yours respectfully,

/signed/ Marius Fortie

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Received at the United Nations on 16 January 1948.