

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

JBG-32
Mau Mau and Nairobi

Nairobi, Kenya
17 November 1952

Mr. Walter S. Rogers
Institute of Current World Affairs
522 Fifth Avenue
New York 36, New York

Dear Mr. Rogers:

This is an interim note to say a few things before I get inside the picture here in Nairobi and become able to go into more detail about the Mau Mau¹ disturbances.

When we were in the act of leaving Moshi we had called in at the house of Dick Clifford, a District Officer with whom we are on the friendliest terms. I told him we were going up to Nairobi principally to get a close look at Mau Mau and anti-Mau Mau activities. He and his wife made a point of inviting us to stay over night at their house and leave the next morning. In contrast to his usually relaxed noon hour attitude he kept glancing at his watch and saying that he had to return to the Boma. It turned out, as we later surmised on seeing a huge convoy of armed police moving on the Arusha-Moshi road, that we actually were leaving a scene of anti-Mau Mau activity. Obviously Clifford knew this, but could not violate secrecy and tell us. On the strength of seeing the police convoy we could have returned to Moshi but I chose to come on here. The area north of Nairobi is the real seat of Mau Mau activities. This was only a precautionary police raid to seize a number of immigrant Kikuyu having Mau Mau connections and possibly some Mau Mau members who had fled across the border into Tanganyika. The Kenya Police Reserve Emergency Company, cooperating with Tanganyika Police, used six armored vehicles manned by thirty Europeans together with fifty askaris in two troop carriers to round up Africans up to an altitude of 10,000 feet on Kilimanjaro. Forty-odd Kikuyus, who were on the Tanganyika Mau Mau blacklist and against whom deportation orders had been signed by the Governor, were arrested and have been handed over to the Kenya Police. As the second phase of the Tanganyika Government's campaign to dispel the Mau Mau from the Northern Province, the Provincial Commissioner has been holding a series of barazas or native meetings in Kikuyu settlements, warning the Kikuyus that they will be removed from the territory permanently for subversive activities. Plans had also been made for the registration of all Kikuyu men over 16, the granting of permits to those considered fit to remain in the territory and the expulsion of all those considered a likely danger to peace. The Provincial Commissioner has also announced government plans for the future administration of the Kikuyus through their own headmen and courts.

1. I can provide a more correct definition of the words Mau Mau than given in the footnote of the newsletter on the Mau Mau. The word Mau implies great power, or tremendous size - something to create awe and fear. One translation could be Mighty, Mighty, or perhaps more accurately, the fearsome terror. I should have guessed this from the name of the steep wall of the Great Rift Valley, called the Mau Escarpment.

Nairobi is peaceful, with none or very little of the gun-toting by Europeans which the District Commissioner of Kondoia described as prevailing three weeks back. No armored cars are in the streets (although I did see three obsolescent armored cars, two parked and one turning off the road, the day we came into town) and the only sign of extensive police activity is that a number of the blue-sweatered native policemen are carrying loaded rifles and there is perhaps a little less than normal vehicular traffic in the streets after dark. In the residential area whose outspread nature renders professional police patrolling impracticable the civilian emergency patrols continue to operate. Because of these civilian patrols and the increased police activity, and perhaps because of the increased alertness of the European population and the generally greater readiness of loaded firearms, the crime statistics and burglaries and house-breakings are lower now in Nairobi than in any recent period. A number of Africans attempting to break into houses have been shot by Europeans.

To the north the disorders continue but no longer at the same intensity. The weekend of November 15th which was designated "Black Weekend" in the East African Standard saw several further violences. A European woman near Nyeri was shot by an African with a pistol at point blank range but has survived. An Asiatic woman was strangled in a house on a European farm. This is the first reported killing of an Asiatic, seeming to go against a previously apparent Mau Mau policy of exempting Asiatics from violence, but it is important that it took place on a European farm and that the Asiatic woman was in European employ. On November 15th the home of some European farmers near Thompson's Falls was raided by a party of Kikuyu, four of whom were said to have been carrying rifles. Four rifles were stolen from the home and the safe containing the bolts of the rifles was broken into so that whole weapons were obtained by the robbers. The raid took place shortly after the departure of the couple for a shopping visit, and the house was ransacked thoroughly by the raiders. The same day near Naivasha an African police informer was attacked. One of his arms was almost completely severed and he had other serious body wounds. A European lodge was burned down near Gilgil. Three days earlier (November 12th) Africans attempted to murder a European couple in their home near Thompson's Falls. An African Chief, Eliud of Karatina, has been shot at three times since the Emergency was declared. And Mau Mau oath-taking ceremonies are still taking place.

Military and police patrols have continued roundups of suspects, and the establishment of permanent police stations in the Kikuyu locations - the third phase of "Operation Jock Scott" - has begun. Patrols under a reconnaissance force of White Hunters and their trackers have been carried out in the Aberdares. As a "punitive action" against a section of the tribe which had been hostile, livestock belonging to Kikuyus in the Thegenge location of Nyeri - 3,775 cattle and 6,095 sheep and goats - were seized by the government, and the effect of the roundup on the local Kikuyus has been described as "shattering."

The Kenya Government has proscribed the Kikuyu Independent Schools' Association, of which Jomo Kenyatta¹ was the President, and the Kikuyu Karing'a Educational

1. Jomo Kenyatta was arrested on October 20th for his connection with the Mau Mau disturbances and has been interned in the Northern Frontier District. Before the war he was President of the Kikuyu Central Association which was proscribed as an illegal society in 1940 and from which Mau Mau is believed to have developed. At the time of his arrest he was President of the Kenya African Union, an allegedly legitimate political organization. Kenyatta spent the years 1930-1946 in England where he worked as a farm laborer and married the daughter of an engineer. During this period he visited Moscow and was much feted there, but on his return he declared himself no longer a communist.

Association and closed 34 schools, most of which were controlled by the K.I.S.A. on the grounds that they were used in the Mau Mau movement. Another 150 independent schools will be permitted to continue for the remainder of the term but then they must prove that the teachers and members of the schools' committees are not engaged in any subversive movement and the schools must come under District Education Board management, which involves appointment of teachers by the Board.

On November 11th a British teacher who taught at the Government Indian Secondary School, Nairobi, was dismissed because he "engaged in political activities improper in a Government officer" such as attending a secret meeting with many leaders of subversive activities in Kenya. He was declared a prohibited immigrant and forced to leave the territory. Later in England the teacher denied that he had come across Mau Mau, attended any subversive meeting, or had any connections with subversive activities. He declared he had no connections with any political party and was certainly not a communist.

Eight persons (including five of the original six and three others) have now been charged with the murder of Senior Chief Waruhiu and police have said another seven people may be charged with the murder. The three lawyers representing the accused - including my Moshi acquaintance, Mr. J.D. Thompson, a Jamaican - have protested vigorously to the magistrate about continued delays in fixing a date of hearing for the case because the police were not prepared. Mr. Thompson declared that he opposed the "dilatatory methods being used to bring these people before this tribunal." He added that "there are other counsel further away interested in it," and this morning it was announced that Mr. Dingle Foot, with whom Thompson had been associated in England, would arrive in Nairobi early in December to help with the defense of ex-Senior Chief Koinange. This indicates that there is at least a small element in England sympathetic toward the Kikuyu tribe.

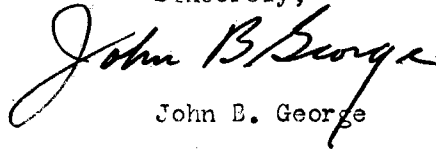
This morning's East African Standard says "One of the many disquieting features is an indication of the spread of the Mau Mau cult to the Coast." Eleven Africans were arrested in connection with a Mau Mau oath-taking ceremony near the Nyali Beach Hotel. It is significant, however, that all these Africans were Kikuyus, immigrant from the affected area north of Nairobi. There is as yet no tangible evidence of the spread of the cult outside the Kikuyu tribe. The other tribe which because of its proximity and similarity to the Kikuyu would be suspected of similar subversive inclinations is the Wakamba. The Wakamba chiefs have publicly denounced the Mau Mau movement and have said that the Wakamba people will have nothing to do with it. Whether the pronouncements of the Wakamba chiefs are genuinely and thoroughly backed by the Wakamba tribe may be uncertain, but there is practically no reported evidence of oath-taking ceremonies among the Wakamba.

Apart from Mau Mau the only other Nairobi impression is of the town's rapid mushroom growth and change. Here in the heart of Africa I drove as I would in Chicago's Loop for a mile down rows of parked cars and through streaming, honking traffic without finding a place to park my jeep. Acres of automobiles are parked in the lot near the Secretariat and the principal arteries of Delamere Avenue

and Government Road are crowded so thickly that it seems obvious that it is only a matter of time before parking meters and garages appear. Several new buildings have just been completed and hardly an office, it seems, can be found at the address of several months before. Everything is moving and growing. An Indian store, Ahamed Brothers, which only a few months ago was content with a fairly extensive showroom and storeroom is now trying to arrange for a building which will multiply its store and storage space five times. Since my last sight of the town five months ago practically every enterprise has grown noticeably and some enormously.

One question much discussed by European scholars of Africa is Does the native really want our civilization? The trouble in Kenya provides no full answer. But it is notable that the terrorism, aimed at the ejection from East Africa of the white man and his ideas, has originated in the tribe most exposed to European progress, in and around the modern, newly chartered city of Nairobi.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John B. George". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

John B. George

Received New York 11/21/52.