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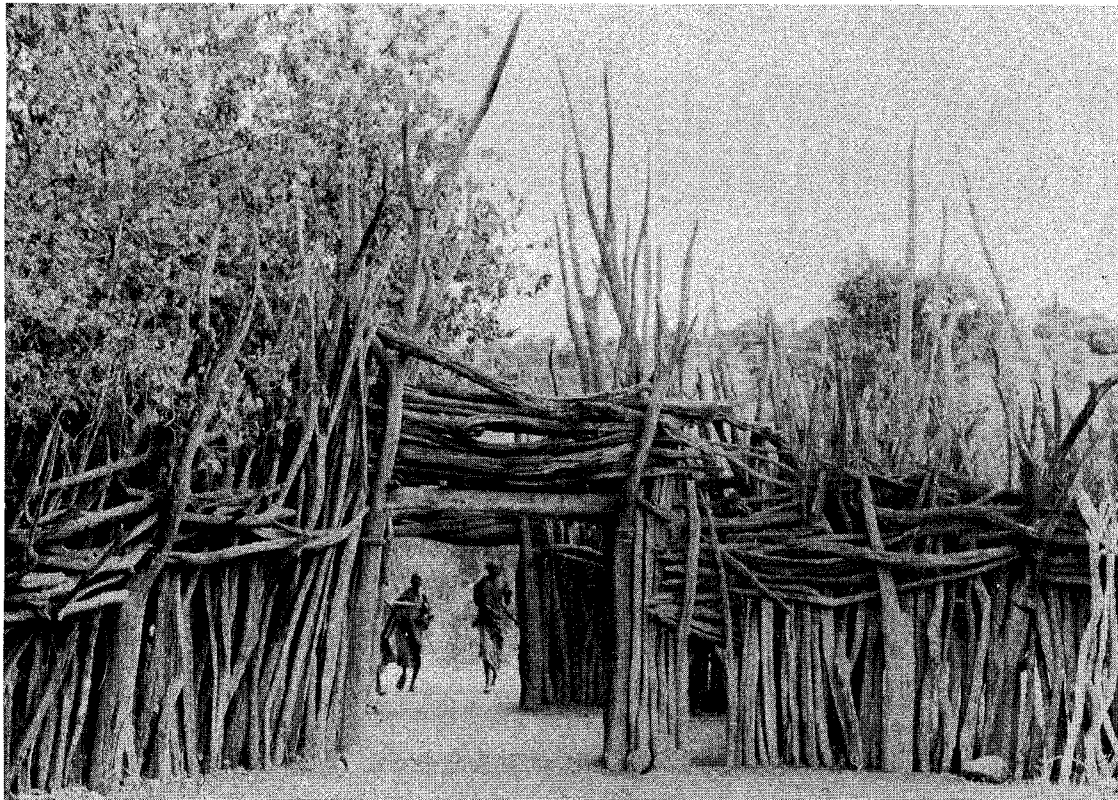
RFG - 15  
Sonjo Headlines

c/o Barclays Bank  
Arusha, Tanganyika  
October 10, 1955

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

Dear Mr. Rogers:

As there is no newspaper in Sonjo, I have imagined a SONJO DAILY HERALD. This paper would serve the four or five thousand people who inhabit the six villages comprising the Sonjo Tribe, which forms a Bantu enclave in the interior of northern Masailand in Tanganyika. The DAILY HERALD, as I imagine it, is an independent paper which prides itself on its progressive views: but the editor is nevertheless a Sonjo. To give you some idea of recent events in Sonjoland, I shall simply copy a few leading items from the imaginary newspaper and send them along without making further comment.



Gateway of Fortified Sonjo Village

## SONJO GETS AGRICULTURE INSTRUCTOR

(Sept. 26) Mr. Paulo Dick, a Tanganyika Government Agriculture Instructor, arrived last week from Loliondo to instruct Sonjo farmers in modern techniques of cultivation. In an exclusive interview with a HERALD reporter, Paulo explained that his assignment was to teach the Sonjo how to plow with oxen. "When this art has been mastered," he stated, "food production in the country will be considerably increased. Famine years may then be a thing of the past." Paulo will start working at Samunge and then continue at the twin villages of Digodigo Juu and Digodigo Chini. At present these are the only villages at which cattle are kept. Another milestone of progress is marked at Sonjo with Paulo's visit.

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## CATHOLICS GRANTED MISSION SITE

### Special Baraza At Samunge

(Sept. 27) A special meeting of Samunge elders was called by Mayor Kasedi Mogide yesterday for the purpose of reconsidering the application of the Roman Catholic Church to establish a mission at Samunge. Father Hillman, who is remembered from a number of previous visits to Sonjo, arrived in the morning and requested the meeting. According to Father Hillman, recent events have so altered the situation that the time is now ripe for establishing a Catholic Mission in Sonjo. The cautious fears of the past must be cast off if Sonjo is to forge ahead on the road to progress.

Father Hillman's enthusiasm communicated itself to the meeting, and the elders were nearly unanimous in their approval of his request. The young men of the warrior classes (both senior and junior) were described as being delighted with the decision. They seem to have a genuine thirst for the Catholic religion. Up to now there has been no formal teaching of Catholic doctrine in the country, but the proposed teacher for the new school, a Samunge man of senior warrior grade, has been living outside of the village in a foreign-style house on the site where the mission will be built. The attitude of the meeting was typified by Kalosi Baranayigu, senior elder of Samunge, who, although he intends to live out his remaining days in the Tribal religion, extended a cordial welcome to the Catholics on behalf of the village.

As was to be expected, the only dissenting voice came from Ginoria Koroi, who has long been associated with the Lutherans and lives at the site of their mission at Samunge. Contesting the alleged unanimity in favor of the Catholics, Ginoria cited the baptism of twenty-two Samunge people at the Lutheran Church only two weeks ago. He addressed the elders, reminding them that a few years ago they had placed their thumb-prints on a document at Sonjo Baraza which refused the Catholic Mission permission to enter the country. Kalosi Baranayigu then strode before the assembly and leaned on his long staff with all the dignity of a prophet of old. "Bring us that paper now," he said, "and we will rub our thumb-prints out."

Father Hillman expressed satisfaction with the result of the meeting. "A good start has been made," he said. An American priest from Boston, he belongs to the missionary order of the Holy Ghost Fathers. Together with

two other missionaries he carries on mission work in Arusha and Masai Districts from the headquarters in Arusha. Progress among the tribes of Arusha District--the Meru and Arusha Tribes--has been slow, owing to the fact that the Lutheran Church was established first in those areas. The town of Arusha also comes under Father Hillman's mission. Most of his time is spent traveling over the 24,000 square miles of Masai District, supervising the ten mission stations which serve the Masai Tribe. It is estimated that over two hundred Masai are now baptized Catholics.

After the meeting Father Hillman visited the camp of the American travelers at Digidigo, where he was entertained at dinner. He returned to Loliondo the next day after promising that there would be no unnecessary delay in starting construction on the new mission.

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#### DANGER TO SONJO OXEN

##### Plowing Scheme Termed "Rash"

(Sept. 28) Reports from Samunge indicate that the government project for introducing the ox-drawn plow has come to a standstill through shortage of oxen to train. Mr. Paulo Dick, the Agriculture Instructor who has been working on this project for several weeks, stated that he is at a loss to understand the situation. "The cattle population of the village is more than sufficient for the success of the program," he asserted, "but the owners are unaccountably reluctant to offer their oxen for training."

When the elders of Samunge were sounded for their opinion, they stated that the plan was basically unsound. One of the leading elders explained that to tie an ox to an unwieldy iron contraption and force it to pull undoubtedly did the animal great harm. "We are all for progress," he said, "but when visionary schemes of this kind are foisted upon us, common sense must prevail." He went on to point out the plain indecency of making animals do the work of women. "May the time never come when we look on our cattle as things to be used and broken like tools," he said. "This is a rash and foolish venture."

Another Samunge cattle-owner refuted the notion of plowing with oxen by tracing briefly the history of agriculture in Sonjo. "Our forefathers were given digging-sticks and wives by their God for the purpose of cultivating the land," he said. "For untold generations our Tribe has prospered, though surrounded on every side by the formidable Masai. Whatever our individual preferences may be in regard to religion, we are all agreed that Hambageu, our Tribal God, must be honored by following the traditional ways that he enjoined on us, and by propitiating him with the necessary sacrifices." He expressed doubt that the land would produce crops if the digging-stick were abandoned. He then cited the well-known episode of the iron hoes.

A few years ago an overzealous agriculture officer brought 200 iron hoes to Sonjo and distributed them to be used in place of digging-sticks. The women were scandalized at the time and demanded that they be destroyed. But the resourceful Sonjo people found a better use for them. They were converted into cymbals which are played by warriors at dances. "Instead of mocking our God as the foreigners intended," an elder said, "they now ring out his glory."

at every sacrifice. If the digging-stick was good enough for our grandmothers," he concluded, "it is good enough for our wives. If we give in on this issue, they will be asking us next to buy cloth for our women and throw away their goat-skin garments."

Cattle-raising is a comparatively new activity in Sonjo, as some of the other elders pointed out. It is significant that Ginoria Koroi was among the first Sonjo to acquire cattle some ten years ago. Prior to that time we had only herded goats. - This was not, as some cynics say, because the Masai would have plundered us of any cattle we possessed, but rather in obedience to the ancient commandment of our God. It is generally acknowledged that Hambageu has revoked his injunction and that cattle-raising is now lawful. But this does not excuse Ginoria for his irreverent innovation in acquiring cattle for purely selfish motives, with no thought for the welfare of the country. "Should this newly-granted privilege now be abused," snapped old Kalosi, "by making our oxen toil across the fields like a party of digging-stick women!"

The Agriculture Instructor explained that he required a minimum of six oxen to make a plow team. So far only four have been presented for instruction. These come from the herd of Ginoria Koroi.

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#### SONJO FREED OF FOREIGNERS

(Sept. 29) After residing in Sonjo for seven years, Saidi Omari left this morning with his woman and several baskets of belongings for Loliondo where the Omaris will establish a permanent home. Saidi has accepted employment there as gardener for the District Officer.

Saidi first appeared in Loliondo as a road worker twenty years ago. He quickly formed a liaison with a Samunge woman which has lasted until the present. The woman had left her lawful husband in Sonjo. Although Saidi referred to the woman as his "wife" he had never legally purchased her from the first husband, and his relations with her remained strictly illicit.

Having acquired a plot of land near Digodigo, Saidi brought his family to Sonjo seven years ago. Using iron hoes and other bizarre methods of cultivation, he reaped enormous crops from his fields. This example has been a standing warning against the use of unorthodox methods of tillage, because there is no knowing what forms of dangerous magic he used on his shamba. As one farmer put it, "He steals our women and pollutes our soil with vicious charms."

Saidi's "wife" bore three children, who properly belong to her first husband's heirs. They are all baptized Lutherans. The two daughters were sent to school--the only girls of Sonjo parentage to have flagrantly flouted decency in this manner. The eldest daughter Mary is engaged to marry the court clerk at Loliondo. At present she is recovering from a circumcision which was performed in an off-season ceremony at the request of her fiance, who is also a Lutheran. The mother is reputed to be contemplating baptism in the Lutheran Church at Loliondo. Saidi himself is a Mohamedan. He was the only foreigner to reside permanently at Sonjo. Few people will now admit to having been friendly with him.

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## FATAL ACCIDENT

### Digodigo Man Killed By Poisoned Arrow

(Sept. 30) Stealing water is a familiar crime in the annals of Sonjo law. Although the offense is punished with a sharp fine when detected, water-stealing has never been considered a shameful deed. A man has to get water for his fields somehow. The justice which was dealt out by fate last night for a crime of this nature was indeed severe.

Sukutani was illegally flooding his field from a breach which he had made in the irrigation ditch last night. Sadigi, the owner of the neighboring field, was sitting on a platform waiting to chase away wild pigs which had been rooting up his growing sweet potatoes lately. It was pitch dark. He thought he heard a pig in the corner of his field. He let fly an arrow and heard a human cry. On running out to investigate he found that Sukutani had been pierced through the arm by the arrow. There was nothing to be done but help the wounded man to his home in Digodigo Chini. The poison was mild and acted slowly. He lived almost an hour before dying in the bosom of his family.

There were differing comments on this tragedy. Some people professed to see a connection between the shooting and a recent government proclamation concerning irrigation water. This confusing order stated that irrigation water is the common property of the whole tribe; that no one has individual ownership rights over water; and that no one must be denied the water that he needs for his fields. It is hard to know what is meant by all this. The irrigation water for each village has been controlled by the village Water Board ever since the Sonjo God first created the springs which produce the water. Membership on the Water Board has been handed on from father to son over the generations. These men have an unassailable right to their position. Their own shambas are well watered. In strictest justice they assign periods for the use of water to anyone who is wealthy enough to pay tribute of an occasional goat to the Water Board. The rest of the people are free to obtain water as best they can. The usual custom is to request the water that is left over when a board member's field is soaked and his assigned period is not yet finished. Those who cannot afford the small gift of money or beer which this request involves are reduced to stealing water at night, like the deceased Sukutani. According to one interpretation of the government order, the Water Board would be robbed of its hereditary water rights. This would indeed be catastrophic. "In that case," a member of the Water Board predicted, "we would all be obliged to steal our water."

The brothers of Sukutani have announced their intention of suing Sadigi (who belongs to a different clan) for a hundred goats in compensation for the wilful slaying of their brother. Their prospects of gaining this wealth are remote. In all probability the case will go on appeal before the District Officer at Loliondo, and Sadigi will get off scot-free. Even if he is judged guilty, the brothers of Sukutani will not get their just compensation: he will simply be fined or put in prison.

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### NEW CHURCH RAISED AT SALUNGE

(Oct. 1) True to his promise of prompt action, Father Hillman arrived Friday with a truckload of angle iron and corrugated iron which he brought from

the Catholic Mission at Loliondo. The quiet American priest smiled and said, "With the help of God we will erect the church in one day and celebrate Mass Sunday morning." And so it happened. There was no lack of willing but fumbling hands to piece together the iron parts, like a giant Mechano Toy. Sometimes the pieces were bolted together the wrong way, then taken apart and fitted correctly. By nightfall the frame was finished and part of the walls were in place. Only the roof was entirely lacking. The people of Samunge are breathlessly waiting to witness the first Catholic Mass ever to be celebrated in Sonjo.

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#### TEACHERS THREATENED

##### Quarrel Over Dead Calf

(Oct. 2) A calf belonging to a Digodigo family fell into the irrigation furrow near the government school and was killed Sunday afternoon. The wife of the owner soon appeared and accused the two teachers, who were present at the time, of causing the calf's death. A number of passers-by, including the mayor of Digodigo Juu, stopped to listen to the argument. Tempers rose and accusations and counteraccusations were made. Finally the group broke up without reaching an agreement.

Later the same evening the two teachers, Bernard and Francis, walked to the camp of the American travelers and reported that they had been threatened with death. According to the story of the frightened teachers, a Digodigo cattle-owner named Lodinyi had said to them: "I will shoot you with poisoned arrows so that you die far from home." Bernard and Francis, who both come from the Chaga Tribe, had written a letter to the District Officer telling of the death threat. They left this in the safekeeping of the Americans, so that if they were killed during the night their slayer would not escape being brought to justice for his crime.

When questioned about the affair, the owner of the dead calf said that he intended to accuse the teachers in baraza of killing his calf. Lodinyi, the alleged threatener, denied that he had made serious threats against the teachers. He said that on a previous occasion the teachers had shut two cows up in the school building, claiming that they had been grazing in the school garden. He concluded, "I only warned the teachers never to seize my cattle in this high-handed manner."

The teachers at the government school are newcomers of this school term. Not understanding Sonjo views on education, they professed to be amazed that there were no girls among the hundred-odd students in the school. They are both Catholics and have been giving religious instruction to students who request it. As a result of the respect in which the teachers are held, a large proportion of the children have expressed their desire to become Catholics. The adult population of nearby Digodigo has been less friendly. The teachers appear to be dissatisfied with the progress which has been achieved by our Tribe, and have been heard to refer to the school as a "punishment station."

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## CATHOLICS OUSTED

### Samunge Baraza Held Illegal

(Oct. 4) A meeting of tribal elders convened at Sonjo Baraza by the District Officer, Mr. F.G. Finch, ruled this morning that the building permit issued to the Catholic Mission last week was invalid. The Samunge baraza which granted the Catholics a building site had exceeded its authority in taking this action, it was decided. The building permit was revoked and the Catholics were ordered to remove their painted road-sign. It was to be understood that the Catholic Mission owned no land and had no property rights whatever in Sonjo. No formal teaching or religious services are to be allowed. Any further instruction in the Catholic faith must be done by private individuals on their own premises.

The 115 elders who were present at the baraza represented five of the six Sonjo villages. The short notice on which the meeting was called did not allow time for the Sale contingent to arrive. Sale is 18 miles from the baraza. The elders of Digodigo Juu, Digodigo Chine, Kisangero, and Ol Donyo Sambu voted alike in favor of all the motions passed by the baraza. Most of the Samunge elders opposed these motions and argued for the legality of the action taken at their own baraza last week.

(A full report on the baraza appears elsewhere in this paper)

### COMPLETE REPORT ON SONJO BARAZA

The District Officer arrived from Loliondo at nine A.M. looking stern and preoccupied. The elders were already foregathered at the baraza waiting for him, contrary to their custom at ordinary barazas of sauntering in towards noon. With no preliminary delay the meeting was brought to order. The five village mayors who were present took their places on the front bench. As usual, the proceedings were carried on bilingually. Sonjo speeches were made in our own language and translated into Swahili. The D.O. made his remarks in Swahili and they were translated into the Sonjo language. The head messenger of Sonjo, Simeon Ndula, acted as interpreter, and also dashed about the baraza scolding and pushing elders who were talking out of turn. The D.O. had to slam his book down on the table occasionally to restore silence. The main transactions of the baraza are reported immediately following point by point.

Mau Mau Patrol. The ten senior warriors who constitute the Sonjo Mau Mau Patrol reported no terrorist activity during the past month. They were then issued with their monthly ration of maize meal and paid their salary of forty shillings. No Mau Maus have appeared in Sonjo as yet, and the people are not sure what Mau Mau is all about. There is an unconfirmed rumor that the Kenya settlers plan to move to Sonjo if they are driven from their farms. The American travelers, whose object in coming to Sonjo remains obscure, were taken for the first of the displaced settlers. However, they denied the allegation, and up to now have made no effort to seize land for themselves.

Catholic Mission Site. The D.O. stated that he had been informed that the Catholics had been given a site at Samunge for building a mission. He asked the baraza to consider (a) whether the action of the Samunge elders was lawful according to Sonjo constitutional law, and (b) if not what should be done about

the mission, which now appeared to be a fait accompli. The elders were invited to express their views, which they proceeded to do most volubly. The more important testimony is reported below in the order in which it was given.

The Mayor of Digodigo Juu was on his feet first and gave a long impassioned speech to the effect that the Samunge elders had erred gravely: "The mission must go," he stated.

The next speaker was the mayor of Samunge. He started speaking directly to the D.O. in Swahili, but was made to start over again in Sonjo. According to this witness, the Samunge elders were well within their rights in acting as they did. "If the other villages do not like our Catholic church," he said, "let them stay away from it."

The mayor of Digodigo Chini then got up and made a slow careful speech. "Large nations," he said, "can afford to have many religions. But Sonjo is such a small country that it has no room for three religions."

A more legalistic view of the question was taken by the mayor of Kisangero. He reminded the meeting that all previous applications for a Catholic mission site had been considered and refused by a baraza of the whole Tribe. "Can one village allow what the whole Tribe has prohibited?" he asked.

The Samunge mayor answered that the Lutheran church was located at Samunge, but that all villages were free to make use of it.

Ngoyedi, a leading Kisangero elder, analyzed the problem from the standpoint of overall educational policy. The Lutheran mission and school had been situated at Samunge, he explained, because the government school and dispensary were near Digodigo. From their headquarters at Samunge, the Lutherans had then established bush schools at Sale and Ol Donyo Sambu. Thus all the villages were provided with schools, except for Kisangero which would have nothing to do with any mission out of respect for the temple of the tribal God located in that village.

The elders of Ol Donyo Sambu recorded their opposition to the Catholic Mission without elaborating their reasons.

The D.O. asked the elders of the other villages why they had not attended the Samunge baraza and thus prevented all the trouble which has ensued. He was answered by several elders that they had not been notified in advance and could not get there in time to take part in the baraza.

The D.O. then stated that the establishment of a Christian mission concerned the younger generation more than the elders, who would no doubt continue to follow the tribal religion in any case. He invited the young men of the Tribe to give their opinions.

Representatives of the warrior class of the other villages gave evidence in turn of their opposition to the Catholics.

The leader of the Samunge senior warriors, Mahoba, said that the youth of Samunge had their hearts set on a Catholic mission. He was followed by another Samunge warrior who tried to explain why the Catholic mission was so much



desired. "There are two main reasons why we want to be Catholics," he said. "First, we will be allowed by that religion to have two wives. Secondly, we will not be prevented, as we would be by the Lutherans, from taking part in sacrifices to our tribal God. In effect we will enjoy the double advantage of having two religions."

On hearing these words, the D.O. slammed his book on the table and shouted, "You are talking nonsense. Both of those reasons are false. I know, because I am a Catholic myself. A Catholic is allowed to have only one wife and must not worship pagan gods. On these questions there is no difference between Catholics and Lutherans." He went on to say that the baraza had been called to decide legal questions, and that there would be no more discussion of theology.

Old Kalosi, the senior elder of Samunge, who had been following the discussion closely, attempted to salvage the crumbling Samunge position by appealing to the baraza on the grounds of expediency. The Catholic padre, he said, had been so persistent in his efforts to establish a Sonjo mission that there was no gainsaying him. Sooner or later he would have his way, and it would save the tribe trouble if they let him in now. The D.O. endorsed these remarks. He also believed it was inevitable that the Catholics would ultimately get their mission, and that it would be a good thing for the country.

Ginoria Koroi, who had been mentioned by several previous speakers as working against the Catholics, was invited to make a statement as an unofficial representative of the Lutheran Mission and a Samunge elder. He said that he was in favor of Catholics or any other church that would help to raise the Sonjo out of their pagan ignorance. As for his alleged opposition to the Catholic Mission, he said that he had only tried to correct misconceptions about the Catholics which were prevalent in Samunge. Before allowing a new mission into Sonjo, the people should have some idea of what it stands for.

A Digodigo elder then reviewed the sociological reasons against a new mission. The uneasy truce which was now maintained between the two existing religions would undoubtedly be upset if a third religion were introduced, he said. The dignity of the tribal God, on whom everybody's welfare depended, would inevitably be further prejudiced in that case. The two present religions might turn son against father, but a third religion would turn brother against brother as well.

At this juncture the well-known singer and dancer from Digodigo Juu, Bokhama, jumped to his feet and sang out, "Enough talk; let's come to a decision!"

The D.O. summed up the question and gave his decision: "The whole country outside of Samunge is against the new mission. The Catholics applied for permission in the first place to Sonjo Baraza and were refused. Now they must wait until Sonjo Baraza is ready to grant that permission. In the meanwhile no single village is authorized to take action on the matter. Let the Catholics take down their sign immediately and remove their church from Sonjo territory within a reasonable period of time. The subject of missions is now closed. I am now going to eat food for one hour. We will then reassemble and consider other matters."

He then drove off to the Americans' camp. The camp cook reports that he was fed with curry and rice—a luncheon dish which is known to cause short tempers in the afternoon.

Teachers Acquitted. During the lunch hour the D.O. had read the letter informing him of the death threat made against the government teachers by Lodinyi. The afternoon session of the baraza began with a consideration of this case.

Lodinyi was first asked to answer the charge that he had threatened the teachers with poisoned arrows in front of witnesses. He admitted having warned the teachers not to meddle with his cattle, but denied having seriously threatened them with death. Witnesses to the altercation, including the mayor of Digodigo Juu, were unable to remember the exact words that were exchanged. The D.O. made Lodinyi admit that the teachers were justified in restraining cattle from grazing in the school garden, which is public property. He then reprimanded him severely for frightening the teachers with a threat, even if he had not really meant to kill them. "Good teachers are very scarce in Tanganyika," he concluded. "The government will never, under any circumstances, allow them to be killed wantonly."

The owner of the dead calf then formally charged the teachers with causing its death. This charge was not upheld. It appeared that there were no witnesses to the accident. The owner's belief in the teachers' guilt was based on nothing more substantial than his conviction that they were capable of such a vengeful act and had the means of causing the calf to fall to its death, even without using physical force.

Paramount Chief for Sonjo. The D.O. referred to a petition which had been sent to him requesting that Ginoria Koroi be appointed as paramount chief of Sonjo. He was greatly surprised to note that the petition had been thumb-marked by a number of prominent elders and the mayors of three villages including the mayor of Samunge who is known to be pro-Catholic and not on good terms with Ginoria who is Lutheran. These mayors were asked to state their present views on the matter.

One after the other the mayors stated their disapproval of having a paramount chief at all. "Why in the world did you sign the petition then," asked the D.O. There was visible reluctance to answer this question. They tried to change the subject. Several people talked at once. The D.O. was obliged to slam his book again. Finally, after much irrelevant talk, it transpired that the elders had thumb-printed the petition under the impression that it was an official government order appointing Ginoria as paramount chief.

The D.O. vehemently denied this. He brought out the charter of constitution for the Sonjo Native Authority and had it translated into Sonjo. Any change in the constitution, he explained, would require the approval of an all-Sonjo baraza. However, now that the subject had come up it may be a good time to sound general opinion.

The village mayors were all against the idea. The Sonjo villages have existed as independent groups from time immemorial, they stated, each one secure within its palisade of trees and its fortified gates, and each ruled by its own

Water Board under the leadership of a mayor. Every village has some distinctive customs of its own. Intermarriage between villages is uncommon and is never allowed in the case of a girl's first marriage. All that the villages have in common is their tribal God, Hambageu. Should all this be swept away now so that the villages lose their individuality and become merged as a common rabble under a single paramount chief? Moreover, would not the village mayors lose their jobs and government pay if a paramount chief were appointed?

The D.O. discounted these fears. He assured them that in the case of a paramount chief being appointed the village mayors would very likely keep their jobs and pay with, perhaps, reduced powers. He pointed out that the general trend of the world was in the direction of federation and unification. "Wise people everywhere are working for One World," he said. The Sonjo villages certainly had more common interests than religion. When the people felt that they were ready for unification under a paramount chief, they should notify the government and a tribal baraza would be arranged at which the District Commissioner himself would probably be present.

(Note: The DAILY HERALD, whose editorial policy has consistently favored a paramount chief, welcomes these words of the D.O. The present constitution is entirely inadequate for modern conditions. As it now reads, any one mayor and three elders are authorized to hold court at the baraza and sit in judgement in all categories of legal cases. None of the mayors are literate. As many young men have complained to us, justice is on sale to the highest bidder. There is no traditional precedent for the present set up. In the old days the Water Board of each village judged with wisdom and impartiality. Fines were paid directly to the Water Board and were used in sacrifices, for securing the welfare of the whole community. Now we come under the wider law of Tanganyika which the village elders cannot cope with. What is needed is a paramount chief having the education, legal knowledge, and power to insure that the new law is justly enforced. The only catch is that only one man in the whole country with the rank of elder can read and write. This is Ginoria Koroi the Lutheran. Although he has the formal qualifications for a paramount chief, he is notably hostile to the tribal religion and his appointment would encounter wide opposition, particularly from his home village of Samunge. There are, however, several young men of the warrior class now in the upper grades of school at Monduli. In four years time, at the next general initiation ceremony, these men will graduate to the rank of elders. Therefore we recommend that the whole question be deferred for four years; then that a Sonjo Baraza be convened to elect the most suitable of these young elders as paramount chief.)

Training of Plow-Oxen. The Agriculture Instructor informed the D.O. that his work was being held up because of lack of oxen to train. The reason for this state of affairs was inquired into, and witnesses testified that the scheme was basically unsound and fraught with danger to the oxen. The D.O., who appeared to be unfavorably affected by the afternoon heat, made gestures of impatience. All over the world for many centuries, he said, men had been plowing with oxen. It was in no sense a recent innovation. The results had been uniformly good. With less work farmers had reaped larger crops. He knew for certain there were enough cattle in the three western villages to supply teams of oxen. Therefore he charged the mayors of these villages to order the cattle-owners to produce the necessary oxen forthwith. By acting decisively in this matter they would prove to the government that they possessed

the intelligence and authority to retain their jobs as mayors.

The Agriculture Inspector then stated that through an oversight he had neglected to bring along the harness which was necessary for training oxen. If he could be supplied with a wildebeeste skin he promised to make a harness on the spot. The elders conferred on the question and reported that wildebeeste were not to be found in Sonjo territory. They recommended zebra, which are numerous and the favorite meat of the Sonjo. But zebra was declared unsuitable for ox-harness. In the end the D.O. decided to take the Agriculture Instructor with him to Loliondo and send him out with one of the special police officer who does a good deal of hunting.

Junior Warriors Assault Girls. Two junior warriors from Samunge recently arrived at Loliondo to appeal a verdict which had been declared against them of assaulting two girls. They had been sentenced to three and six months imprisonment respectively. These sentences sounded excessively severe in view of their own story that nothing more than "rough play" had been involved in the incident. The D.O. asked the members of the court that had sat in judgement to explain their action.

After much questioning and argument the actual crime was reconstructed as follows: The two warriors had crept up on the girls in the evening. One of the boys had snatched a string of beads from one of the girls "in fun." His companion had then "slapped" the other girl, and they had run away. The girls went straight to the mayor of Samunge and reported the outrage, grossly exaggerating the actual events. According to their story, the warriors had knocked one of the girls unconscious with a wooden club. The girl had a cloth around her head which she said concealed the wound.

The next day the mayor summoned the two warriors, called in another mayor and a few elders to constitute a court, and judged the case. He explained what had happened and proposed sentences which the court accepted: 30 shillings fine for the boy who snatched the beads, and 100 shillings for the boy who struck the other girl. The father of one of the boys was present and said that he would refuse to pay the fine. Thereupon the sentences were changed to three and six months imprisonment. The case was written up by the court clerk as the mayor had explained it and was duly thumb-marked by the court.

In the meanwhile the girls had told their mother of the affair. She explained to them that by Sonjo kinship custom they stood in the relationship of sisters to the warriors and were not allowed to accuse them in court. If there had really been a serious assault, the case would have had to be settled within the clan. This was the reason that the girls had not appeared in court as accusing witnesses. After the trial was finished the mother of the girls came up and explained the true situation. The court elders were sympathetic but said that it was too late to change the verdict as they had already affixed their thumb prints. The court clerk made no mention of this later development of the case in his record book.

The D.O., by now rather red in the face, termed the case "a flagrant miscarriage of justice." On a number of points, he said, the fundamental principles of British justice had been violated. Among the more important errors which he listed were these: Judgement had been passed by the court without hearing any proper witnesses. The president of the court had played

the role of the chief and only witness and had dictated the verdict to the court. The original sentence had been changed on the supposition that the fine would not be paid. The final sentence was not proportionate to the first and was excessively severe for the alleged crime. No note was taken of fresh evidence which completely altered the complexion of the case.

It was decreed that the appeal be sustained and the boys were acquitted of all charges. The elders were cautioned that hereafter they must listen carefully to all the witnesses who might be involved in a case before making a fair and impartial judgement. The D.O. referred back to the subject of a Sonjo paramount chief. "The time is fast approaching when such an official will be essential," he said.

This ended the baraza.

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#### UNREST AT SAMUNGE

(Oct. 5) A report has come from Samunge that the warriors have been dancing in the village plaza for the last two nights. During the day these young men go to their camp in the forest to eat quantities of goat meat, as is their custom. They also drink tea made from the bark of certain trees which arouses them to a pitch of excitement. During the course of the evening dancing a number of them have fits of frenzy and have to be restrained by their comrades from causing serious injury.

It is well understood that when warriors dance in this way, when there is no special holiday to be celebrated, they are expressing discontent and working themselves up to the point where they make a demand to the elders of the village. According to usually reliable sources, the Samunge warriors have been angered by the actions of the court clerk Samuel and the Samunge elder Ginoria, and they are expected to demand that these men be expelled from the country, by force if necessary.

Many of the warriors believe that Samuel has complete control of the Sonjo court and writes up judgements in favor of the man who pays him the highest. As the warriors have little wealth at their disposal, they complain of coming off badly when summoned to court. They would like to see the present clerk replaced with one who is more sympathetic to the warriors.

In the case of Ginoria, the warriors feel that his continued presence is prejudicial to the welfare of the whole community. Holding the position (unpaid) of evangelist in the Lutheran Church, he has used his influence to turn the youth of Samunge away from dancing and beer drinking. He tries to persuade his converts to abandon traditional Sonjo clothing and wear European style shorts and shirts. He enjoins strict sexual morality on his people and speaks out against polygamy. Above all he absolutely prohibits attendance at pagan sacrifices and has been guilty of many impious offenses against the Tribal God. Now he wants to become paramount chief of Sonjo and saddle the whole Tribe with his negative policies, which, in the opinion of the Samunge warriors, are the opposite of progressive.

Ginoria Koroï belongs to a strong Samunge clan. For nine years he was

mayor of Samunge. It was during his office that the Lutheran Mission was established at Samunge by Dr. Rausch in 1948. In 1951 Ginoria was baptized in the Lutheran Church after one month of instruction. He then resigned from his position as mayor and built himself a modern mud-brick house near the mission. Having been convinced of the value of education, he quickly taught himself to read and write with the help of the mission teacher. He was appointed a Lutheran evangelist and gave much of his time to mission work. Ginoria was among the first Sonjo to start raising cattle and he now has a flourishing herd of over thirty beasts. (It is against Sonjo custom to tell exactly how much live-stock you own.)

Because of his prestige and powers of persuasion, Ginoria greatly increased the appeal of the mission to the young people. But the rigorous demands which he made on his converts engendered a feeling of frustration. Loyalties and enmities towards him are strong. But oddly enough, the hostility to Ginoria does not extend to the African pastor and the three teachers who form the mission staff.

Ginoria is notoriously scornful of the Tribal religion, but the one act of disrespect for which he has never been forgiven was in cutting the sacred tree two years ago. This ancient and noble tree lost its balance and toppled over, obstructing the government motor road. Against the will of the Samunge elders, Ginoria went out with a saw and cut through a large sacred bough so that the road could be opened for traffic again.

In which direction does the road to true progress run? That is a question for all Sonjo people to ponder deeply.

Sincerely,  
*Robert F. Gray*  
Robert F. Gray.

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