

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

RFG - 7

A Sleeping Sickness Settlement

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Arusha, Tanganyika
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Dear Mr. Rogers:

After leaving Mbugwe (RFG - 6) the Great North Road continues south for ten miles through Mbulu District of Tanganyika, then comes to the village of Kibaoni which is the center of a thriving African farming district. The whole settlement, which is called Magugu, is quite new. Fifteen years ago it was uninhabited bush of interest only to hunters. In the early years of World War II serious epidemics of sleeping sickness broke out in this part of Tanganyika. It was feared that the disease might be spread more widely by people and vehicles traveling up and down the Great North Road. A survey disclosed that the Magugu area was heavily infested with tsetse fly which is the insect vector transmitting sleeping sickness. The Magugu bush, through which the road passes, was contiguous with areas in which sleeping sickness occurred. Therefore the authorities reasoned that if the Magugu bush adjacent to the road could be cleared of tsetse fly the danger of the disease being carried to uninfected areas would be greatly reduced.



Magugu Settler

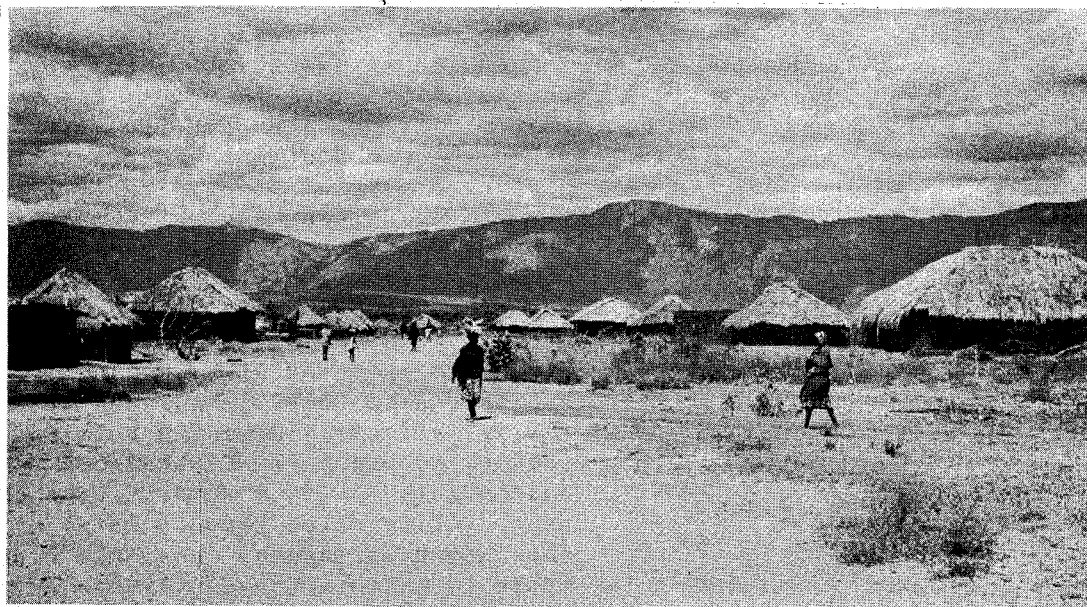
Enormous stretches of equatorial Africa are rendered uninhabitable by the presence of tsetse fly. In Tanganyika it is estimated that two thirds of the land is infested. The tsetse is a large robust fly which sucks the blood of man and beast, imparting a painful sting with an intensity midway between that of a mosquito and a wasp. Its greatest harm, though, is in transmitting protozoal parasites called trypanosomes. A large proportion of wild animals in tsetse-infested areas are infected with trypanosomes, but they seem to be immune and suffer few ill effects. Domestic animals, though, particularly cattle, are highly susceptible to certain strains of the parasite which cause a fatal disease known as nagana. For this reason it is impossible to keep livestock in regions where the tsetse fly abounds. The Tanganyika Government for many

years has been investigating methods of controlling the tsetse fly with a view to eliminating it in areas which might be used for agriculture and cattle raising. A good deal has been learned about the habits and life cycle of the insect, but no practicable method for eliminating it on a large scale has yet been discovered. However, for controlling tsetse in small critical areas the destruction of all trees and bush seems to be effective. Of the twenty or so species of tsetse fly only a few are known to transmit trypanosomes. It is not yet known for certain which species are responsible for transmitting sleeping sickness.

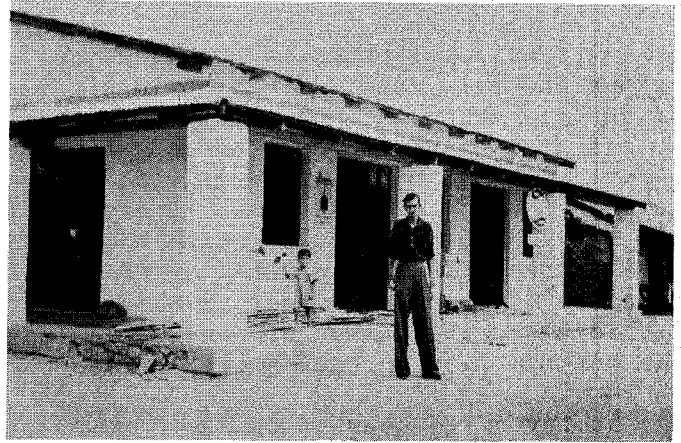
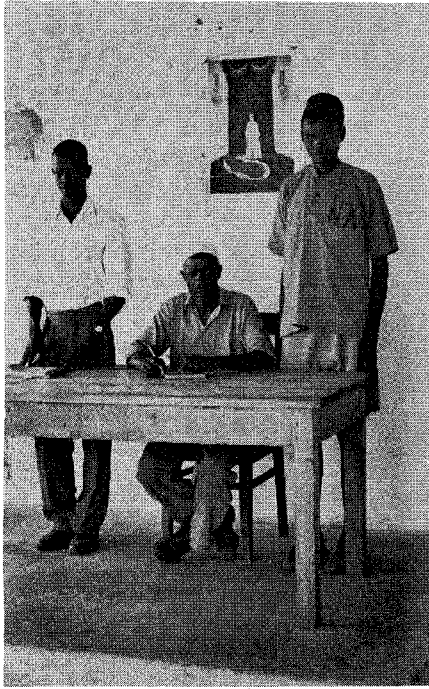
The trypanosomes have also been the subject of intensive research. Several different species of the parasite have been distinguished in the past. Trypanosoma brucei was considered to be the cause of nagana in cattle, while T. rhodesiense was accused of being the parasite which sometimes caused sleeping sickness in man. But recent studies of the problem have failed to confirm that these are separate species of trypanosomes, and the question is a matter of controversy at present.

In making plans for clearing the bush in the Magugu area, the Tanganyika authorities had to cope with the problem of preventing the bush from growing back after the initial clearing had been completed. One method of accomplishing this is to settle people on the land who form a labor force for further clearing operations and at the same time retard the regrowth of bush by putting part of the land under cultivation and pasture. Accordingly the Magugu bush was cleared, leaving the Great North Road free of tsetse fly at that point. Then a public announcement was made inviting Africans to settle in the cleared area. Thus the Magugu Settlement was founded in 1942. The response to this offer of free watered land was prompt, and soon fields of maize, sorghum, rice, sugar cane, manioc, and sweet potatoes were flourishing where there had been only wilderness a year or two before.

In appearance Magugu is quite different from the neighboring tribal area of Mbugwe. Instead of being flat-roofed tembes, the houses are of



Main Street of Kibaoni with Rift Wall in Background



Gulamali—Robbed by Bandits

Khalil Bin Rehani, Jumbe of Magugu,
with his Court Clerk and Messenger

the banda type—rectangular structures with substantial walls of mud bricks and pitched roofs of thatch. Most of the houses are concentrated in the village of Kibaoni; only a few are scattered in the country near their owners' fields. The Government has constructed a system of irrigation furrows so that most of the cultivated fields can be irrigated when rainfall fails. The interesting subject of land usage in Magugu under these conditions was investigated last year by Mr. Wallace Dierickx, a young American geographer from Northwestern University, whose findings will no doubt be published in time.

At present 530 taxpayers are listed in the tax register and the total population probably exceeds 2,000. The Magugu settlers are drawn from all parts of Tanganyika and even further afield. The tax register lists a total of 76 different tribes. These include all the larger Tanganyika tribes and a considerable number from Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Ruanda-Urundi, Uganda, Kenya, and Mozambique. Six or seven of the men are registered as Manyema from the Belgian Congo. These are the sons or grandsons of slaves brought by Arab slave-traders from the Congo to Central Tanganyika. In fact the community constitutes a veritable anthropological paradise and should offer rich rewards for a social scientist investigating subjects such as acculturation and detribalization among African tribes. Swahili is the true language of Magugu, not just a second language or lingua franca.

The appointed chief or Jumbe of this cosmopolitan community is Khalil bin Rehani, the son of a Nubian soldier who came with Emin Pasha to Uganda at the time of the Mahdi rebellion in the Sudan. Khalil is proud of his Sudanese ancestry, affects Arabic manners, speaks Swahili with an Arabic accent, and writes it in Arabic script. With the help of three elders he holds court at the Kibaoni baraza twice a week. The rest of the time he

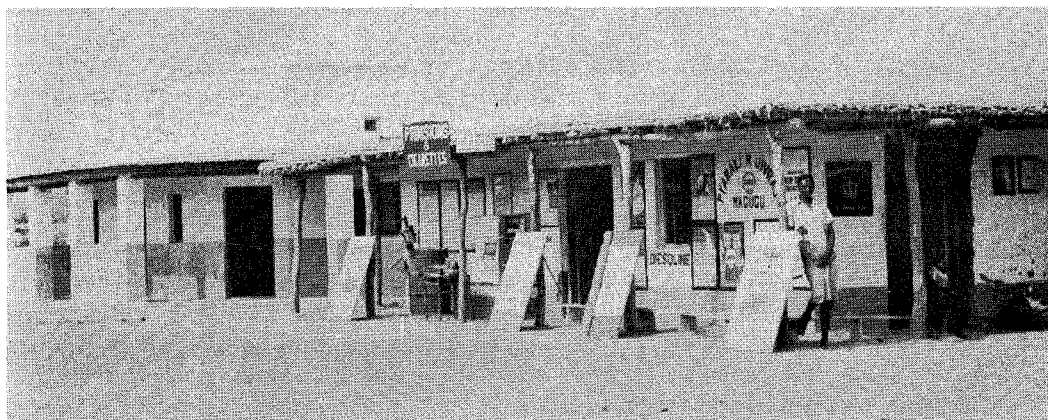
is occupied with the routine duties of administration, and he still finds time to cultivate a model shamba with the help of his young sons.

The legal problems in Magugu are complicated by the multiplicity of tribes and religions. It is obviously impossible to apply the customary law of any one tribe to a community of such diverse tribal origins. In order to get an idea of the kind of cases that are dealt with by the native court, I went over the baraza records with the help of the court clerk, a young Wambugwe named Faustini Yona. Every court case is summarized in Swahili and entered in one of two record books, one for criminal and the other for civil cases. In 1954 a total of 38 persons were brought before the court under 14 different criminal charges. There were no acquittals. I have listed below the number of persons who were charged with each offense and the maximum fine or punishment in each case:

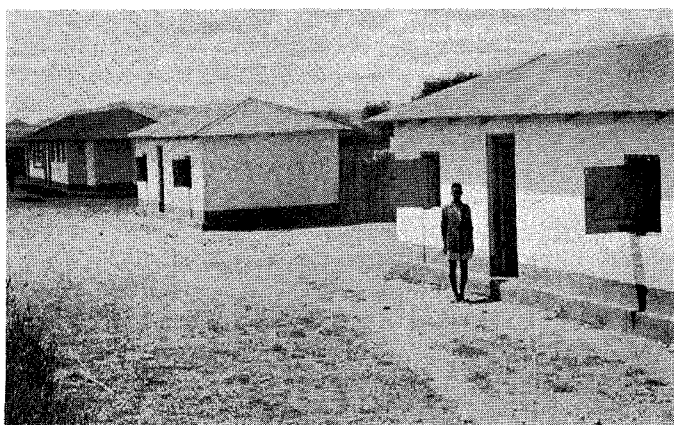
<u>Number of Persons</u>	<u>Charge</u>	<u>Punishment</u>
10	Illegal Use of Irrigation Water	50 shs fine
3	Contempt of Court	100 shs
4	Striking a Person without Cause	50 shs
4	Refusing to Do Government Work	50 shs
3	Driving People away from the Market	25 shs
1	Illegal Sale of Rice	50 shs
1	Stealing a Wife's Fine Money	25 shs
3	Neglect of Cultivation	10 shs
1	Contempt of his Wives	50 shs
1	Lurking near a House	40 shs
1	Stealing a Hat	10 shs
2	Rape	50 shs
1	Starting a Religious School without the Knowledge of Government	50 shs
1	Herding Goats in a Neighbors Shamba	5 shs
1	Beating his Wife	25 shs
1	Stealing Corn from a Field	3 Months Imprisonment

These raw statistics, of course give little idea of the human drama behind the cases, or of the forensic talents of the litigants which make African courts so popular. It is the civil cases, though, that arouse most interest among the people. Fifty-four civil cases were tried at Kibaoni Baraza in 1954. These were mostly concerned with debt settlements and with property damage caused by a tax-payer or his wife or children or animals, usually by accident but sometimes on purpose. The judgements were varied and ingenious and cannot easily be classified and tabulated. Twelve cases were listed under the title Kukatalia Kwao which can be freely translated as "to refuse to return from her parents' house," and refers to wives who have run away from their husbands. The court granted a divorce and required the return of the bride-price in nine cases. In two cases the husband was ordered to complete his payment of the bride-price before he could demand his wife back. One wife was simply ordered to return to her husband without further ado.

In comparing the Magugu court records with those which I had previously examined at the Mbugwe Baraza, where the customary law of the Wambugwe is followed, I was struck with several marked differences. The complicated Wambugwe disputes over the inheritance of cattle were entirely lacking at



The New Bar (the Most Modern Building in the Village) and the Jivraj Duka



Magugu School

Magugu. Moreover, at the Mbugwe court personal injury and sex offenses were commonly treated as civil cases in which compensation was demanded, while the Magugu court tended to regard them as criminal offenses.

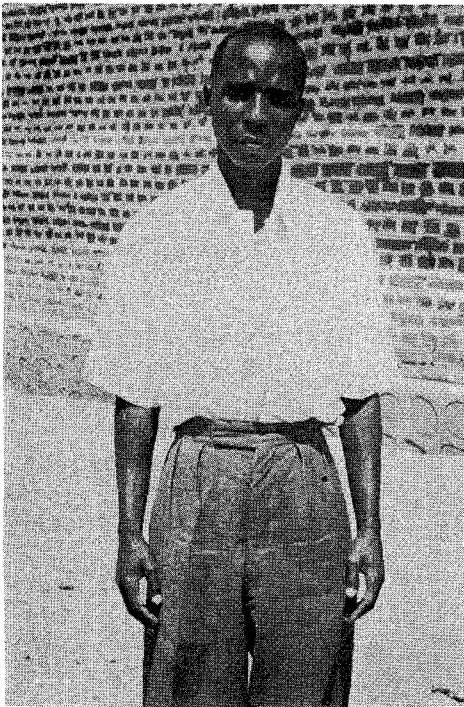
According to Khalil there are comparatively few pagans in Magugu. The inhabitants regard themselves as being a step above tribal Africans in culture, and one necessary element in this sense of superiority is the possession of a dini (religion). There are two Christian churches in the country. The Catholic church is maintained by the Mbugwe missionaries who come every second or third Sunday to say mass. The other church is supported by the cooperative efforts of local Protestants and seems to be poorly organized as yet. But the Mohamedan religion undoubtedly enjoys the greatest prestige in the community, and the majority of the Africans are at least nominal Muslims. The white kanzu gown or a short kikoi skirt worn with a white kofia or red tarboosh on the head is the predominant costume to be seen in Kibaoni. The centrally located mosque is large but humble in its style of architecture.

Until last year there was no school in Magugu: the children went free and untaught except for the few who attended koranic schools or were sent to the Mission School at Mbugwe. Now there is a new Government School at Kibaoni--a school building and two teachers' houses with gleaming iron roofs and whitewashed walls, but unwisely situated only fifteen yards from the Great North Road which distracts the students and envelops the buildings

in clouds of dust as trucks and cars pass by. Because the school was so recently founded there are still only two classes of students and only one teacher is required. During my week's visit at Kibaoni I stayed at the extra teacher's house, which was clean and comfortable but designed with African style kitchen, bath, and W.C.

By comparison with the village of Madukani in Mbugwe, Kibaoni is a bustling place. Seven Indian dukas are aligned along the Great North Road. The two most progressive dukas are equipped with gasoline pumps; these are owned by families who got their start in Madukani. The Jivraj boys (see RFG - 6, p. 4) spend most of their time at the Kibaoni duka. The most modern and best stocked shop is owned by Hussein Ladak of Madukani and managed by his brother Gulamali. This shop was robbed last year by four African bandits who called themselves "Mau Mau." The people still like to tell about the excitement. Arriving at Kibaoni late at night in a car stolen from an American missionary at Bonga thirty miles to the south, the gangsters first tried to rob the native treasury. The guard on duty released the single prisoner from the jail to help him, and together they drove off the bandits, using pick axes and hoes for weapons. The gang then went to the Ladak duka and demanded entry. Gulamali, an asthenic individual, stood nervously behind the locked door and emptied his revolver through the ceiling hoping to scare them off. The bandits then broke the door down and helped themselves to the cash and to the jewelry of Gulamali's wife. They put him in the lavatory and ordered him under threat of death to stay there till morning. They then started for Arusha but wrecked their car on the way. The bandits were later captured, but not before disposing of most of the loot. Besides a large amount of gold jewelry--a form of investment favoured by small Indian traders--several thousand pounds in cash were stolen. Gulamali did not state the exact amount because, according to a government official who had investigated the affair, this might have revealed a substantial income which had not been reported for taxation.

Two other business concerns in line with the Indian dukas are a rice mill and a bar where European type beer is served. The main street of the village runs westward perpendicular to the Great North Road. Two butcher shops, several small African dukas, and the homes of some craftsmen and important citizens are located there. There is also a market supervised by a government clerk who insures that all produce is weighed honestly, that it is offered to buyers at open auction, and that price regulations are observed. Most of the cash crops and surplus food crops of the farmers are sold at the market, which provides protection against the sharp practices of which Indian buyers are sometimes accused. The houses of the people are clustered along paths which lead off from the main street. Most of the people with whom I discussed economic matters complained of poverty. The average cash income of the settlers is undoubtedly low, though I do not have the precise statistics on this question. The community is in close contact with the outside world, but their semi-subsistence economy does not permit them to acquire many of the alluring goods that are available in the shops. Kibaoni is the first trading center to be met on the Great North Road out of Arusha 95 miles away. The dukas along the main road derive as much profit from the travelers of all races who pass through as from the Magugu settlers.



Mr. Nyirenda in Charge
of Magugu Hospital



Patients with Third-Stage
Sleeping Sickness

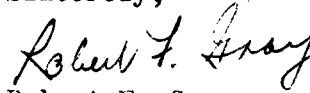
The Colonial Insecticide Research Institute has established a research station at Magugu for the study of the control of tsetse fly. The station is not manned at present. One of the field officers working there last year developed sleeping sickness just nine days after being first bitten by a tsetse fly, which is considered to be the minimum period of incubation for the disease.

Early in the program to clear and settle the Magugu area, a ten-bed hospital was built by the Government. Mr. Nyirenda, the Medical Assistant in charge of the hospital at present, comes from the Henga Tribe of northern Nyasaland. He received his education and medical training in Nyasaland, but moved to Tanganyika because of the better pay and opportunity for advancement there. He has been stationed at Magugu for three years. His hospital staff consists of two dressers, a microscopist, three sweepers, and a cook. Although tsetse flies have been eradicated from Magugu, they are still present in the surrounding forests which the people enter to cut timber and firewood, to gather wild honey, and to hunt and trap game. As a result of this exposure to tsetse bites cases of sleeping sickness appear from time to time. In 1952 a small epidemic broke out with 72 cases being diagnosed. In 1954 there were 42 cases with 5 deaths. To insure that patients come to the hospital for early diagnosis—which is of utmost importance for successful treatment—Mr. Nyirenda has five sleeping-sickness scouts who are posted in the more exposed outlying districts. These scouts are trained to recognize the early symptoms of the disease and bring suspected cases to the hospital. The diagnosis is confirmed or ruled out by examining a series of blood slides for trypanosomes.

Sleeping sickness is treated at Magugu with antrypol, a complex organic compound which contains no heavy metals. The amount of treatment depends on the stage of the disease, which is estimated by determining the protein level of the cerebrospinal fluid. The first stage, which is considered to be curable, is treated with a course of five injections followed by a test of the cerebrospinal fluid six months later. The second stage is a borderline condition which may be cured or progress to the third stage which is incurable. This terminal stage is treated with a standard course of injections, then monthly injections till the patient dies, usually in seven or eight months.

Under present conditions Magugu does not attract educated Africans: the only English-speaking African in the country appears to be the Medical Assistant. It is a pioneer settlement in which the only reward for hard work is food, shelter, and a humble home. Perhaps there is also the satisfaction of taking part in the building of a new type of African rural community in which the restrictions of tribal custom are being replaced by a universal outlook which is more compatible with the pace and ideals of Western Civilization.

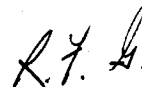
Sincerely,



Robert F. Gray

Postscript:

After I had typed this letter and was bringing it to Arusha for mailing, I passed through Kibaoni and stopped briefly to hear the sensational news that Khalil had resigned as Jumbe of Magugu. This act was apparently the culmination of a developing network of social and political intrigue which I had not understood well enough to mention in the letter. Khalil himself was not available for questioning, but several of his supporters told me that the crucial issue concerned his position in the official hierarchy. Magugu is located within the Mbugwe tribal area, and Khalil was technically designated as a Subchief under the authority of the Paramount Chief of the Wambugwe. In effect he had been acting as an independent chief under the D.C. of Mbulu District, but recently the Wambugwe Chief had been exercising his lawful authority. Khalil considered it degrading for his Muslim community to come under the rule of the chief of a primitive pagan tribe, and, so I was told, he resigned in protest.



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