

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

IMW-16
The People of Kilimanjaro

P.O.Box 5113
Nairobi, Kenya
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Institute of Current World Affairs
366 Madison Avenue
New York 17, New York

Dear Mr. Nolte:

UChagga (Chaggaland) is dominated by Kilimanjaro's twin peaks, Kibo, the highest point in Africa, and Mawenzi, slightly lower but more impressive. Quite naturally the Chagga consider Kibo the seat of God, for "indeed a seat that is 19,000 feet high cannot belong to anyone else!" Kilimanjaro's three gifts, an ideal climate, reliable rainfall, and fertile volcanic soil, help them get the highest prices current for Tanganyika's arabica coffees. They are a handsome and healthy people, a fact which becomes even more evident when one leaves UChagga for lower, less endowed areas. They are well off; no wonder they look upon Kibo with reverence.

The Chagga, one of the largest tribes in Tanganyika, number about 320,000 and live in the Northern Province around the town of Moshi. They are thought to be a mixture of immigrants from neighboring tribes who have absorbed the original people they found living on the mountain on their arrival. They may also have a strain of Kikuyu blood, an allegation they strongly deny. They are a progressive tribe and extraordinarily well developed politically. Among the young people, three out of four are literate, an extremely high rate for Africa. The Chagga are also well-known for their passion for litigation (see IMW-15: Tom Marealle's present suit, and I think it more than coincidence that Tanganyika's first African barrister is a MChagga, Juma Mawalla).

They live in small shambas, one to two acre plots where they grow bananas and coffee. On the lower slopes they grow more maize and onions, cotton and cassava. Everywhere eleusine (a vital component of native beer) is grown and is credited with leading to the construction of the amazing system of irrigation ditches found all over the mountain which have been there for years, long before the advent of Europeans. Furrows aligned only by eye extend for miles. Sir Charles Dundas, the first British Administrator in Moshi, has this to say of them:

The furrows run for miles; they must be used by many, and most generally the cultivators have the water in turns on specific days. No small degree of regulation is necessitated, and moreover within the course of the furrow ordered conditions must prevail. It is to these circumstances that we may attribute in a great measure the early institution of Chiefship with the consequent development of a stable organization. Thus the cultivation of mbeke (eleusine), a much con-

demmed industry, has been responsible not only for a remarkable skill in artificial irrigation, which as time goes on will be of inestimable benefit, but it has directly promoted social development of a relatively high order.

Kilimanjaro was first seen on May 11, 1848 by Johannes Rebmann, an intrepid German missionary-explorer who recorded the event in his diary, as follows:

In the midst of a great wilderness, full of wild beasts, such as rhinoceroses, buffaloes and elephants, we slept beneath thorn-bushes, quietly and securely under God's gracious protection. This morning we discerned the mountains of Jagga more distinctly than ever; and, about ten o'clock, I fancied I saw the summit of one of them covered with a dazzlingly white cloud. My guide called the white which I saw merely "Beredi", cold; it was perfectly clear to me, however, that it could be nothing else but snow.

For years he was ridiculed by learned geographers in Europe who said that of course it was impossible for there to be snow so near the equator. The dispute dragged on until 1885 when at last Rebmann was vindicated.

An increasing number of early travellers passed through UChagga, for it lay on one of the main routes to the interior. Thus they were described long before most other inland tribes, and today there is a wealth of early literature available.

In 1884 Sir Harry Johnston, who had spent five months on Kilimanjaro studying its flora and fauna, urged the British Foreign Office to proclaim a protectorate over UChagga, but the British Consul-General in Zanzibar advised against it and his advice was adopted. Soon after, unbeknownst to them and without the authority of his government, an unprincipled German, Carl Peters, was dashing about the countryside signing treaties of protection with so-called Sultans, most of whom were people of no consequence. One of his companions, Juhlke, concluded a treaty with one of the more powerful Chagga chiefs who is reported to have signed it on condition that Juhlke would bring him a better flagstaff than the one the British had given him. In 1885 the German Emperor ratified these treaties, in effect establishing a German colony. In the scramble for Africa the British had lost Tanganyika.

Therefore, instead of repudiation, Peters returned to Germany a hero. But he was soon back as Imperial High Commissioner for the Kilimanjaro District. He was a stern ruler, and before long ugly rumors began to circulate about him. They came to a head when a boy was hanged ostensibly for stealing cigarettes but in reality for visiting one of Peters' African concubines. This brought about his downfall; he was recalled in 1893, and in 1897 he was deprived of his commission for "misuse of official power". Relations with the Chagga went from bad to worse, and in 1893 a large German force

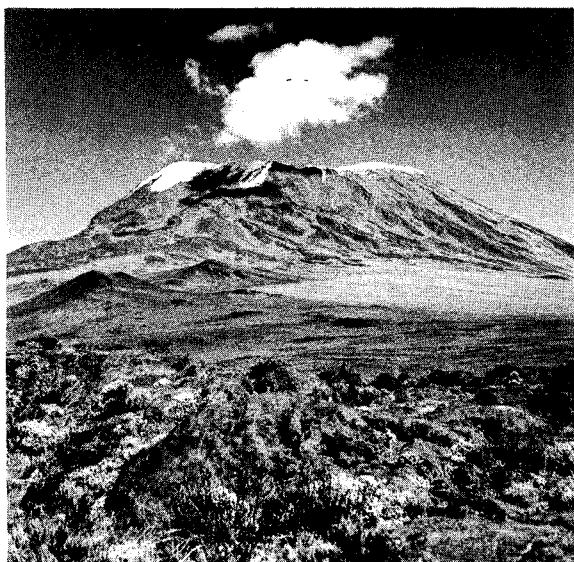
went to Moshi to settle accounts with one of the more powerful chiefs, Meli.

Up to this time UChagga had been divided into a number of sub-tribes with each petty chief attempting to gain supremacy over his neighbors. Strong rivalries among the more powerful of them left little doubt that the ultimate outcome would be unification through the establishment of a paramount chief. Dundas says the political development of the Chagga "has taken us from a social stage in which each clan formed a separate state, through the establishment of Chieftdom, and on the verge of Kingship. It was at this point that further development was arrested by the advent of an overwhelming power, namely the introduction of European Government."

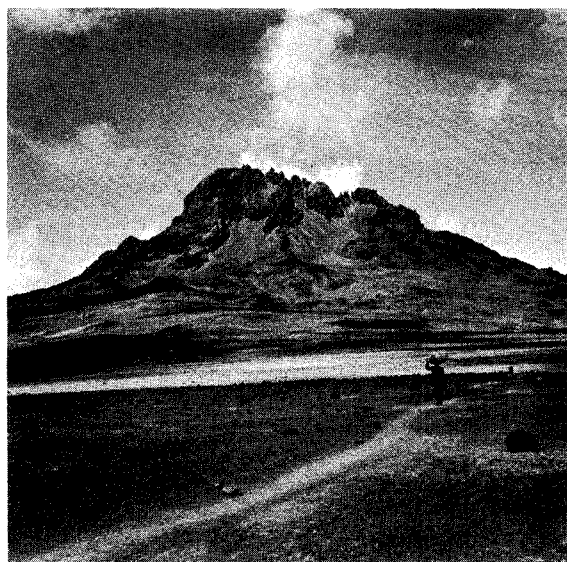
In the ensuing battle Meli was utterly defeated, and Germany became effective master of all UChagga. A German doctor who took part in the expedition to subdue Meli mentions another chief, Marealle, "an intelligent young MChagga who was married to a sister of our enemy, Meli, and who, perhaps for that very reason, had become his deadly foe. In his own interests he had remained true to our flag through good days and bad, and his faithful followers were also unswervingly loyal to us in the ensuing campaign." No doubt partly for this reason the Germans did not object when Marealle made himself master of many of the warring sub-tribes and proclaimed himself paramount chief of the Chagga, starting a dispute that continues to this day over his eligibility for the title. Many people claim his authority was recognized only in Rombo and Vunjo (see map on page 2), and it is doubtful he ever exerted real control over the whole of UChagga.

The German administration came to an abrupt end during the First World War, but not before it had created a problem which caused

Kibo 19,340 ft.



Mawenzi 16,890 ft.



considerable tension and which has not yet been completely solved. It was then Government policy to encourage German settlement, and so numerous farms were alienated at the base of the mountain. At the time it appeared the Chagga ~~were~~ seriously opposed to this, but as their population grew and pressures on the land increased, they found themselves encircled and unable to move anywhere. Land hunger was a pressing problem until well after the Second World War when a lands commission suggested a largely acceptable solution which was later imposed by the government.



A typical Chagga shamba

After the First World War there appears a gap in Chagga history. The move toward unity had broken down, and when the British arrived they found no fewer than nineteen chiefdoms separated by bitter rivalries. Previously the Germans had ruled the area largely through mangis (chiefs) and had allowed them considerable responsibility in their own affairs. The British, on the other hand, appear to have imposed a more thorough administration and mangis became merely government spokesmen. They also imposed a new educational system, totally unrelated to Chagga traditions.

The early success of British policy in UChagga is largely due to the character and ability of Sir Charles Dundas who was in charge of the district for several years. He is still held in very high esteem by the Chagga, and it was during his period as Administrator that the process of development gained momentum.

The prominent position the Chagga occupy today is largely the result of two policies pursued from the beginning by the British: their economic development through the coffee industry, and their political unification by the Chagga Council. The growth of the coffee industry led to the development of the first African co-operative society in Tanganyika, the Kilimanjaro Native Co-operative Union, better known as the KNCU, now a large and powerful organization. It, in turn, provides funds to the Chagga Council for the economic development of the area. The Council has grown from a tribal assembly of chiefs to a more democratic body most of whose members are directly elected. To avoid confusion, I shall deal with them separately, taking the KNCU first.

Until Sir Charles Dundas energetically encouraged planting (sometimes with force), there were few coffee trees in UChagga.

Few wanted to grow coffee, because the work was strange. But when they saw how profitable it was to European plantation growers, for whom some of them worked, there was a large increase in planting. By 1925 the Chagga growers had decided to form their own association, the Kilimanjaro Native Planters' Association. This was unfortunately opposed by local European growers who saw in the KNPA a threat both to the quality of Moshi coffee and to the supply of their own labor. In spite of setbacks, however, the Chagga were quick to see the advantages of co-operation, for only in association could they effectively fight pests and diseases. They also found their returns far more than they had formerly received from local traders. The KNPA began to win top prices on the London Market, sometimes even higher than those paid for the best plantation coffee.

This loose form of association didn't last for long, however. By 1929 a handful of Africans were in control, and the organization got into bad odor. The President and the Manager were indicted for embezzlement, and the Government got to work on a law for co-operatives which was passed in 1932. Arthur Bennett took over the KNPA and reorganized it under the new co-operative law. The KNCU and ten societies were soon registered with the Government. At this time the total production was between 600 and 900 tons a year.

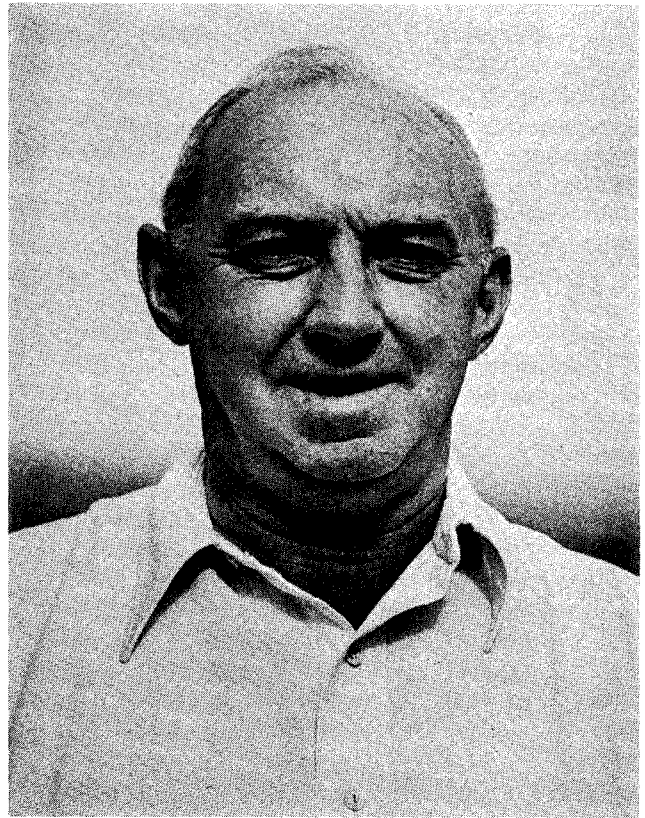
Today, after thirty years, the KNCU has fifty-three affiliated societies with over 45,000 members who own 30,000 acres of arabica coffee with an annual crop of 8,000 tons and a local value of \$5.6 million. The KNCU is a marketing co-operative which is entitled by law to market all Chagga coffee. Its main job is the bulking and packing of members' coffee, although they do sell other agricultural products on a small scale such as pyrethrum. The KNCU also levies a coffee tax, given to the Chagga Council, which is largely responsible for the great improvement of the social services over the last few years. In all the KNCU deducts about 18% of the selling price of the coffee for expenses, taxes and its own levy.

Through its levy, the KNCU has become a wealthy organization in its own right. It has used this money for a variety of purposes. Its modern headquarters in Moshi houses a commercial college, a hostelry, a library and several small shops. The KNCU also has its own printing press and it leases a modern building to the Standard Bank. Besides commercial ventures, the KNCU has recently donated a secondary school to the Chagga Council which will bear the recurrent costs. It is also in the midst of replacing old coffee trees throughout the area with younger and better varieties, a process involving many years.

The KNCU is not without its critics in spite of its impressive record. Many observers feel the KNCU has invested heavily in buildings for prestige purposes, and that this is incompatible with its aim of raising living standards in a poor country. They point out that there is not enough economic development going on outside of Moshi, and they criticize the KNCU for falling behind other coffee co-operatives (i.e., the central coffee factory built by the Meru Co-operative Union, see IMW-4). The KNCU hasn't financed a single coffee factory, and when I inquired if they plan to do so,

the Manager told me rather vaguely that it was "under consideration". A conservative group seems to be in control with the result that its early pioneering spirit has become decidedly more cautious.

The KNCU has often led the way, however. Its greatest contribution has been its demonstration that primitive tribes can improve their livelihood by abandoning traditional and wasteful agricultural practices and adopting modern methods. It has changed the face of UChagga and is continuing to do so. It preceded the Chagga Council and the latter's democratic development has been influenced in no small way by the higher living standards achieved under the KNCU's dynamic leadership. There probably wouldn't be a Chagga Council, at least not as we know it, without the KNCU. It is indeed a powerful force in UChagga.



Arthur L.B. Bennett, C.B.E., M.N.A.
(Photo T.I.S.)

The second aspect of British policy in UChagga was tribal unification, and with this in mind the Chagga Council was established. Originally consisting of twenty area chiefs, it was obviously unworkable as a progressive tribal authority. In 1946, at the instigation of the chiefs, the twenty existing chiefdoms were grouped into three divisions (Rombo, Vunjo and Hai), and one of the area chiefs of each division was appointed divisional chief (backed up by a divisional council) with authority over the others. There were thus three divisional chiefs and seventeen area chiefs who, along with their deputies and two councillors from each area chiefdom (one nominated and the other indirectly elected), made up the new Chagga Council.

Still the hereditary element far outweighed the popularly elected element throughout the Chagga administration. In 1948 a popular movement sprang up, much on the lines of a political party, calling itself the Chagga Citizens' Union. The CCU advocated unity and democracy, and it called for the appointment of a Mangi Mkuu, or Paramount Chief, as well as for greater electoral representation. Later it was to influence considerably the election of members to the new Chagga Council.

In the tradition of British colonial constitutional growth, a committee was appointed to investigate the matter. As a result the

entire tribal administrative structure was overhauled in 1951. The new reforms were three-fold. First, the judiciary was separated from the executive by the appointment of magistrates. Sir Edward Twining, then Governor of Tanganyika, noted the importance of this move: "The functions of ruler and judge have always been combined in the persons of Bantu chiefs and a break with tradition in this respect is one of the most revolutionary changes demanded by political development." Secondly, popular representation on the councils of all levels was increased, and area chiefdom councils, which didn't previously exist, were established. The third reform was the appointment of a Mangi Mkuu.

Elections to the three tiers of councils were held toward the end of 1951. The CCU swept the polls and Tom Marealle was elected Mangi Mkuu by an overwhelming majority. I won't go into his subsequent fall from grace and his deposition, for I have dealt with that elsewhere (see IMW-15). Suffice it to say that the CCU went into eclipse at the same time, and an opposition, the Chagga Democratic Party which is allied to TANU, soundly defeated the CCU in the 1961 elections (80% to 20%) with the platform "Get rid of the Mangi Mkuu".

The man who engineered Tom Marealle's ouster is a young Chagga, Solomon Eliufoo. A Member of Legco and a close friend of Nyerere's, he had TANU's support right down the line. As a result yet another constitution was drafted, substituting a President for the Mangi Mkuu. Although this one has yet to be approved by the Minister for Local Government, there have already been elections under its provisions and it is virtually in effect. Its main lines are as follows.

The local representative of the Government is the village headman, or mchili. Besides his local duties he is a member of a parrish (mtaa) council which has certain responsibilities vis à vis land and its allocation. The parrish council consists of all the mchilis within the parrish. The next tier is the area council whose chairman is the area chief. Its members are the mchilis of each mtaa, two directly elected councillors from each mtaa, and the member or members of the Chagga Council from



Solomon Eliufoo, M.N.A.
(Photo T.I.S.)

the area chiefdom who are entitled to attend meetings but not to vote. The area council (whose members are elected for three years) administers an area land board which reviews decisions reached by its parrish councils.

In the new constitution the division as an administrative unit has been abolished. Eliufoo called on their chiefs to resign in order to become executive officers of the Chagga Council. This Council consists of a President who is elected for a four-year term (Solomon Eliufoo was the first incumbent), the three executive officers, four area chiefs chosen by the Council (two from Hai, and one each from Rombo and Vunjo), thirty directly elected councillors from the area chiefdoms, and not more than six co-opted members. The Chagga Council therefore has a total membership of not more than forty-four, of whom thirty-four are elected, four are ex-officio, and six are nominated.

By and large there is virtual universal adult suffrage in UChagga. About 90% of those over eighteen are entitled to vote in elections for all tiers of government. Most of those who can vote do.

Many local services are also provided by the Chagga Council, often in association with the central Government. About one-quarter of the Council's budget is for administration which leaves three-quarters for services and development, mostly for communications, health and education. The Council maintains the local road system largely without government subsidy, although it does get help for roads with heavy traffic. Its health services, however, are provided without assistance, and even local hospitals are usually built by the Council alone. Education is the Council's largest single expenditure (about one-third), and in this the national Government contributes 56% of the recurrent expenditure while the Chagga Council provides 44%.

These services account for most of the budget. The Council also spends smaller sums on development, the most important of which is water development where the central Government matches shilling for shilling the ammount the Council invests. Compared with most other local authorities, the Council's services are extensive and have, over the past few years, contributed tremendously to the area's development.

At the moment the Council is on the verge of yet another change. The Government is now encouraging tribal councils to become district councils. Up to now the Chagga Council has had jurisdiction only over Africans, but from June or July the Council will become a rural district council with authority over all of Moshi District save the town of Moshi which has its own urban council. This means the Europeans who live on alienated land in West Kilimanjaro will come under the new council, as will those few Indians living outside of Moshi. Nevertheless the Council will remain much the same. The position of President will be replaced theoretically by a non-political Chief Executive Officer, chosen by a committee of the Council. I say theoretically because

I can't envisage anyone in such a position other than a politician, especially in UChagga. The seventeen area chiefs will become executive officers in charge of different aspects of the administration. The major political position will be that of Chairman of the Chagga Council, now held by one of the founders of the CDP, Mr. Matemba. The new council's name has not yet been decided, but it will probably be the Kilimanjaro Rural District Council. Perhaps this will be the last change, at least for a while.



Chagga Council coat of arms

This remarkable development has not been accomplished without problems, and at the moment the Chagga appear to have more than their share of them. The present situation is a result of three interrelated factors: the cultural tension caused when a western democratic system supplants traditional tribal authority, uhuru, and the loss of their leader, Solomon Eliufoo.

Economic and social development among primitive peoples often conflicts with traditional social values causing tension, and it appears that opposition, to a certain degree, is inherent in the process. Although the Chagga have been quick to appreciate the advantages of development, the pace of change has far outstripped their own advance. Thus the people are far behind their leaders, and it is doubtful if the majority of Chagga really understand the changes that have taken place. There is still a significant minority of traditionalists who support the Mangi Mkuu and who consider modern democracy only a method of bolstering traditional authority. Essentially the Chagga have been monarchists for generations, and many see no reason why they should change now. Traditional chiefs still hold great personal power and most of the top people in the Chagga Council also fit into this tribal hierarchy. It takes a long time for new ideas to seep down to the bottom, and the process has just begun in UChagga.

Tanganyika is also facing what other newly independent nations face, "the revolution of rising expectations". UChagga has not been left behind. Even though most of the national leaders warned their people not to expect too much from uhuru, this policy wasn't always followed locally. Many people expected to be given higher wages or to move into Europeans' houses, even to have their wives. A Chagga told me a while ago that a friend of his asked him just before uhuru if the Government would give him money with which to buy beer and celebrate. He replied that on the contrary his friend should be prepared to give the Government more money to pay for uhuru. Shortly afterwards this dictum was emphasized to the friend when school rates were tripled. The logic of uhuru, however, is more easily understood than that of higher school rates. The fact is that many people expected more from uhuru than they got and so

are now disappointed. Nyerere's resignation was probably largely determined by this factor, for he said he was taking the step in order to get the nation working from the bottom up so their expectations may begin to be realized.

Nyerere's resignation brought about the third factor which was Eliufoo's resignation from the Chagga Council to become Minister of Education in Rashidi Kawawa's new government. Eliufoo was a strong leader, and the resulting vacuum brought into the open a conflict which has been brewing for years. At this very moment a battle royal is being waged over who is to control the KNCU and the Chagga Council, and the sides are almost even.

The real prize is the KNCU, however. Recently the Chagga Council has lost much prestige, because the trend has been away from local politics since national politics now has so much more to offer. The KNCU is a powerful organization in its own right, and the group that controls it can be the most influential voice in UChagga. As I have pointed out above, there are an increasing number of people, opposed to its conservative leadership, who want a more progressive development program. The KNCU certainly has the money for it.

The key to the problem is Arthur Bennett, now well into his seventies, the dominant figure in the KNCU. Behind the scenes he wields a strong hand, and as long as he is around his men will have a great advantage. He has just arranged for a new ten-year contract.

Nevertheless the situation provides an excellent opportunity for a progressive group to challenge the authority of those now in control. Even with Bennett's backing, his men are having a difficult time, and neither side has yet won a decisive victory. The Government is well aware of the situation and may take a hand in its solution. Edward Barongo, ex-Secretary-General of TANU, has just been appointed the political Regional Commissioner of the Northern Province. No one has said why such a valuable man should be sent away from Dar es Salaam where his talents have been so useful.

There's unrest in the shambas. Sooner or later those in power will fall, if not this year, then next or the year after. Africans are patient, or at least they used to be.

My bet is we'll hear more from UChagga. And sooner, not later!

Very sincerely yours,



Ian Michael Wright