

Oral Statement to the Trusteeship Council on Prohibition of Entrance  
to the Trust Territory of Tanganyika

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Mr. Chairman:

I should like to thank the Trusteeship Council for granting me the privilege of appearing here to make an oral presentation about my difficulties in gaining entrance to the Trust Territory of Tanganyika. My presentation will be brief and to the point.

First of all, I should like to review the facts in the case. During the summer of 1957 I was in West Africa for a project in Nigeria for which I had some responsibilities. I hoped that on my way home I would be able to visit some areas of the continent that it had not been my privilege to visit before. On investigation I learned that I did not need to procure a visa to Tanganyika or to countries in the Federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland, but that visas were necessary for Kenya and Uganda. I obtained the necessary visas at the British Consulate in Leopoldville.

It is not germane to my appearance before the Trusteeship Council to discuss my travel difficulties in any other territory than Tanganyika, but parenthetically it should be mentioned that apparently I am a "Prohibited Immigrant" in all of the British territories of East and Central Africa. I first knew that I might face difficulties when I was turned back from Northern Rhodesia in Ndola. I then took a plane from Elizabethville in the Belgian Congo to Entebbe-Kampala in Uganda. I had no difficulty with the immigration authorities in the Entebbe airport. But on the following day immigration officers of the Uganda government asked me to accompany them to their office for questioning. It was then that they told me that they had made a mistake the day before and that I would have to leave Uganda at the earliest opportunity. I mention this experience in Uganda only because it was through the Uganda authorities that I learned formally of my "prohibited immigrant" status in Tanganyika. I was permitted to stay in Uganda for five days until the next plane left for London. One of the reasons that these few days were interesting was that I had an opportunity to become very friendly with the police officer who was assigned originally to follow me, but who, as the days went by, accompanied me instead, and indeed aided me greatly because as we became acquainted it was no longer necessary for him to follow me surreptitiously at a distance. We rode together in his car to whatever places my schedule took me.

As I was leaving the Entebbe airport, through an immigration officer I was handed a note on the letterhead of the Principal Immigration office of Kampala, dated July 22, 1957, which read:

"I am directed to inform you that the decision of the Principal Immigration Officer, Dar-es-Salaam, declaring you a Prohibited Immigrant in Tanganyika in the terms of Section 5(1)(f) of the Immigration (Control) Ordinance, was on 19.7.57 confirmed by the Governor in Council of Tanganyika. I have accordingly to inform you that you will not be admitted to Tanganyika Territory."

Inasmuch as I was boarding a plane for London, it seemed somewhat anti-climactic to be given this note. But I appreciated it because it set the record straight.

Upon my return to New York, I wrote to the Governor of Tanganyika to inquire as to the reason for my "prohibited immigrant" status, and raising some of the problems this presented to me. I had a reply dated 10th September 1957 from the Office of the Chief Secretary in Dar es Salaam which read:

"I am directed to refer to your letter of the 22nd August, 1957, addressed to His Excellency the Governor, concerning the decision of the Government of Tanganyika to declare you a prohibited immigrant and, thereby, to deny you entry to the territory.

"I am instructed to inform you that it is not the practice to disclose the reasons for declaring any person a prohibited immigrant. I am to add that, while your representations have received full consideration, it is not proposed to vary the decision already communicated to you."

I am prohibited from Tanganyika under Section 5(1)(f) of the Immigration (Control) Ordinance of 1947. This reads:

"Section 5(1). The following persons, other than permanent residents, are prohibited immigrants and it shall be unlawful for them to enter the Territory except in accordance with such provisions as may be prescribed -- . . .

"(f) Any person who, in consequence of information received from any source deemed by the Principal Immigration Officer to be reliable or from any Government, whether British or Foreign, through official or diplomatic sources, is deemed by the Principal Immigration Officer to be an undesirable immigrant:

"Provided that every decision of the Principal Immigration Officer under this paragraph shall be subject to the confirmation or otherwise of the Governor in Council, whose decision shall be final."

To summarize, I am prohibited from entering Tanganyika under a statute which indicates that the information upon which my exclusion is based can come from many possible sources, and the specific reasons for my prohibition apparently can not be made known to me.

Perhaps it is rather fruitless to theorize about the possible reasons which could have caused this action to be taken against me. And yet it is inevitable that such speculation will take place both by me and by others. It is relevant to point out that only in British East and Central Africa have I, to my knowledge, been prohibited. I have travelled in Africa three times between 1954 and the present. I have visited Tunisia, French West Africa, Liberia, Ghana, Togoland, Nigeria, Cameroons, French Equatorial Africa, Belgian Congo, Angola, and the Union of South Africa. I have reason to believe that I might not be admitted to the Union of South Africa if I applied for a visa now, but this has not been put to a test.

I hope that the prohibition against me personally does not imply a blanket prohibition against other representatives of the American Committee on Africa as well. Yet since I am the Executive Director of this organization, action against me also has an effect on the organization. The Committee is a recognized group in the United States which, within the American tradition, is sympathetic to the desire of the African people for independence. The organization opposes racial injustices and inequalities at home and abroad. And a distinguished group of Americans form the National Committee of the organization which includes 18 members of the Congress of the United States.

My own activities in Africa antedate the formation of the American Committee on Africa in respect to only one territory on the continent, namely South Africa. In 1952 when the nonviolent anti-apartheid campaign was being carried on in South Africa, during which some 9,000 Africans, Indians, Coloreds, and Europeans were arrested, I helped to raise a very small amount of funds as relief to the families whose breadwinner was spending a period of time in jail. Therefore my personal activities in Africa ever since 1955 when I began working for the American Committee on Africa have been only through the organization. But I can conceive of nothing that could possibly warrant action against either my organization or me and certainly not by a government in the democratic tradition of Great Britain. It is no longer wild-eyed or revolutionary to stand firmly for independence. Indeed the Trusteeship system of the United Nations is founded on the idea of promoting the "progressive development towards self-government or independence" of the people in Tanganyika. The Tanganyika African National Union, with which our organization has maintained a very friendly relationship, is now recognized as the most representative political body in Tanganyika and is playing a highly responsible role in the developments occurring there.

I am led to assume that the information on which my exclusion from Tanganyika is based is faulty or that the action was taken with inconsiderate speed. I can not believe that evidence which the government of the Union of South Africa might present to the government of Tanganyika about my activities in support of those who oppose apartheid in South Africa would carry weight with authorities in Tanganyika. But in final analysis I am left deeply puzzled about the action against me in Tanganyika.

I should like to make clear that I do not question the right of a government to prohibit whom it will from its borders, although I might seriously disagree with the action in a specific case. Also Tanganyika is within the tradition of other governments in not divulging the specific information which led to the action. The query might be made as to whether, if reasons for prohibiting entrance of a person to a particular country were made known, it might put the country involved in the embarrassing position of not having a good case.

But on this occasion I am not questioning the right of the Tanganyika government to exclude me and to refuse to state the reasons. What I am saying is that it is a serious matter and not to be taken lightly when a person is excluded from a particular territory. In my own case the action against me has had at least three effects:

1. It was an expensive and trying experience to be prohibited in 1957;
2. The publicity which was attendant to this experience automatically raised questions in the minds of some people not too close to me personally or to the American Committee on Africa about the reliability and responsibility of our activities.
3. But perhaps most important, since my work involves Africa and the relations between Americans and Africans, a working knowledge about conditions and developments in various parts of Africa is essential to me. I have been needlessly hindered in carrying on this work in relation to Tanganyika because of the action of the government of Tanganyika. Not that one's knowledge is dependant solely on access to a territory, but a dimension is added by first-hand observation which can not be replaced by anything else. If this were not the case, there would be no need for this Trusteeship Council to send its Visiting Missions to the various Trust Territories with regularity.

I can not ask, nor would I, that the Trusteeship Council consider either my work or that of my Committee as essential to developments in a Trust Territory. But perhaps my experience can present in a concrete case the importance of giving more than casual attention to the exclusion of an individual deeply involved in African affairs from visiting a Trust Territory. Because Tanganyika is a Trust Territory, it seems to me that this Council has a responsibility to look into the circumstances which give rise to a "prohibited" status even to the representative of a private organization. It further seems to me that this Council should adopt the general position that individuals should have the right of access to Trust Territories unless there are overwhelming reasons dictating against it. And where a prohibition is erected, should not the circumstances be examined with great care? It should be clear that the reasons for excluding a person from a Trust Territory are reasons which stem from an understanding of the United Nations Charter and not from the whim of a colonial official alone.

On this occasion I am asking the Trusteeship Council to look carefully into my case, and I would hope that of others who have been refused entrance to Tanganyika. Further I am asking the Tanganyika government to reconsider its action in placing me on the "prohibited immigrant" list. At the very least, I would hope that whatever might be discovered would end the necessity of speculation on the reasons for my prohibited status.

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