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Date  
26TH AUGUST 1921

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SLAVERY & ABORIGINES  
PROTECTION SOCIETY

*(K. G. ...)*

SUBJECT

NATIVE LABOUR

Enclose memo. of grievances put forward by the Kikuyu Association with the Chief Native Commr etc at meeting on 24TH June 1921 re native affairs including forcing of girls and women to work on plantations.

Grindle  
E. Lambart  
R. ...  
Fiddin  
Wood  
Hornhill

Previous Paper

MINISTERS

Registered for record.

*M. J. 1122*

*(A copy of the letter from ...  
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...  
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...)*

*P. G.*

*W. G. 7-11-21  
etc*

*sent 21  
Date = ...*

Subsequent Paper

*M. I. 50529*

*45890*

# The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society

25 Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4, and Foreign Office, 10, Whitehall, London, S.W. 1.

SECRETARY:  
Travel: Bush, M.A.

DENISON HOUSE,

29, VAUXHALL BRIDGE ROAD,

LONDON, S.W. 1.

(Close to Victoria Station)

PRIVATE.

20th August, 1892.

Dear Major Wood,

Our Committee has dispersed for the holidays, and therefore we can hardly send the enclosed document (officially) without some reference to this, but in view of the fact that you are discussing the present

situation with Sir Edward Northey, I think I ought not to delay placing in your hands a copy of this very serious document which has come into our possession.

I think you will prefer that I should adopt the somewhat exceptional course of sending this privately to you, rather than risk any delay in the matter.

I would draw your particular attention to what is called Appendix 1.

Yours very truly,

Major the Hon. S.F.L. Wood, M.P.  
Colonial Office,  
Whitehall, S.W. 1.

# The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society

(Incorporated in the Colonies and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and the Aborigines Protection Society.)

SECRETARY  
TREVOR BUNSON, M.A.

DENSON HOUSE

296, VAUXHALL BRIDGE ROAD,

LONDON, S.W. 1.

CHAIRMAN, SECRETARY,  
JOHN H. HARRIS.

28th August, 1921.

PRIVATE.

Dear Major Wood,

Our Committee has dispersed for the holidays, and therefore we can hardly send the enclosed document (officially) without some reference to them, but in view of the fact that you are discussing the East African situation with Sir Edward Northey, I think I ought not to delay placing in your hands a copy of this very serious document which has come into our possession.

I think you will prefer that I should adopt the somewhat exceptional course of sending this privately to you, rather than risk any delay in the matter.

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Yours very truly,



Major the Hon. S.F.L. Wood, M.P.  
Colonial Office,  
Whitehall, S.W. 1.

MEMORANDUM OF GRIEVANCES put forward by the KIKUYU ASSOCIATION

at a Meeting with the Chief Native Commissioner and the Senior Commissioner, Kikuyu, at Bagoretta on Friday, June 24th 1921.

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1. Forcing out of girls and young women to work on plantations.

Up to March last this practice was prevalent under Government orders emanating from the administrative headquarters of the Kyambu District. A Tribal Retainer would be sent to such and such a Chief or headman to say that so many girls were required for such and such a plantation. Some times the Tribal Retainer was given a letter specifying the number of girls wanted, some times not.

the chief would be placed under restraint at the Government Station at Kyambu until such time as the required number of girls was obtained. Sometimes he would be kept longer under detention as a punishment for failure in his duties. The evidence of chiefs so treated is available if desired. In some instances a Tribal Retainer would be sent out to procure a given number of girls without reference to chief or headman. In either case when a father or owner of a girl actively objected to her going he was called to Kyambu and fined a sheep or the district's stock tax and the girl had to go. The girls were taken to the plantation in the unaccompanied and were kept in a gang of 10 to 15 girls, the number of girls for the gang was fixed by the Government, the gang was placed in charge of a Tribal Retainer. At the plantation where generally they work for three months, if the work to be done did not require them for as long as this they were kept for a correspondingly shorter period. In many cases the girls were taken to plantations at a distance from their homes which precluded their returning home at nights and they remained at the plantation. The Tribal Retainer usually conducted a gang, its destination remained in charge of the gang until its period of work was finished. If a girl deserted he had to get her back, and her father or owner suffered.

In January of this year the Kikuyu Association complained

of this practice in a letter to the Chief Native Commissioner and in March were informed in reply that there were no Government orders that women are to work and that it had been stated that the chiefs themselves it was, who forced out women and girls to work.

Subsequent to this, however, girls have again been forced out to work. The system now is for the Tribal Retainer to be sent to the chief or Headman and the two of them under the orders land given them, instruct the "githaka"-holders in the location to produce the required number of girls, and if they are not forth-

coming the "githaka"-holders and the girls' husbands husbands coming the "githaka"-holders and the girls' husbands come into trouble. They are liable to be taken to Kyambu and detained there until the girls are forthcoming, and sometimes flogged by way of punishment.

In the month of May instructions were sent to Headman Muehara of Chief Mukoma's location through Tribal Retainer Kabunyi for 50 girls from Mukoma's and 50 girls from Headman Karanja's location to be taken to Mrs. Monson, Kamiti Estate. The girls were taken and are still working there.

The Kikuyu Association protests against the practice of forcing out girls and women to work and request that it entails hardship and operates in the interests of the girls and their fathers or husbands. In addition, it results to the consequences due to the manner in which the girls are taken into the power of the overseers and employed on the farms. Girls are seduced by threat or by favour. The native overseers often have the power to get a girl's days off work, on the other hand, to favour her and let her off work. The girls are not free owing to their being under the system of implantment and knowing that if they cause trouble they may be made to suffer and if they desert their fathers will be penalised. A list of girls who have become pregnant on farms owing to the above circumstances is appended, together, in some cases, with the name of the man responsible.

2. Indignities inflicted upon Chiefs and Headmen.

It is explained that Chiefs and Headmen are now imprisoned and are kept under detention without their being known to the Kiama and to Kinyua that the charge against them is.

Several Chiefs and Headmen have been made to carry loads, in some instances for a number of days, without having first received trial and been convicted of an offense. This is regarded as damaging to the authority of the chiefs.

The power in the hands of the chief Tribal Retainer, Waiganjo, is likewise detrimental to the position and authority of the Chiefs.

3. Protest as to powers and authority of Waiganjo

18 chiefs and headmen, of whom a list is appended together with the Kiama make the following charges against Waiganjo wa Kgotano, the chief Tribal Retainer:

(1) He takes the greater part of the Kiama fees although he is not a member of the Kiama; he is a tribal retainer.

He appropriates all the sheep exacted in connection with fines for beer drinking.

He acts as though he were the head of Kiama.

(2) He permits the young men who are his followers to do what they like with the girls by compelling them to submit to the practice known as "thango" which is a form of seduction.

He allows his followers to hold dances and to prevent the girls who attend from returning to their homes; they treat the girls as though they were their own wives. As an instance, a dance called "Kibata" was held on June 8th, and the practice of "thango" was required on that occasion.

The evidence of chief Gitango in whose location Waiganjo resides is as follows:

(a) Waiganjo causes the custom of "thango" to be practised whereby girls are made to sleep in a house erected at the entrance to his village and which is known as "Kes" (i.e., the "K.A.R.") and is occupied by the young men.

A girl named Mungere wa Mungere was raped in this house by

Gitundi wa Ndogono a half brother of Waiganjo. He was fined sheep by the Kiama for this.

(b) Waiganjo makes the old men cut roads on Sundays when everyone else is off work, and this without payment. The roads they are made to cut are not those made by Government order the upkeep of which is accepted as a duty by all, but this is his own private work.

(c) In regard to the practice of "thungo", the following young men were those who fetched the girls from their homes on the last occasion: Kumbur - Ndogono, Kigata wa Tubura. It was three weeks ago and Gitangu came to blows with Ngaruiya who struck him with a club. Chief Gitangu proceeded the following morning to charge him before Mr. Kisher (the Asst. District Commissioner, who directed that the case was to be dealt with by the Kiama. The Kiama gave as their decision that two of the young men were together to pay one he-goat and other one ram by himself as fine. The elders who tried the case are

Koinane wa Witu.

Njuguna wa Siang'ira.

Mumwa wa Ndogono.

Gitangu wa Ndogono.

Waiganjo also gave their decision that the case should be dealt with by the Kiama.

Instead he directed that the father of the girl should each pay a fine of one ram. The fathers concerned were

Kihoi wa Muthenja.

Wairang'wa Muhuria.

Gachomba wa Murega.

Kinuthia wa Namwati.

In addition, he also ordered that Chief Gitangu, himself should pay a fine of one ram.

In the face of this Gitangu asked by whose authority was Waiganjo usurped his place and authority. Gitangu originally appointed him as a Retainer, not as a judge.

#### 4. Delay over the issue of Title Deeds to "Githaka" holders.

In view of the promise made by H.R. the Governor in 1913 in a letter that Githaka holders should receive title deeds, the Kikuyu Association again press for the issue of these.

Their anxiety that security of tenure should be safeguarded by the issue to the Githaka holders of title deeds they feel to be justified by the fact that in spite of the Government's promise that they should be deprived of no more land, little pieces are still being taken from them. This has occurred at Muguga, at Ngabobe in Gatoru's location and at Mjumu in Koinange's location.

#### 5. Registration of Natives.

At first it was understood the registration would be beneficial to the natives, but after experience of its working it is regarded with disfavour, as it is found to have brought with it much that is vexatious including imprisonment and fines.

Amongst the grievances experienced in this direction are the heavy charges, up to Rs. 6/-, imposed for new registration papers to replace those lost, and in some instances in the case of registration papers having become torn.

Also there have been many cases of Europeans refusing to sign off the registration papers of workers wanting to leave at the end of the month. It is very difficult for a man to get away if his employer chooses to prevent it in any way. If the worker stays and begins another contract the European will not sign him off, leaving him liable to be prosecuted for desertion.

#### 6. Hut tax and reduction of wages

The Hut tax is considered to be very high and excessive. The Kikuyu Association suggest that if wages are to be raised the Hut tax should not be expected to pay more than Rs. 1.50 Hut tax.

7. "When we went to go war were we war? We told the Governor that we should be rewarded, but we were not. We have our tax raised and we have registration papers given to us. Our ownership of the land to be called registration. We told to-day that we are to receive title deeds. We are not to appear that we are not to receive them?"

#### 8. Use of the Forests

It was once agreed (in 1907, when the late Chief Native Commissioner) that the forests should be the joint property of the



Kikuyu and of the Government and that the Kikuyu should not be prevented from cutting trees or taking firewood. But now if a native woman breaks firewood in the forest or anyone cuts even a small tree, there follows arrest, imprisonment and fines. "We now have to buy the firewood and the trees which were once ours".

Paths also which it was agreed should remain open are now closed and anyone using them is arrested, for example the Rironi, Jitanga and Lari routes. It is desired that these roads shall not be closed.

2. Arbitrary Legislation.

It frequently happens that the Europeans discuss and consider matters affecting the natives, and afterwards when it is settled the natives are informed that this is now the law of the Government. It is desired that opportunity be given to the natives also to consider such matters and that native representatives be present when they are discussed and their opinions ascertained, instead of their being ignored. There is great objection to the introduction of the registration which was brought in before the natives even once over the "Kiparis" area. It is desired that the Government should be informed of the objections of the natives when all matters are being discussed.

3. Education

"We also wish the Government to consider the education of the natives. We may have knowledge in many parts of the country. At the Embasa there are Government schools, but there is no school in many parts. It is only such work as the Government can do."

(Draft from the Kikuyu Association, Nairobi, Kenya, 1952)

Kikuyu Association, Nairobi, Kenya

of the Association

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### 4. Education.

"We also wish the Government to consider the education of the natives. They may have knowledge of many parts of the world. In Mombasa there are Government schools, but here in the interior there is only what works on coffee and sisal and such like."

(Drafts from notes and explanations of the Kikuyu Association to the Government.)

Kikuyu Association, P. O. Box 100, Nairobi.

of the Association.

## APPENDIX 1.

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List of Girls who have become pregnant while working on plantations and names of Men responsible.

Name of Girl.	Name of Man.
1. At Mr. A. Fenwick's estate, "Kagiria(?)" (Chief Mimi) Wanjiku wa Kihara Mwari wa Marigi Mwari wa Nyabururu Mwari wa Kinyanjui	
2. At Mrs. Roberts' estate, Nuiru (Chief waweru wa Karja) Agwaga wa Nungu Kariuki wa Wambau	Mueboku wa Kung'u
3. At Mr. Thoms' (?) estate, Komothai Mwari wa Kairohe Mwari wa Gachinga Mwari wa Muchina Mwari wa Theche Wanjiru wa Mathigo (Chief Naweru wa Mahui)	Kibangwa wa Karanja Ngacha wa Kanwaki Kariuki
4. Capt. Beck's estate, Ndururumo. (Chief Njoroge) Wambui wa Wanduadu Mwachambi wa Muri Njeri wa Wang'ang'a Wanjiku wa Mwaure	Karoge wa Kangera Kahuri wa Kamiri Machinga wa Magwanja

APPENDIX 2.List of Chiefs and Kiamas accusing Wajana wa Wapoto.

The following Chiefs and Kiamas:

Kinyanjui wa Gathirama Muki	Mwanga wa Karoma
Waweru wa Wambai	Mithanga wa Wambau
Waweru wa Kanja	Muhoro wa Gathecha
Mimi wa Richo	Gatoru wa Ndaihera
Njoroge wa Muchai	Ndegwa wa Chega
Gathingo wa Karoro	Mushendu (for Mukoma)
Remongi wa Gachiama	Karanja wa Marite
Koinange wa Mbiu	
Gahuo wa Mg'ong'o	
Ndekei wa Mukanda	
Wairima wa Muriba	

APPENDIX A.List of Girls who have become pregnant while working on plantations and names of Men responsible.

Name of Girl.	Name of Man.
1. At Mr. A. Perwach's estate, "Kagiria(?)" (Chief Mimi) Wanjiku wa Kihara Mwari wa Marigi Mwari wa Ngabururu Mwari wa Kinganjui	
2. At Mrs. Roberts' estate, Nuiru (Chief wawaru wa Kenja) Ngendo wa Munenge Isakari wa Wanbou	Mwendu wa Kang'u
3. At Mr. Thome's (?) estate, Komothai Mwari wa Kairohe Mwari wa Gochinga Mwari wa Muchina Mwari wa Theche Wanjiru wa Mathigo (Chief Nwera wa Mahui)	Kibangwa wa Karanja Ngacha wa Kanwaki Kariuki
4. Capt. Beck's estate, Ndururumo. (Chief Njoroge) Wambui wa Wandungu Gachambi wa Muni Njeri wa Wang'ang'a Wanjiku wa Mwaura	Karogo wa Kangere Kahuri wa Kamiri Machinga wa Kagwanja

APPENDIX B.List of Chiefs and Kiamas assisting Heigandjo wa Ndoto

The following Chiefs and Headmen:

Kinyanjui wa Gathiriga	Mundiro wa Karoga
Mimi	Muhoro wa Gathiriga
Nwera wa Mahui	Gatoru wa Ndaihera
Nwera wa Kanja	Ndegwa wa Cheja
Mimi wa Richo	Jumheru (for Mukoma)
Njoroge wa Muchai	Karanja wa Marito
Gathingo wa Karoro	
Remongi wa Gachema	
Koinange wa Mbiu	
Gahuo wa Mg'ong'o	
Ndekei wa Mukanda	
Wairina wa Muriba	

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**DRAFT**

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very kind to  
bring me a new

**MINUTE.**

The Document Bureau  
is your blue of the  
26 August 1921  
I am at your service  
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I have a copy of it

- Mr. G. G. G.
- Mr. H. Lambert
- Mr. H. H.
- Mr. G. G.
- Mr. G. G.
- Mr. G. G.
- Mr. G. G.

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10, AVENUE, CRAYFORD, LONDON.

REGISTERED OFFICE.

*M. P. [unclear]*

# The Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society

(in which are incorporated the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and the Aborigines Protection Society.)

SECRETARY,  
David Scott, M.A.

DENSON HOUSE,

26, VAUXHALL BRIDGE ROAD,

LONDON, S.W. 1.

(INCORPORATED BY ACT OF PARLIAMENT.)

MANAGING SECRETARY,  
John H. Harris.

2nd September, 1901.

Dear Sir,

In the absence of Mr. Harris, who is in Geneva for the Assembly of the League of Nations, I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 1st inst., contents of which I am communicating to him.

Yours faithfully,

for JOHN H. HARRIS,

*John H. Harris*

Major The Hon. G. F. [unclear],  
Colonial Office,

*Albion*  
*acc*  
*5/9/01*  
*Albion*