

WILLESDEN 2058

8, AYLESTONE AVENUE.
BRONDESBURY PARK,
LONDON. N.W. 6

5th February, 1950.

The Reverend Hanock M. Phiri,
Kasungu,
Nyasaland,
Central Africa.

My dear Uncle,

I was very happy, indeed, to receive your letter, which you wrote on the 21st of January, 1950. As you said you were going home, I am sending this letter to Kasungu, and also, £10.0.0, which I hope will reach you safely. I am sending both the letter and the £10. 0. 0 in care of Chief Mwase, as I do not know whether you will be staying at Kayesa's village or at Kaninga's village. But I know you will see the Chief, so I am sending both letter and money c/o Chief Mwase.

I am very glad that you agree with my suggestions about your choosing a place for yourself. I do not know where you will choose, as I do not know where good soil and water are now at Kasungu. Rusa is a very nice place, where the river Rusa goes into Buwa. Also, there used to be many other good places not so very far from the Kayesa's and Kaninga's villages. But whatever place you choose, I shall try to help you as much as I can.

As you wrote to me about Thimbi, I wrote to my brother, Hanock, instructing him to go to Thimbi and see about the land there. He went there and saw Mr. Msulira, who own that part of Kasungu. Mr. Msulira was very kind and gave Hanock a man to show him where he could choose a piece of land for me and my family. My brother, Hanock, went into the forest to choose the place and came back to Mr. Msulira and told him that he wanted a certain part of his place to be given to me. Mr. Msulira agreed.

Now I have a place at Thimbi, three miles from Msulira's village, between the Nkhotakota-Kasungu Road, and the Stream Thimbi, and about seven or eight miles from Buwa and seventeen miles from the Boma at Kasungu. Thank you very much for suggesting that place for me. Please, tell Na. A. Mwase that I thank him very much for suggesting that place for me. I like it very much, from what Hanock, my brother, has told me.

About dividing the land among certain important families, that care for their country, I am very glad that you agree with my suggestion. If the whole country is divided and given to ~~certain~~ certain families, in fact, all the families, then there will be no land left to be given to Europeans. In fact, most of Kasungu already belongs to certain families. What you should now advise the Chief is that he should tell the Government who the owners of this or that part of Kasungu are. For example, at Mtunthama, most of the land belongs to the family of Chinyama. At Wimbe's, most of the land belongs to the family of Wimbe. And at Chilanga, most of the land belongs to Chief Chilowa and his people and so forth. Now, you should advise N. A. Mwase to tell the Government that the Government must recognise our laws and customs and respect the African owners of these pieces of land. And when the Government wants land, it must not give it away to Europeans, unless the African owner of the land agrees and says "Yes, I agree to give this piece of my land to this man or that man".

Tell N. A. Mwase that, here in England, the Colonial Office recognise the African owners of land. In West Africa, no European can get land without the consent or the agreement of the Africans. It must be the same in Nyasaland too. The land is our own. It must not be given to Europeans without our agreement. Please, tell the Chief this. And when the Chief hold council, tell all other councillors or important and big men at Kasungu that the land is ours. It must stay ours. It must not be given to Europeans, unless we agree to it. Whenever the Government want a piece of land to be given a European, it must ask, first, N. A. Mwase. After that it must ^{ask} the owner of the land which the Government wants. If N. A. Mwase says "No", the Government must not give the land to anyone. If the owner of the land says "No", even if the Government want that land, it must not give it to anyone. And the Government has no right at all to give it to anyone, if N. A. Mwase or the owner of the land says "No".

Tell N. A. Mwase and all the chiefs and headmen that the land is ours. Tell them all not to be afraid of the Government about the land. The Government will not force them to give the land to any European, if they say "No". The Africans have the right to say "No", even to the Governor, because the land is their own. Kasungu is our country and our home. The land at Kasungu is ours. And we have the right to keep our land and to say "No", if we do not want to give it to anyone, European or Indian. You must advise the chiefs wisely, Uncle, please. Because most of the chiefs are ignorant and ^{do} not know the laws. Therefore, they are afraid of the D. C. or the A. D. C.

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So, please, Uncle, tell the Chief to be very careful and not to allow too many Europeans.

I am very glad to hear that the chiefs do want want charge me anything until the farm is working well. That is very kind of them indeed. As a Chewa, I have more right to use the land than any European or Indian. Kasungu is my home. The land is mine. If I make any money at Thimbi, it will greatly help the country. But when the farm is making profit I shall be glad to pay to the Kasungu treasury, any reasonable sum. The Government charges Europeans six pence an acre. I do not know what the Chiefs or the Achewa Council will charge me. They should not charge me as much as European pay, since Kasungu is my own home and I am not a foreigner. They should charge me less than Europeans pay. Any way, Uncle, you will let me know when the time comes.

Yours sincerely.


Hastings K. Banda.

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