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PETITION FROM MR. BERNARD VICZKO, FOR THE CREW OF THE "TRIASTER"
CONCERNING NAURU

(Circulated in accordance with rule 85 of the rules
of procedure of the Trusteeship Council)

M. V. TRIASTER
British Phosphate Commission
Collins St.
Melbourne Vic. Australia

To
United Nations Trusteeship Council
United Nations Building
New York City,
New York, U.S.A.

Dear Sirs,

I along with my fellow members of the crew of the above named ship on whose behalf I write this letter to you are deeply concerned as to the treatment of the natives on the Island of Narua in the Pacific, who come under, we are told the administration of the Australian Government.

We are all Australian Citizens and therefore we feel slightly guilty of the treatment meted out to the natives, even though we are not directly responsible. We are employed on the ship as Sailors and Motormen, and the ship herself is owned by the British Phosphate Commission which engages in the trade of carrying phosphate from Narua to various ports in Australia and New Zealand.

The ship also has accomodation of upward of fifty (50) passengers which is at all times partially full, and the passengers are mostly employees of the British Phosphate Commission who are travelling back and forth to their respective jobs on the Islands.

As the ship trades on accassions to Ocean Island as well as Narua, there are at times passengers travelling from one Island (Ocean Island) to the other (Narua). Among these Inter Island passengers there are frequently natives who for one reason or other find it necessary to travel with us.

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Now the white passengers pay there fare and are accomodated to the best of the ships facilities. The native Passengers who some time pay their fare and sometimes don't, are dumped on the deck like a load of deck cargo and left to their own devices. There is no discrimination to those who pay and those who do not, nor does it matter if they are family units or single individuals, men women or children, Naruans, Gilbertese or Ellice Islanders, paying or non paying passengers, and once abroad the ship and the ship proceeds to sea they must either beg for food from the ships galley or as always happens we the crew realize their plight and share our food with them.

This may not sound to bad an arrangement as the ship only spends the one night at sea on the voyage from Ocean Island to Narua, but occasionally when the weather is bad, they may spend as much as two days and nights before being landed. All this time they are not provided with descent shelter or free access to food and sanitary conditions. We consider this discrimination between the paying white passengers and paying native passengers to be apartheid in its worst form. Especially under a government that classes itself as to be non-discriminatory. I will give you one glaring instant that happened between the 20th and the 22nd of Sept. One Christian Robert Grundel aged 20 and his wife who are both Naruan by birth, had travelled from the Fiji Islands to Ocean Island enroute to Narua. He had been awarded first class accomodation from Fiji to Ocean Island on a different ship to this one. Upon arrival in Ocean Island he made enquiries as to when and how he could get to Narua, he was told that this ship (Triaster) would be sailing for Narua on the 20 and that the fare was £3.10.0

He paid his fare for himself and his wife and upon coming aboard the vessel, was told to pick himself out a nice soft spot on the deck someplace and make himself comfortable. He was perplexed, but being the subservient type he resigned himself to the whitemans ways. Upon engageing him in conversation I was told the above details whereupon I asked him why he did not complain. His reply was that if he did he would be told to like it or leave it and wait for something else and as ships are few and far between he just had to like it. At this particular time there was plenty of accomodation in the passenger quarters available.

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I then asked him if he had eaten. He replied that he had not whereupon we invited him and his wife to partake of a meal with us. They did so gratefully. We were supposed to have arrived in Narua the next morning but due to engine trouble we did not arrive till the morning of the 22nd.

This is one example of the glaring inconsistency of government policy in regard to native treatment.

There are of course other examples that we could quote but by now I think I have given you an idea of the goings on in this part of the world.

We write you because we are told that although Narua comes under Australian Government Administration it is only so because Narua is under the trusteeship of the United Nations. Resting assured that this matter will receive your attention and that justice and equality will be shown this fine race of people.

I remain yours in equality

Bernard Viczko

for crew Triaster
