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COMMUNICATION FROM THE PARTI DU PEUPLE
CONCERNING RUANDA-URUNDI

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Umugambwe w'Abarundi basanzwe,
Parti du Peuple
Central Office
Usa
P. O. Box 4,175
Nigagara

Usumbura, 9 May 1960

Regional delegations:

Kitega,
Muramvya,
Ngozi,
Muhinga,
Bururi,
Rutana,
Bubanza,
Bujumbura,
Ruyigi.

Sir,

We have the honour to enclose the texts of the resolutions adopted by the Congress of the Parti du Peuple (Urundi), held at Usumbura on 1 May 1960.

We hope that you yourself and the members of the Trusteeship Council will give it your close attention.

We have the honour to be, etc.,

(Signed) Illegible

Pascal MANANDA
Secretary

The President and Members of the
Trusteeship Council
United Nations, New York

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CONGRESS OF THE PARTI DU PEUPLE
HELD AT USUMBURA ON 1 MAY 1960

The Parti du Peuple held a Congress at Usumbura on 1 May 1960. Delegates attended from the districts of Usumbura, Kitega, Ngozi, Muramvya and Buriri.

At the outset, the Secretary read to the Congress a speech which was to have been made by the Chairman, Joachin BARIBWEGURE, who was unable to attend the meeting.

The Congress then noted that its local section at Kitega had developed considerably and had recently become an independent party under the name Parti de l'Emancipation Populaire (P.E.P.), with Mr. Pascal MBUZIYONJA, former Vice-Chairman of the Parti du Peuple, as Chairman.

Accordingly, the Congress elected Mr. Michel BUYOYA, of Kayanza, as its new Vice-Chairman.

After lengthy discussion, the Congress unanimously adopted the following resolutions:

(1) The Parti du Peuple notes

(a) that despite its sincere efforts over the last five months to eliminate racial opposition between the Bahutu and the simple Batutsi and to group them together in a single party for the defence of the under-privileged of Burundi, many Batutsi were unable to join, as they were not sufficiently independent of their feudal lords. The Party hopes that this pressure can be gradually overcome so that the Parti du Peuple shall not become an exclusively Hutu party;

(b) that political life in Burundi is being organized in an unhealthy atmosphere and under unfair conditions;

that intolerable pressure has been brought to bear, including threats of death, the dismissal of employees by employers, and the promise of public office, on leaders of popular parties to prevent them from playing a political role;

that the man in the street is dragooned into the feudal party of his chief or sub-chief, despite his personal desire to support a popular party which would release him from his servitude;

that the distribution of membership cards of certain parties gives rise to veritable extortion of money from poor people;

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that despite a number of warnings by the Trusteeship Authority and the Murundi authority, one party persists in taking advantage of its dynastic connexions to impress the lower classes and ensure their loyalty through blackmail;

that the feudal parties have an organizational advantage which might distort the entire electoral process. This situation was denounced by the Resident-General himself in a speech on 3 March 1960 in connexion with the "UNAR", which considers itself strong "as its membership includes chiefs and sub-chiefs who can have cars and printing presses at their disposal, hold meetings and give orders in the name of the State";

that in some areas, people's candidates upon being asked to stand for election have already stated that they do not dare to do so;

that the situation prior to the elections in Burundi is similar to that in Ruanda before the November revolution as described by the Resident-General in the same speech: "Do not let yourselves be deceived, implored the spokesmen of the popular and progressive movements, the manoeuvre is all too clear: an inexperienced electorate, still more accessible to orders from the sub-chiefs than to the weak propaganda of our parties which have almost no means of action, will, owing to a judicious use of demagoguery and intimidation, re-elect almost all the Tutsi officials and the first elections will also be the last";

that as a result political freedom is non-existent in Burundi;

that in such circumstances, the proposed elections are bound to be marked by chicanery and dishonesty and must be categorically opposed;

(c) that the electoral propaganda of certain parties is based either on false rumors, libel or slander or else on threats and acts of intimidation or even on demands which may be legitimate in themselves but dangerous for simple-minded people;

that in speaking of Burundi, the Resident-General further stated: "This success would be all the better assured if those at present in power, whatever the position they occupy, were to understand better that the rise of the people is both desirable and inevitable, that it requires concessions and even the gradual abandonment of privileges on their part, and that it is pointless to seek, as did some in Ruanda in 1959, to oppose this irresistible phenomenon of history by force"; but despite this solemn warning at least one particularly powerful party in Burundi is endeavouring to oppose the inevitable rise of the people by force;

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that in some areas the partisans of certain opposed parties show clear outward signs of great mutual hostility;

that, accordingly, the general political climate in Burundi in April 1960 is not far different from that in Ruanda in October 1959, without, however, being as serious;

that as a result there is real danger to public order in Burundi;

(d) that the United Nations Visiting Mission envisaged the formation of a Burundi national assembly for the beginning of 1961 only;

that in the meantime the Interim Commission consisting solely of highly placed individuals with feudalistic views cannot be held to be truly representative of the people of Burundi;

that furthermore this Commission has already taken a number of tendentious decisions which have greatly antagonized certain sectors of the population.

2. The Parti du Peuple, conscious of its responsibilities, strongly urges the Government to organize an emergency meeting at Usumbura or Kitega at the earliest opportunity and at all events before the holding of the round-table conference. The emergency meeting would be under the auspices of the Trusteeship Authority and of the Mwami of Burundi and would be attended by delegates of the political parties, of the former High Council and the General Council of Ruanda-Urundi. The agenda would be as follows:

(a) A propaganda truce between the political parties;

(b) A series of measures designed to eliminate the most reactionary aspects of feudalism and to establish a climate of political freedom;

(c) The democratic formation of a provisional special Council of Burundi with the same powers as the former High Council. This body might well be provided with further powers under the Interim Decree;

(d) The setting of the date and the organization of the round-table conference and the possible organization of communal elections in an improved atmosphere.
