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COMMUNICATION FROM THE "COMITE DE L'UNITE TOGOLAISE"  
AND "JUVENTO" AT LAMAKARA CONCERNING TOGOLAND UNDER  
FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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Comité Unité Togolaise  
and Juvento  
Lamakara

To the members of the United Nations Commission on Togoland.

Sir,

On behalf of our political parties we welcome your arrival among us at  
Lamakara.

We wish to inform you of the deep suffering inflicted on us by the  
Administration through the prevention of our meetings.

Many nationalists from our parties had decided to gather together in honour  
of your arrival, and only the preventive action of the Administering Authority  
makes us nationalists appear before you as such a small minority.

We say plainly that we protest about the internal autonomy of Togoland, which  
seems little more than a rumour; we cannot see it or feel its existence and it has  
never been approved by the people, the Togolese Nationalists.

This autonomy has been established by the Union des Chefs and the French  
Government. The Togolese people, "Nationalists", have never envisaged autonomy n  
under the French Government, but rather Complete Independence and the Unification  
of the two Togolands.

We do not hesitate to ask for the abolition of autonomy under the French  
Government.

We ask your Commission to bring to an end the useless operations of the polling offices set up by fraud in a village to obstruct us. We shall specify the obstacles created by the Administering Authority by sudden and unfounded arrests.

1. The President of Juvento, Piya Haut Canton, one Jean Sosso Badaba, was arrested at Piya on 23 May for no reason whatsoever and taken to the Sokodé prison, where he still lies. This is not the first time that Mr. Jean Sosso has been molested in this way, particularly when the United Nations Commission arrived, when twice he was arrested and not released until after the United Nations Commission had left the area. We immediately wrote to the Commandant de Cercle to ask the reason for this action, which remains unknown since there has been no reply.

2. On 5 June last the Commandant de Cercle, noting the preparations of the Parties, Juvento and the Comité Unité Togolaise, in the Cercle for welcoming the United Nations Commission, took Mr. Marcel Agba, his secretary, with him and seized a member of Juvento in an office that had recently been opened at Piya. This nationalist, Mr. Alidi, responded with a clear conscience to the questions of the Commandant's secretary, acting as interpreter:

Where were you born?

Mr. Alidi: I was born at Piya.

The Commandant: Where do you pay your taxes?

Mr. Alidi: I pay my taxes in British Togoland.

The Commandant: Hand over your passport.

Mr. Alidi: It is not required for travelling between the two Togolands.

For no better reason than this, Mr. Alidi was made to get into the Commandant's car and taken to the Gendarmerie nationale of the Cercle to sign a statement admitting violence against the Commandant de Cercle. Mr. Alidi refused to sign such a false and lying statement, and was thrown into prison, where he remained from eleven in the morning to 4 o'clock in the afternoon; then he was set free and told to report to the office of the Commandant de Cercle the next day at eight in the morning.

When Mr. Alidi appeared, the Commandant asked him the following question:

When are you prepared to leave the country?

Mr. Alidi: I will leave my country when I am given an assignment somewhere else.

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The Commandant: You must leave the country within some stated period.

Mr. Alidi: I shall leave whenever I please; I am not a foreigner here.

The Commandant found Mr. Alidi a hard man to get into prison, so he had to let him go without saying anything more.

The whole of this was merely a way of interfering with Mr. Alidi so as to prevent him from being present at the arrival of the Commission, because he is a member of Juvento.

The Partie Progrès, which is favourable to the Administering Authority, never meets with any such hindrances in its political activity, in fact everything is made easy for it.

We strongly urge the dissolution of this Legislative Assembly, unwanted and unknown to the people, and we call for free elections conducted under international guarantee, which in our view would not be any impediment to the goal of UNIFICATION AND COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE.

The Administering Authority relies on the village chief, who has his own way of showing loyalty by fomenting discord in the country and inflicting undeserved punishment on the nationalists, sometimes for purely personal motives, since this autonomy under the French Government means that might is right.

As proof of this, read what follows.

In the Kétao canton, Cercle of Lamakara, one of the male nurses at the dispensary raped a woman patient on the operating table while he was supposed to be examining her.

Frenziedly repulsing him, the woman ran to tell her husband about the health official's indecent conduct. The husband took the matter to the Administering Authority, which, far from rendering justice to the plaintiff, intimidated him and threatened to throw him in prison if he dared to bring action against an official who was a member of the Parti Togolais du Progrès; this was because the plaintiff himself was a member of the CUT (Comité Unité Togolaise).

This serious offence by a member of the Parti Togolais du Progrès will go unpunished, since autonomy under the French Government means that officials belonging to that party can count on having their misdeeds glossed over.

To tell the truth there is no member of the Parti Togolais du Progrès who belongs to it from conviction rather than from convenience. Most of the officials of the party blindly support Internal Autonomy under the French Government in order to have their misdeeds winked at by the law, to be well thought of, to be free of police supervision, or merely to keep their jobs.

Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

To us, the Togolese People, complete independence to free us from slavery under the French Government.

We ask you to compare the life of an official of the Parti Togolais du Progrès with that of a nationalist; when you see the vast difference you will be struck with compassion.

If you have really left your beautiful homelands and loving families in order to separate truth from falsehood among the rumours about our Togoland that have reached you at the United Nations during the last few years, and you are really members of the Commission known as the Fact Finding Mission, those who hope to benefit from your efforts prostrate themselves before you with cries of joy ... Ablodé.

We paid taxes that were supposed to be spent on our hospitals.

Today in the Territory most of our medical care has to be paid for, especially in the Cabrais Region. The revenue from our taxes disappears without a trace, but the arrival among us of Visiting Missions stimulated the French Government to furnish new supplies for most of the dispensaries because of the visit; once it is over, our sufferings go untended.

Under our old Assembly the taxes paid for the maintenance of roads, bridges and so forth; now, under the legislature of the so-called Internal Autonomy all the money is spent on politics, and public works are neglected. See for example the road from Lomé to Yapango (the intercolonial road).

The money set aside for these public works finds its way back to the Deputies, to the Delegates and to the Ministers, and becomes money to be spent on parties and on the many cars they use for joy-riding.

/...

This irresponsibility is the reason for the bad condition of the roads, which leads to continual car accidents.

The Government, having deprived the Nationalists of all their rights and given them to the members of the Parti Togolais du Progrès, has divided the country into the South for the members of the CUT and the North for the French Government.

If you take a look at the offices of the Cercle of Lamakara you will at once detect racialism there.

This racialism is based on politics, and its aim is to hand over to the colonialists all Togoland and the members of the Cabrais race who have blindly followed a political line for their own advantage.

In the offices in the South all Togolanders have equal rights, but it is not so in the North.

Inquire for yourselves; you will find that it is as we say, the French Government has imposed a salary reduction on the highly paid officials in the Territory. This was done to relieve the wretched condition of the people, and to give work to a large number of unemployed workers such as masons, joiners, carpenters, and so forth, as a sign of encouragement to the people. The opposite of this duty is to dismiss workers.

We ask for our political freedom. Our Juvento office has been set on fire twice running. At the moment you will find it burnt down, and this was done deliberately to destroy our files, and prevent us from sending in petitions to the Commission.

The Administering Authority was aware of these actions, and hoped to discourage us in our work, also by imprisoning us without cause.

The reason that fewer of us than of the other party appear before you is that free transport is provided for them. The Government granted the Parti Togolais du Progrès free transport for the people living in the bush - men, women, adults and children, and for two or three days before the arrival of the Commission there was a publicity campaign about it in the town of Lamakara, whereas we members of the CUT and Juvento had to make our way in our frail little boats to where we could await the arrival of the Commission, our hearts full of hope.

How many years is it now since the Parti Togolais du Progrès first announced to the United Nations that it had its own little civilization, and hoped to achieve a higher level of civilization and independence?

How many years is it now since it has developed sufficiently for Independence, yet the only form of it offered to us excludes any member of the CUT or Juvento?

We maintain our stand, and insistently call for the complete Independence and Unification of the two Togolands.

ABLODE

Bodé Isoufo-Secretary

(Signed) illegible

Mamah Pierre - President of the  
CUT and JUVENTO

(Signed) illegible

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