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SEP 13 1960
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T/PET.3/L.45
31 August 1960
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

PETITION FROM THE "PARTI DEMOCRATE CHRETIEN (PDC)", THE
"PARTI DU PEUPLE DE L'URUNDI (PP)", THE "RASSEMBLEMENT
POPULAIRE DU BURUNDI (RPB)", THE "UNION DEMOCRATIQUE
PAYSANNE (UDP)", THE "MOUVEMENT PROGRESSISTE DU BURUNDI
(MPB)", THE "UNION NATIONALE DU BURUNDI (UNB)", THE
"MOUVEMENT RURAL DU BURUNDI (MRB)" AND OTHERS CONCERNING
RUANDA-URUNDI

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Sir,

Our parties are taking the liberty to submit a memorandum to you on the
political conditions prevailing in Burundi at the present time and their position
with regard to the elections, bearing these conditions in mind.

We hope that you will give due consideration to this memorandum and have the
honour to be, etc.

P.D.C. (signed: illegible)	P.P. (signed: illegible)	R.P.B. (signed: illegible)
U.D.P. " "	M.P.B. " "	
U.N.B. " "	P.E.P. " "	
	P.O. " "	P.J.R. (signed: illegible)
	M.R.B. " "	

Copies sent to:

The President of the Senate, Brussels
The President of the Chamber of Representatives, Brussels
The Resident-General, Usumbura
The Resident of Urundi, Kitega
Mwami Mwambutsa of Burundi

MEMORANDUM ON POLITICAL CONDITIONS AS THE ELECTIONS DRAW NEAR

As the elections are drawing near our parties are concerned about the increasingly virulent and insidious intrigues of UPRONA (Unité et progrès national), under the leadership of Muganwa RWAGASORE, which will poison the atmosphere in which preparations are being made for the elections if remedial measures are not taken at once.

Again and again incidents have been reported, stressed, recalled. We want now to give a brief general picture of the situation and are ready to provide the authorities concerned with such details, particulars and proofs as they may desire.

In February last the signatories of a telegram refuting the arguments for immediate independence were taken to task and threatened by members of UPRONA in the Conseil Supérieur of Burundi who had come from Kitega to Ngozi especially for this purpose.

Again in February members of UPRONA held a party meeting in the premises of the Administrative Centre at Kitega, giving the affair every appearance of an official meeting; these premises are moreover looked upon and regularly used by UPRONA as the Party's headquarters.

Sub-chiefs who are members of UPRONA are officially summoned to Kitega, their travelling expenses being paid from the coffers of the State, in order to be told the party's latest line.

Thus UPRONA is endeavouring, for the most part making use of the high personal standing, prestige and wealth which his dynastic rank confers on Prince RWAGASORE, to make its activities "official", in order to show that it is the party which has the support of the authorities.

Moreover, UPRONA continues against all comers to claim that it has the exclusive patronage of the Mwami and is acting on his behalf. UPRONA represents itself "as the only party working for the interests of the Mwami" (see their pamphlet of 2 May).

However, the Mwami's journey through the districts, when he read his letter of 14 April, in which he clearly states that he is above the parties and refutes the arguments which have made improper use of his name, has been the subject of counterpropaganda by UPRONA, which takes the form of advising the crowds not to believe him. This has inevitably confused people and roused some of them to

indignation, especially when this counterpropaganda has been made by Prince RWAGASORE personally. We shall cite as proof of this fact the letter addressed to the Mwami by the notables of MUKENKE, recounting facts such as these and asking the Mwami whether they should believe him or his son.

As soon as a Chief who is not a member of UPRONA leaves his Chiefdom for one reason or another, UPRONA propagandists swarm over it, explaining the Chief's absence by the fact that, having betrayed the Mwami by not joining UPRONA, he has just been arrested and imprisoned, that preparations are afoot for a punitive expedition against the Chiefdom and that in order to escape it they must all join UPRONA at once.

The "punitive expedition" argument is moreover used even when the Chief is not absent. Failure to join UPRONA is represented as an offence meriting serious reprisals. Consequently, people are to be seen rushing to the Chief (who is not a member of UPRONA) to ask him for a UPRONA membership card, as a charm against reprisals ...

It is harvest-time and people can be seen putting their crops in silos instead of storing them in the usual manner, in order to conceal them and protect them from being burnt or confiscated during the punitive expeditions they have been told about.

It is rumoured that only members of UPRONA will be included in the electoral registers and permitted to vote, being the only real and good citizens.

In many places, UPRONA arranges on one pretext or another for meetings, which develop into riots. Prince RWAGASORE sometimes appears shortly afterwards, (the pretext given for calling the people together is moreover frequently that "a very important personage is going to speak"), and interprets the incidents in his own way. We would mention the cases of KITERANYI, where RWAGASORE made a speech and policemen were among those molested, and RUKECO (where RWAGASORE made no speech) where the Administrator had to spend three hours persuading the crowd to disperse.

In Chiefdoms where the Chiefs are not members of UPRONA, slogans inciting people to rebel are put out: "Do not obey a Chief who does not obey the Mwami, since he is not a member of UPRONA. Do not let individuals who are not members of UPRONA sit in judgement on you", and so forth.

In his Chiefdom, Muganwa RWAGASORE holds meetings where he accuses non-members of UPRONA of the most heinous crimes, and then explains that they are not prosecuted because the Administration protects them and that it is necessary in order to put an end to this injustice and many others to vote for UPRONA, the only party devoted to justice and capable of making it prevail.

However - doubtless in a spirit of justice and tolerance - UPRONA propagandists are everywhere tearing up and burning our parties' membership cards, after intimidating their owners into handing them over. We shall mention the case of two Chiefdoms in the KITEGA district, where the Chiefs, carefully indoctrinated by UPRONA, called together all those whom UPRONA had indicated as members of other parties, in order to confiscate and destroy their membership cards.

The UPRONA supporters intersperse their propaganda with constant references to the support which foreign parties, such as MNC/LUMUMBA, have allegedly promised to give to Burundi, in the form of money and arms, to assist it in obtaining its independence immediately.

They also make mysterious references - which in this context strike a disturbing note - to "important and serious events which must be expected shortly".

UPRONA approaches the United Nations, through Mr. RWAGASANA, just as it did Mr. LUMUMBA at the independence celebrations at Léopoldville as "representing Burundi" or "the Burundi parties" which is, we repeat, presumptuous and dishonest.

We cannot but compare all these methods with those used by UNAR in Ruanda: promises of immediate independence, ("everything will be better when we are among ourselves, trusteeship is the cause of all our difficulties"), exclusive references to the Mwami, intimidation in all its forms, incitement with assurances of armed disturbances, the arms of course always to be supplied by "anti-imperialist" parties and countries. Similarly, tactics such as brain-washing, lying, opposing all those who stand for order and authority recall both UNAR and MNC/LUMUMBA.

UPRONA is strongly opposed to "the feudal order" but seems to attack order in itself whatever form it takes rather than the feudal system as such, for feudal characteristics - misuse of power, high-handed action, favouritism - have never been so flourishing as they are in UPRONA circles at the present time. To please party members or to attract new ones, the UPRONA members in the Mwami's entourage can be seen using all their influence to obtain appointments of all kinds, however inefficient, untrained and inexperienced the persons concerned may be.

/...

In view of everything we have said, we think we have reason to fear that the approaching elections will not represent the freely expressed national will.

If everything could be settled at the polls, we could perhaps meet riots with riots, blackmail with blackmail, threats with other threats. But should our country be built on such foundations? For it is our country's interests which must be served and not personal ambitions or grievances.

Thus we could take part in the elections only if the atmosphere were more wholesome, more genuinely national, without continuous references to foreign parties with questionable connexions.

However, the policy of UPRONA seems to be inspired by Prince RWAGASORE and to be carried out under his guidance. Not only does he inspire and protect but he also participates actively, in defiance of all regulations. If for instance another Chief took it into his head to hold meetings, to travel without permission, and to harass the whole country to the detriment of his own work, what would happen to him? Thus Prince RWAGASORE confers on questionable activities a sort of impunity due to a rank whose neutrality and dignity he does not respect. In so doing, he does harm to the country, to the monarchy - and to the party he serves or uses for his own ends. For in its present form it would seem that UPRONA ought to be outlawed by all political parties. Would UPRONA have considered the possibility of resorting to force? At all events, the assumption of unanimity or even an absolute majority is fantastic. The hour of democracy has struck, whether Prince RWAGASORE wants it or not when he says that "democracy is a big word which means nothing". For us it has a very definite meaning and we shall see that it prevails.

Thus we want Prince RWAGASORE to retire from politics with all the desirable publicity, as has been stated.

As regards the equal status of the parties, we thank our Mwami for the firm and dignified stand he has taken and for his concern to make his position known. However, in view of the counter-manoevres in regard to his attitude, we respectfully request him to repeat it again and to insist on it and to recall it whenever those who instigate disturbances cause fresh confusion in people's minds.

We also request him to broaden his entourage, and not to let himself be hemmed in by a hide-bound society representing one view only; it must not be permitted that, like the Mwami of Ruanda, he should be surrounded by a clique making him responsible for its own faults.

We want to bring up again the question of a Commission to be composed of representatives of all the parties and to settle disputes between parties. This Commission has never been set up and we regret it. We are thinking for instance of a case in the Ngozi area, where some individuals had lodged a complaint about their Chief on questions of policy. The Mwami had gone there to make an investigation. That was not at all in accord with his role of chief arbitrator. All the same, the matter has never been definitively settled. If the desired Commission had existed it would certainly have been able to settle it, while at the same time our Mwami would have avoided establishing a precedent which might make it necessary for him to intervene wherever anyone had anything to complain about.

Lastly, we thank Mr. REISDORF, the Resident, for the promises of firmness and severity contained in his speech of 21 July. We earnestly ask that these promises be given practical expression at once. We request the District Administrators not to underestimate the significance of incidents of the kind we have reported. Their concern to avoid exaggeration is certainly praiseworthy but neither should they be blind or weak.

We repeat that only an improvement in the political climate through the measures suggested - discontinuance of Prince RWAGASORE's political activities, renewed and repeated dissemination of information regarding the Mwami's position, greater administrative vigilance and firmness - will make it possible for the democratic parties to take part in the elections.

Otherwise, to their great regret, they would be obliged to abstain.

PDC

PP

RPB

UDP

(signed: illegible)

UNA

FEP

MPB

PJR

MRB

(signed: illegible)

PO

(all signatures illegible)