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PETITION FROM BANYARWANDA STUDENTS AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF THE BELGIAN
CONGO AND RUANDA-URUNDI CONCERNING RUANDA-URUNDI

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Copy respectfully TRANSMITTED to the
United Nations Trusteeship Council,
NEW YORK, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
for its information (and for the
necessary action).

(Signed) NYIRUBAYOMBERO JEAN

KALISA CLAVER	AHISKYIZE THEOMENTE	...Illegible
KALINY	...Illegible	NKUNDISSAMA
KAYABO ALEXIS	KAYAGWE PAUL	...Illegible
A. KAGAH	...Illegible	MUTSINZI
LEMNARI VENANT	KANIMBA	
...Illegible	...Illegible	

Sir,

We have learned from a news bulletin broadcast by Radio Brazzaville on 2 May that "three of the four political parties of Ruanda which are represented in the Special Council have sent a telegram to the King and the Minister stating that they are breaking once and for all with the Mwami Kigeli V because he has refused to sign a decision of the provisional Special Council, that they refuse to take part in a round-table conference on Ruanda-Urundi and that they request the appointment of an interim Head of the State".

Your Majesty will allow us to express our indignation at the frivolity of such statements.

The senders of this telegram do not seem to realize (can they really be unaware of it?) that, even taken together, all the political parties of Rwanda,

which are at present eight in number, do not represent the whole country. Only elections held on the basis of universal suffrage can confer upon those elected the representative character which certain parties, perhaps destined to disappear, so blithely claim for themselves. What is really surprising, what is really an affront to common sense, is the fact that the three parties which signed the telegram, doubtless confident that they have behind them the support and authority of certain officials in carrying out their highly suspect manoeuvres, maintain that the whole nation is with them in their desire to dethrone the Mwami.

Mwami Kigeli V ascended the throne in accordance with an age-old tradition of royalty on which Ruanda prides itself and the Government, by investing him, endorsed the approbation of the whole nation which had formally acknowledged him. It is high time that the leaders of parties which do not represent the people should stop treating the Mwami as a plaything to be used as they see fit. It is regrettable that certain persons continually take advantage of the population for unworthy ends and by methods which are scarcely honest.

Every party naturally has the right to work for the triumph of its cause but when a party represents itself to the population as royalist while secretly advocating a republic, is that not abusing the confidence of the people, who are unaware of these discreditable manoeuvres?

What is still more regrettable, however, is the scandalous collusion between the colonialist Administration and the parties that support it, a collusion which is becoming more and more apparent. We need mention only the most unusual manner in which the original composition of the interim Special Council of Rwanda was decided by the Resident-General of Ruanda-Urundi. It is no secret to anyone that only the parties which Mr. Harroy uses as instruments of his policies were represented on that Council. When the United Nations Visiting Mission arrived, a few voices were raised in timid protest against this injustice. At that time only a nationalist party could be represented on that body.

The Provisional Council, which is supposed to aid the Mwami in his work and to deal with current business pending the elections, is in no way qualified to impose on the Mwami, on the strength of a Constitution which does not yet exist, decisions binding on the entire Nation. Apart from the fact that all the political parties are not represented on it, this imposed Council is singularly forgetful of its provisional and non-representative character.

/...

Your Majesty will surely be amazed that leaders of political parties should have conceived the strange notion of opposing the convocation of a round-table conference on the political future of Ruanda-Urundi, as proposed by Belgium and recommended by the United Nations Visiting Mission, on the specious pretext that the Mwami Kigeli V has not signed one of their decisions. It is our understanding that a constitutional monarch is in no way bound by the caprices of political leaders who represent nothing but their own ambitions. Despite the ingenious propaganda which has been skilfully put together by the mission newspapers and the Government information services, it is sometimes to be wondered how many members certain parties have. As for the rejection of this round-table conference, which would provide perhaps the only meeting ground and basis for negotiating the rapid emancipation of the country, we venture to question the sincerity of the motives underlying it. In any case, we see only one consideration which could have inspired it, namely, personal interest, the desire to retain the advantages, however ephemeral, of a position conferred on the persons concerned by an authority which is singularly self-seeking and eminently collusive. The discriminatory and often oppressive measures which the local Administration has felt obliged to apply to the nationalist parties while nurturing an ill-disguised tenderness for certain others, the objectionable notions which it has incessantly spread both at home and abroad in an effort to discredit the Mwami, have obliged all persons of goodwill to demand justice.

May we be permitted to tell Your Majesty that the activities in which the agents of the Rwanda Administration have been engaging for some time and the arbitrary and unjustified decisions of Mr. Jean-Paul Harroy, the Resident-General, are causing anxiety among the people and may alienate from Belgium the sympathy which it has a right to expect. It is disillusioning to see the extent to which the Usumbura Government is involving itself in party politics and certain of its statements are not conducive to harmony.

In conclusion, we should like to draw attention to the futility of appointing an interim Head of the State, as demanded by the signers of the cable, and we shall oppose such an appointment if it should be contemplated. The State cannot allow itself to be represented by anyone other than a person of its own choice. If the

Mwami is no longer to lead the nation which has recognized him as its Head, the nation alone can decide to depose him and choose his successor by whatever system it sees fit to adopt.

We have the honour to be, etc.

Elisabethville, 4 May 1960

(Signed) Banyarwanda students of the
State University of the
Belgian Congo and
Ruanda-Urundi

His Majesty King BAUDOUIN I,
King of the Belgians,
BRUSSELS
(Belgium)
