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ANONYMOUS PETITION  
CONCERNING RUANDA-URUNDI

Note by the Secretary-General: In accordance with rule 84 and supplementary rule F of the rules of procedure for the Trusteeship Council, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the Trusteeship Council and to the Government of Italy as the Administering Authority of the Trust Territory of Somaliland, an anonymous communication dated 1 August 1951, signed "Les Evolués Banyarwanda" concerning the Trust Territory of Ruanda-Urundi.

This communication was transmitted to the Secretary-General by the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa.

51-56542

ANONYMOUS PETITION CONCERNING RUANDA-URUNDI

Ruanda, 1 August 1951

Requests submitted to the United Nations  
by the inhabitants of Ruanda on the occasion  
of the visit to that area of United Nations  
representatives in July-August 1951

Gentlemen,

We felt relieved when we learned that the United Nations Mission had arrived, that it was going to various places and lodging in such and such a spot in our UNHAPPY Ruanda.

For, while our hypocritical champions are busy trying to deceive the distinguished envoys who are strange in their appearance and colouring, we enjoy a respite from their perfidious trouble-making.

On the other hand, we are very glad to tell the Visiting Mission, which we consider worthy of our confidence, about the many social problems which have been tormenting us for a long time and about which we are forced to keep silent.

(1) In the heart and mind of every Belgian in our country is written this text from their Codes and Laws of the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi (Louwers Codes, Sixth Edition, p. 754-755) which represents their inexorable native policy:

"The native, who is very observant, cleverly exploits any disagreement between officials and any difference of opinion among the administrative services. Every member of the staff should, to the utmost possible extent, safeguard the prestige and authority of all other members, regardless of the administrative branch to which they belong and of their grade. He will thus be protecting his own authority and prestige and the authority of the State. Accordingly, inspections, investigations and punishment of breaches of discipline should be carried out with the utmost discretion. In the last analysis it is the prestige of the white race which administrative officers must endeavour to preserve within the framework of the laws and regulations in force, and when justice demands that the authorities should protect natives

/against the

against the actions of certain Europeans, it must do so, taking care never uselessly to harm the status of the whites, whoever they may be, whether private persons or government officials."

"Special consideration to be given to the native elite...."

....On the contrary, all our efforts should be directed toward the formation of a native elite which is faithful to us and which we can use the better to establish and extend our authority."

How can we dirty niggers, as they consider us, benefit from such a magnificent programme of heroic justice and charity which a money-grubber and mercenary like the Belgian in our country finds natural and which is imposed as the first order and regulation to be followed?

If the entire native elite is to be used and is in fact used better to establish and extend Belgian prestige and authority in our country, how is Ruanda-Urundi expected to realize the fundamental aims of the international Trusteeship System?

(2) What does an employee deserve who bungles his work, becomes wealthy at the expense of his employer and the company, deceives the boss by false reports and eludes inspection by systematic trickery?

That is not a libelous description of the Belgian in our country. He arrives here, sickly, poor and wretched, and he grows rich and fat. He does not give a damn for the mother country and the native he has come out to civilize. He is "umuzungu and umuhashyi: a profiteer and money-grubber."

He quickly acquires what he would never have acquired in Belgium or in the Congo: expensive cars and motorbicycles, all kinds of jewelry, fine house furnishings and expensive clothes. Such are the fruits of tyrannical power and authority. The United Nations' inspection tours are of no use: they are infrequent and cleverly guided from beginning to end by those who gloat over having hoodwinked the United Nations visitors.

(3) What is the good of a teacher who deforms those he has to train. The entire native elite of our country, the Bamis, the Chiefs, the Assistant Chiefs and Assistants of all ranks and services and those appointed Monitors in every branch of activity, as well as all the clerks and Karani of our administration, are conditioned by the example of our present civilizers to become mercenaries, profiteers and money-grubbers. Their career consists of

strengthening and extending Belgian prestige and authority in our country. Like the Belgians and following the pattern set by them, they enrich themselves at the expense of their masters and of the poor people, they cheat and lie. Worst of all, they are proud of it. Their one and only motto is: "Grind down the little man: the muhutu: the worker, farmer and small businessman, and devour him relentlessly."

If you doubt what I am telling you -- which is but a small piece of the sad truth, of the situation which has systematically been concealed from you -- it is not surprising. For you are quite unaware of the good or evil done us, the justice or injustice rendered us, the ill-treatment to which we are subjected, and the falsity of the reports made to you.

You will never know and we shall forever be stifled and ground down by a spiritual slavery much more savage than the physical slavery which used to be imposed by the Roumarizah.

We are not allowed to speak. We cannot write to you, who are our true administrators. We have no freedom of speech or action.

We beg you to intervene and to afford us every opportunity to communicate with you and tell you exactly what goes on in your Ruanda-Urundi.

We beg you earnestly and trustfully to take the necessary steps to enable us to correspond freely with you and to enjoy freedom of the press so that we may unburden our heavily-laden and fettered hearts and minds.

In the hope that through your diligent efforts, our captivity shall at last be ended, we beg to remain, sirs, most respectfully,

The Educated Banyarwanda

(signed) several illegible signatures

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