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PETITION FROM MR. JOHN AMATE ATAYI, PRESIDENT OF THE
"PARTI TOGOLAIS DU PROGRES"
CONCERNING TOGOLAND UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

Note by the Secretary-General: In accordance with rule 85 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, a communication dated 20 August 1951 from Mr. John Amaté Atayi, President of the "Parti Togolais du Progrès" concerning the Trust Territory of Togoland under French administration.

COPY

PRESIDENT OF THE "PARTI TOGOLAIS DU PROGRES"

Lomé, 20 August 1951

Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Dear Sir,

We have deliberately allowed the Comité de l'Unité Togolaise to get far ahead of us in overwhelming your Secretariat, in every possible connexion with countless tendentious petitions which often said unkind and slanderous things about our party. We have had many reasons for protest, of which the ^{most} ~~serious~~ have been directed against the Comité de l'Unité Togolaise itself, but we are not animated by that spirit of systematic, aggressive and destructive obstructionism which inspires it. Furthermore, it is not the aim of our party to bring about an immediate change of Administering Authority, an aim which has caused the Comité de l'Unité Togolaise and the All-Ewe Conference to seize unscrupulously upon the smallest incident and to publish grossly distorted information in the newspapers in order to prove everything save the truth.

We know that incidents occur every day all over the world, and when one occurs here, it is our party's policy to request the Administering Authority to prevent its repetition. We never resort to reprisals, having too much respect for public order and tranquillity. We have never importuned you, but rather have sought practical and satisfactory solutions of any situations that arose, through sincere collaboration with the Administering Authority. Instead, we might have put before you a series of grave incidents constantly being provoked by the Comité de l'Unité Togolaise.

The latest tragic incident brought about by this party is as follows:

Hounouvi, traditional chief of the village of Agbétiko in the cercle d'Anécho, died in February 1948. The Comité de l'Unité Togolaise immediately put up as candidate a certain Grégoire Amouzou in opposition to the natural candidate, a son of the dead chief, Ayité Hounouvi, because the latter is a member of our party. Grégoire Amouzou's endeavour to usurp the chieftdom was from the first accompanied by threats and attempts to intimidate Ayité Hounouvi and his supporters, since, owing to the manoeuvres of the Comité de l'Unité Togolaise the village was divided into two bitterly hostile camps. The result was an atmosphere of permanent unrest.

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Faced with this situation, the Administration, through weakness, tried to pacify the general ferment by placing the real chief, Ayité Hounouvi, and Grégoire Amouzou, the usurper, at the head of each of the two camps. We protested strongly against this duplication of authority in a small village, emphasizing that it was an unwise solution which might give rise to grave trouble.

Our fears were soon justified: In December 1948, a scuffle occurred; fortunately it was contained, thanks to the wisdom and cool-headedness of Ayité Hounouvi. In our respect for law and order, we had urged our friend Ayité Hounouvi and his supporters not to respond to repeated provocation, in order to avoid any new incidents, and to request the competent authorities to put an end to a situation which was contrary to custom and dangerous to public order.

The case of the succession to the chieftainship was therefore brought before the customary court; later an appeal was made to the tribunal of the second degree. Both ruled in favour of Ayité Hounouvi, son and grandson of chiefs of Agbétiko. Custom and tradition, as well as common justice, finally prevailed when on 25 July, 1951, the Administration approved the choice of Ayité Hounouvi, recognized as their customary and traditional chief by all the inhabitants of the village of Agbétiko, with the exception of a small opposition group, now abandoned by its earlier supporters who have accepted the authority of the real chief.

This choice was consecrated by enthronement ceremonies which took place on 10 August 1951 in the presence of the Commandant of the cercle. The Comité de l'Unité Togolaise, which had alienated the sympathy and trust of all Togoland populations, once more lost face.

This subversive party, which had shown its resentment after the June legislative elections by acts of banditry and terrorism, precipitated riots in Agbétiko which turned to tragedy after the Commandant of the cercle left. Some of the chief's supporters, attacked by henchmen of the Comité de l'Unité Togolaise, were gravely wounded. One of them died of his wounds on 12 August.

We deem it essential today to denounce in all solemnity the odious acts of the Comité de l'Unité Togolaise, which the Trusteeship Council unwittingly covers up. Nearly all the populations of Togoland have stated in different ways that the Ewe movement was subversive, that it had been created by a band of adventurers and that the Ewe question was a myth. Unfortunately the Trusteeship Council has not taken into account this clearly expressed and unanimous opinion. By giving the affair too much attention and postponing its final settlement from session to session it has given rise to hopes that the Ewe myth would triumph in the end and has encouraged these zealots to agitate and to disturb the peace. Incidents such as those which we have ventured to bring to your attention have occurred in our traditionally peaceful country only since the unfortunate raising of the Ewe question.

It is our hope that that high international body, the Trusteeship Council will finally dispose of the question of the Ewe tribe which a handful of brazen adventurers seek to make use of in order to bring Togoland under their control for their own benefit.

I have the honour to be, etc.

(signed) John A. Atayi

John Amaté ATAYI

President of the Parti Togolaise du Progrès

Received at United Nations Headquarters on 28 August 1951
