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COMMUNICATION FROM THE BAFILO BRANCH OF THE "COMITE DE L'UNITE TOGOLAISE"  
CONCERNING TOGOLAND UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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PETITION FROM THE BAFILO BRANCH OF THE **CUT** (SOKODE)

To the Chairman of the United Nations Commission on Togoland

Sir,

We have learnt that you and the other members of your Commission have come to Togoland to ascertain whether we are satisfied with the Statute of autonomy which France has given us and whether we agree that the United Nations Trusteeship should be terminated.

Apart from the fact that this Statute implies the termination of United Nations Trusteeship, it undoubtedly marks a great step forward on the road to our national independence provided that all parties are allowed to take part in applying it through new and really free elections.

Can these elections be free, however? There is no political freedom in the country. No one can belong to a political party which is not favoured by the Administration without being persecuted. Many people who persisted in belonging to the CUT finally had to flee to the south or to Ghana. Alfa Yaya was tried and sentenced in absentia to one year's imprisonment on the grounds that he had struck a local policeman (garde de cercle). His house was buried down and his livestock handed over to the police and the chief's bullies. When, following a resolution adopted by the United Nations Trusteeship Council, Alfa Yaya sought to return to his village, he was seized at Sokodé and thrown into prison, from which he has only just been released one year later. El-Hadj-Issa, Idrissou and others were also incriminated in this case, which was staged by the Administration in order to crush the resistance of the nationalists at Bafilo. Mr. Jules Mustapha, the

leader of the CUT party at Bafilo and an important trader and haulage contractor, has been ruined by taxes and fines because of his political opinions. He is now compelled to live at Lomé and, whenever he comes to the village, gendarmes and policemen are put on his tracks to watch him until he leaves and anyone whom he visits is forced to explain the object of the visit to the police and give an account of what was said. The village chief also inflicts corporal punishment and fines. Hence, to cite only one example, Mrs. Mariama, Mr. Jules Mustapha's mother-in-law, had to pay 2,000 francs CFA.

Alfa Yaya, to whom we referred above, is a Moslem priest and because he has a large following the Administration tries to put pressure on people to compel them to give their allegiance to another priest who is a friend of the Commandant de Cercle. When this manoeuvre failed, the Administration invented the fantastic story that Alfa Yaya and his friends had struck the local policemen sent to disperse the Friday prayer meeting.

There are many other instances of the provocation and pressure brought to bear by the Administration against us, peaceful villagers.

As long as we live in this atmosphere of political constraint, none of the institutions that France introduces in our country will be of any practical use, because it will not be administered by men who are the true spokesmen of the will of the people. Our primary need therefore is to have real freedom, at our political meetings and through our membership in a political party, to express our ideas and cast our votes. Without this fundamental guarantee, which should be the keystone of new elections to a Legislative Assembly worthy of that name, no man of good faith can say that the Statute is functioning properly.

In conclusion may we wish your Commission a happy stay in our country and every success in carrying out its work.

I have the honour to be etc.

(Signed) (Signature illegible)  
16 June 1957

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