



UNITED NATIONS
TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

T/PET.5/771
8 September 1955
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

PETITION FROM THE "CONFEDERATION GENERALE DU TRAVAIL" CONCERNING
THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

(Circulated in accordance with rule 85 and supplementary rule F of the
rules of procedure for the Trusteeship Council)

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Paris, 18 August 1955

Mr. HAMMARSKJOLD
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York (U.S.A.)

Sir,

We wish to draw your attention to the way in which the French Government is deliberately hindering the work of trade-union organizations in the Cameroons, in violation of the United Nations Charter and of International Labour Convention No.87 concerning freedom of association and the protection of the right to organize.

The premises belonging to the workers' organizations or those which had been put at their disposal by the Administration have been closed by the police. Most of the equipment - typewriters, duplicators, files etc. - has either been removed, without any inventory being drawn up in the presence of an officer of the union, or simply destroyed.

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The correspondence addressed to our organizations is either confiscated or, after a long delay and after being opened, sent to the addressees with the indication: "opened by judicial authority pursuant to the requisition of 7 June 1955".

Numbers of active members have been arrested in the most arbitrary manner and detained for long periods at the police station instead of being brought before an examining magistrate; some have been deported without any trial, to places more than 1,000 kilometres away from their homes; others have suffered police violence - for example, Jacques N'GOM, General Secretary of the Union des Syndicats Confédérés du Cameroun - violence implicitly admitted by the French Government, since as a result of our protests against this brutal treatment the guilty prison staff was changed.

The worker-assessors in the Labour Courts are prevented from carrying out their mandate, to the undeniable prejudice of the workers.

During the election of staff representatives, which in many firms followed immediately upon the events of 25 May, the Inspector of Labour and Social Law at Douala brought unjustifiable pressure to bear in an attempt to force the workers to vote in favour of organizations fabricated by the Administration.

At the time of the elections to the Compagnie Commerciale Hollando-Africaine, for example, the Labour Inspector refused to allow the elections to be held because the C.G.T., the only union in the firm, was the only one to submit a list of candidates. After the elections of staff representatives from the Société Commerciale de l'Ouest Africain, several elected representatives on the C.G.T. list were immediately dismissed, with the agreement of the Labour Inspector.

All these acts on the part of the administration run counter to the United Nations Charter, especially Article 76, sub-paragraphs b, c and d, and are very serious violations of article 3, paragraph 2, and article 11 of International Labour Convention No.87.

In the name of the French working classes, we beg you to look into this situation and we ask the United Nations to take whatever steps are within its competence.

I have the honour to be etc.

(Signed) BENOIT FRACHON

General Secretary of the C.G.T.
