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COMMUNICATION FROM MR. CONRAD BENE CONCERNING  
THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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MAROUA, 10 December 1954

DIEMARE  
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MAROUA  
0035/USCC/URDI

Situation of ANDJONGO Mathieu,  
agricultural supervisor.

To the Head of the Department of  
Agriculture in the Cameroons  
YAOUNDE

Sir,

We hereby protest vigorously against decision No. 596 of 30 November 1954 by the Head of the Northern Agricultural Sector, in accordance with which our comrade ANDJONGO Mathieu was posted to the MOUTOURWA product development station (KAELE Subdivision).

ANDJONGO Mathieu has been at Maroua since 11 February 1950 where he was instructor at the Agricultural Training Centre, where two successive classes of assistants qualified under him. In April 1952 he went on leave for six months and on 17 December 1952 he was posted back to Maroua, despite his justifiable objections. ANDJONGO Mathieu has now been in the North Cameroons for five years and has completed fourteen years of praiseworthy service, so much so that the Head of his department selected him to go on a three months' course on the cultivation of the cocoa tree in the Gold Coast. Owing to his good record, ANDJONGO has also just been appointed Deputy Director of the Agricultural Training Centre, in the face of violent opposition on the part of

Mr. ELIAS, Head of the Northern Sector. Mr. VAILLANT can testify to that, although he has allowed political feelings to colour his judgment. When ANDJONGO Mathieu was posted back to Maroua, the authorities told him that this was a temporary posting, especially as he was replacing ZAMBOU Pierre who had gone to France on a mission and had finally been posted to FOUMBAN after a short stay of two years in the north.

We thought it well to give you an idea of the administrative position of our comrade, who has now been subjected to a disguised disciplinary measure: in fact, the MOUTOURWA post, which should normally be filled by an agricultural assistant, has now been entrusted to an agricultural supervisor, following the political accusations that Mr. VAILLANT had just levelled at him, with no success. This political attack on our comrade has passed through several stages. Firstly, the Rev. Fr. DESMOLIERES, who was entrusted by Mr. GEORGY, the Chief Regional Officer, with the task of converting ANDJONGO, told him that every possible favour would be conferred upon him if he would abandon the CGT trade union and set up a branch of the CFTC (Confédération française des travailleurs chrétiens). Notwithstanding this spiritual exhortation, our comrade refused to follow the path marked out by the Administering Authorities in order to counter the workers' aspirations. The Rev. Fr. DESMOLIERES did not fail to inform him of the danger to which he would expose himself if he refused to follow the advice of the authorities. The second stage of the campaign opened with Mr. VAILLANT asking our comrade for an explanation; this was full of political implications and had nothing whatever to do with our comrade's professional activities. The reply given to that request, which you must have read, will give you a better idea of the political texture of this dispute. This active phase followed a period of attack, which failed as miserably as did the first methods. Thus it is the failure of this new phase of the struggle which is the underlying reason for the posting of ANDJONGO Mathieu to a place 80 kilometres away from the nearest centre, without any health services worth speaking of, so that the accredited bandits may this time succeed in committing the crime which failed at MAROUA. There can be no other explanation for this posting: the Agricultural Training Centre certainly needs personnel, which explains his posting to it in

December 1952. Then, NGOUE Dieudonné, an assistant who has no post yet, should have been posted to MOUTOURWA, which would be more suitable for him, in view of his technical qualifications, than for an agricultural supervisor specializing in the cultivation of the cocoa tree who has now been sent to deal with cotton. We fail to see the connexion between cotton and cocoa, nor do we understand the reason for the expenditure in which your service is involving the Territory in sending a supervisor to specialize in a certain field and then, instead of letting him apply the knowledge he has acquired, making him carry out a less productive task. You must admit that your service is entailing wanton expenditure for the Territory if it is a fact that our comrade ANDJONGO, after attending a three months' training course in a foreign country, can be of no further use to his country or his service, regardless of his wishes in the matter. The irony of fate has also willed it that ANDJONGO Mathieu should be placed under the orders of Mr. GIROD, who has been a supervisor, first class, since January 1954, while our comrade has been in this class for three years. What is the justification for all that?

It is easy, therefore, to see what lies behind the posting of our comrade ANDJONGO: it is a question of "getting rid of him by any possible means", from which we must understand that, since the authorities have not succeeded in making him renounce his convictions, he must be left to the mercies of the "bandits", so that afterwards those responsible can shelter behind the argument that "there are too many bandits in the north and they kill only politicians".

You, with your discretionary powers as Head of the Department, can have this decision reconsidered and our comrade posted to the south, to a station where he will be able to make use of his knowledge of the cocoa tree, or to another subdivision, to a centre where he will be able to count upon some protection, in case you repudiate your preliminary judgment on ANDJONGO, which would be curious to say the least. If you insist upon putting the decision of the Head of the Northern Sector into effect, we may also regard you as an "accomplice" in the plot against our comrade and you will be held

responsible for anything that may happen to him. International public opinion will be informed. But we are already convinced of your feeling for justice and we ask you to intervene, so that an appropriate way may be found to satisfy the legitimate claims of our comrade ANDJONGO, whose wife is still in a precarious state of health.

I have the honour to be etc.

(Signed) BENE CONRAD

Copies to

The President, ATCAM

Secretary-General, United Nations

Union des syndicats confédérés du Cameroun

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