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COMMUNICATION FROM THE "FEDERATION DES TRAVAILLEURS AGRICOLES,  
FORESTIERS ET PAYSANS DU CAMEROUN" CONCERNING THE CAMEROONS  
UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

(Circulated in accordance with rule 24 and supplementary rule F of the rules  
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FEDERATION DES TRAVAILLEURS AGRICOLES,  
FORESTIERS ET PAYSANS DU CAMEROUN

203 RUE IVY, P.O. Box 15 - DOUALA

Douala, 7 January 1955

No.14/FAF

To: THE FRENCH HIGH COMMISSIONER IN THE CAMEROONS, YAOUNDE.

Sir,

We have the honour respectfully to draw your attention to the following  
facts:

We have heard from our comrades at SOUZA (Moungo Region) that the  
agricultural improvement service has just appropriated more than a hundred  
hectares of land (100 hectares) belonging to them. The service has not only  
taken over this enormous piece of land, but has also destroyed a huge plantation  
of mature palm trees planted by the indigenous inhabitants, i.e., a total of  
20,040 palm trees, and many fields of food crops, 265 scattered fields to be  
precise.

The officials of the service have taken the liberty of destroying these  
riches and taking over the land, which is the sole economic resource of the  
indigenous inhabitants of the locality, without consulting the present owners  
of the land and its riches.

This is an act of hostility towards the indigenous inhabitants and even towards any improvement in the living conditions of the inhabitants of that village.

There is no denying that under traditional law, the victims of this injustice have full title to the land, and we do not know under what agreement the agricultural improvement service has taken upon itself to destroy these fruitful palms and food crops, and worse still, to take over the land belonging to the indigenous inhabitants already mentioned.

Are they really trying to improve the agriculture of our country, or do they merely use those fine words as an excuse in destroying the modest economy of the Cameroonian peasants?

Our organization strongly protests against such an action on the part of the "agricultural improvement service", which, instead of encouraging the Cameroonians by word and deed to cultivate their fields, on the contrary discourages them.

We therefore respectfully ask you to intervene with the directorate of the service, and ensure that the indigenous landowners of the locality are paid in full for the damage done to their fruit trees and food crops in conformity with Order No. 675 of 2 February 1948 (Journal Officiel du Cameroun, 1 March 1948, page 276). We also request the restitution of the land to its indigenous owners and the payment of damages for unlawful occupation of another's property. Furthermore, we protest against the Administration's "sacrosanct theory" that there are vacant and ownerless lands in the Cameroons; this is only an excuse for taking over lands belonging to Cameroonians.

In the hope that you will take favourable action on our just claim, I have the honour to be, etc.

For the Federal Bureau

(Signed): Mbilla

MBILLA Marcus  
Secretary-General

CGT

USCC

WFTU

FEDERATION DES TRAVAILLEURS AGRICOLES,  
FORESTIERS ET PAYSANS DU CAMEROUN

203 RUE IVY, P.O. Box 15 - DOUALA

Douala, 6 January 1955

No. 8/FAF

To: The Controller of Waters and Forests,  
NKONGSAMBA

Sir,

We have the honour to submit the following case for your consideration:

The agricultural improvement service has destroyed a plantation of 20,040 palm trees and 265 fields of indigenous food crops on a piece of land at SOUZA (Mungo Region) belonging to peasants of that locality.

We therefore ask you to grant the peasant landowners due compensation for the damage they have suffered, in conformity with Order No. 675 of 2 February 1948 (Journal Officiel du Cameroun, 1 March 1948), under which compensation for all fruit trees and food crops destroyed must be paid to the owner by the person responsible for the damage.

I have the honour to be, etc.

For the Executive Committee of the  
Federation

(Signed): Mbilla

MBILLA Marcus  
Secretary-General

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