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COMMUNICATION FROM THE NATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF THE CAMEROONS PEOPLES NATIONAL  
CONVENTION CONCERNING THE CAMEROONS UNDER UNITED KINGDOM ADMINISTRATION

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CAMEROONS PEOPLES NATIONAL CONVENTION

C.P.N.C. National Secretariat,  
BUEA, Southern Cameroons,  
16 March 1961

The Right Honourable Iain Macleod, M. P.,  
Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies,  
Church House, Westminster, London, S.W. 1, England.

Sir,

Southern Cameroons Plebiscite and  
Matters connected therewith

I am directed by the Executive Committee of the Cameroons Peoples National  
Convention to confirm the following cablegram despatched to you today:

"MACLEOD COLSEC LONDON - OPPOSITION AND PEOPLE WHO VOTED AGAINST  
UNION WITH CAMEROUN REPUBLIC STRONGLY PROTEST AGAINST FAR REACHING CONCESSIONS  
GRANTED FONCHA AND AHUJO BY RECENT EASTWOOD DELEGATION YAOUNDE WITHOUT  
CONSULTATION OF ALL PARTIES PRIOR TO UNATIONS CONSIDERATION PLEBISCITE  
RESULTS AND OUR REPRESENTATIONS ARISING THEREFROM STOP WE CONSIDER THIS  
UNILATERAL ACTION EASTWOOD DELEGATION UNDEMOCRATIC AND PREJUDICIAL TERMS  
AND CONDITIONS UNATIONS RESOLUTIONS ON PLEBISCITE AND COMCANS BUDGET  
ADDRESS 1960 STOP SENDING DELEGATION LONDON LODGE PERSONAL PROTEST HMG  
AND PARLIAMENT SOONEST COPIED COMCAN AND UNATIONS ENDELEY LEADER OPPOSITION."

2. Since the release of the Plebiscite results, suggestions have been made in  
the press and elsewhere that the "new" demands for partitioning the Southern  
Cameroons made by those opposed to the union of the two sectors of the Cameroons  
are an example of a defeated minority refusing to abide by the majority decision

for reasons which, the suggestions aver, "cannot be acceptable" to democratic principles.

3. The United Nations, we admit, conceived the plebiscite as the only "democratic way" of "ascertaining the wishes of the people of the Southern Cameroons as to their future", and in ordering the plebiscite to be held, all shades of political opinion in the territory were consulted.

4. But an important corollary to the United Nations decision was that the Trusteeship Council resolution which called on the Administering Authority and the Southern Cameroons Government to ensure before the voting that the people were fully informed of the detailed constitutional implications of joining either Nigeria or the Cameroun Republic.

5. Eventually, only the Nigerian Constitution, which outlines the position of the Southern Cameroons as a Region in the Federation, could be produced and explained to the electorate. All attempts to secure a valid Constitution outlining relations with the Cameroons Republic were foiled by the ineffectiveness of the British Administration in the Southern Cameroons.

6. We have had rather an unpleasant jolt when information of unimpeachable veracity reached us to the effect that a U.K. Delegation led by Mr. C.G. Eastwood, C.M.G., Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office, had recently visited YAOUNDE, Cameroun Republic, and had talks with members of the Governments of the Cameroun Republic and Southern Cameroons whereat constitutional changes of a far-reaching nature relative to the future of the Southern Cameroons were agreed upon. This unilateral action savours of a deliberate "sell-out" of the valiant people of the Southern Cameroons, who in exercise of their inalienable right of self-determination as propounded by the United Nations Organization have voted - in spite of intimidation and oppression by the Government Party (K.N.D.P.) - against the union of the Southern Cameroons and Cameroun Republic, and in favour of union with Nigeria and remaining in the British Commonwealth of Nations. The procedure resorted to by your Delegation to the Cameroun Republic appears to us to run counter to the long-established constitutional practices whereby opposition parties are consulted when issues of major constitutional importance are to be decided. The moral to be drawn from this unilateral action of your Delegation is that the Administering Authority has pre-judged the issues involved in the recent plebiscite independently of the outcome of the General Assembly's debates

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on the results of the Southern Cameroons Plebiscite and the numerous petitions and reports submitted to you and the United Nations by certain tribal groups and political parties in the Southern Cameroons.

7. We learnt with profound dismay that one of the decisions at Yaounde was that the sovereignty of the Southern Cameroons should be surrendered and handed over to an "AD HOC COMMITTEE" consisting of representatives of the Governments of the Cameroun Republic and the Southern Cameroons to run "the provisional government of the United Cameroun Republic". If this information is founded on fact, then we strongly protest against such an arrangement which seems to us somewhat impetuous.

8. It should have dawned upon the Colonial Office by now that the minority tribes in this territory - the majority of which are comprised in our political party - are hard beset by the vast and domineering majority of grassland tribes in Bamenda Division whose representative now heads the government of the Southern Cameroons. Our very existence as a people is threatened by the aggressiveness of these people who are conscious of the power now in their hands. You will, therefore, bear with us if we appear brutally frank and candid in the expression of our feelings.

9. We believe the Southern Cameroons is still a trust territory administered by Great Britain, yet the tribalistic K.N.D.P., which now holds sway in this territory with the apparent connivance of the Administering Authority, is allowed by your representatives to introduce obnoxious and discriminatory laws designed to serve the interests of the Bamenda section of the Southern Cameroons only - a people whose desire is to swamp the thinly populated areas in Victoria and Kumba Divisions and who are all out to oust the indigenes from their patrimony. The following discriminatory Bills were introduced by the Government at a recent meeting of the House of Chiefs:

The Marketing Board (Amendment) Law, 1961;

The Native Authority (Amendment) Law, 1961;

The Native Court (Amendment) Law, 1961.

(vide Southern Cameroons Gazette No. 11 of 8 March, 1961)

These Bills will come up for consideration during the budget session of the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly in the latter part of this month.

10. As we have repeatedly pointed out to you and the United Nations, we have been advised that the situation now prevailing in the Southern Cameroons

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Legislature is unique in contemporary parliamentary history in that a party having an equal number of seats with the Opposition in the Legislature is allowed by your Government to lord it over the latter, and take unilaterally important decisions which affect every member of the community regardless of the views and interests of the minority groups. Our positions submitted to you well before the plebiscite have been studiously disregarded, and have, therefore, brought no relief to the oppressed masses of our people: this is a clear indication that the present Government is anything but democratic, or that it is out to seek the welfare of all the inhabitants of this territory.

11. We are sending a two-man delegation to London to meet you towards the end of this month (a forerunner of our Party delegation to the United Nations General Assembly) and we would refrain from belabouring in great detail all the issues arising from the Yaoundé talks. Nevertheless, we question very strongly the right of the United Kingdom Government to "deliver" us hand and foot to the Cameroun Republic in the teeth of our unflinching opposition. Great Britain is avowedly one of the foremost exponents of the principle of the Right of Self-Determination and a staunch protector of minority interests, yet your Delegation decided to "hand" us over to the Cameroun Republic without affording us an opportunity to discuss as a free people, the new conditions under which we shall be governed. Although this may seem incredible, the fact remains, however, that such an arrangement has been made.

12. We, the people of Victoria and Kumba Divisions, are comprised in a distinct ethnic grouping which bears no relation whatsoever to the people of Bamenda Division. This fact is borne out in the annual reports of your Government to the General Assembly of the United Nations. What has kept us together is the impartial administration of the British, and now that the British are pulling out it is evident that no sense of unity exists between the grassland and forest tribes. It will, therefore, be morally wrong on the part of Her Majesty's Government to surrender the minority groups, without seeking their wishes, into the hands of hostile, greedy and inconsiderate majority tribes as if they were chattel.

13. It should be remembered as we have pointed out earlier in this letter that it has been the policy of successive British Governments to respect and safeguard the interests, both present and future, of minorities in British dependent

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territories. Nigeria and Cyprus are recent classical examples. I am to urge, therefore, that in any consideration of the results of the recent plebiscite and the problems inevitably stemming therefrom careful regard should be had to the vital interests of the minority tribes in the territory.

14. Finally, we would like to make it clear beyond any doubt that we are resolutely determined not, repeat not, to join the Cameroun Republic as has been indicated by our votes, and a new frontier should be set between us and the Grassland people, who have indicated in no uncertain manner that their future, as a people, lies in union with their kith and kin in the Republic. Let us decide our own future and that of our offsprings.

We have the honour to be, Sir, Your obedient, humble servants,

Dr. E.M.L. Endeley, Leader of the Opposition, Southern Cameroons House of  
Assembly, and General President, Cameroons Peoples  
National Convention.

cc: His Honour, the Commissioner of the Cameroons, Buea  
The Secretary, U.N.O., Lake Success, New York, U.S.A.  
The Honourable, The Prime Minister, Federation of Nigeria, Lagos.

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