

UNITED NATIONS TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL



Distr.
LIMITED

T/C.2/L.175
30 June 1955

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Standing Committee on Petitions

PETITIONS CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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I. Petition from the Comité central of the Union des Populations du Cameroun at Yaoundé (T/PET.5/317) dated 8 September 1954

1. The petitioners, in a motion dated 8 September 1954 complain that the Chief of the Brigade of the Obala gendarmerie committed acts of brutality against Mr. Pierre Nana, Chairman of the Local Committee of the UPC and his wife and child. The pretext given was that Mr. Nana had sold palm wine, but although wine was found on the premises it was for consumption and not for sale. They complain that the real reason for the ill-treatment of Mr. Nana was his political activities and they quote certain threats to that effect, said to have been made by Chief of Brigade to Mr. Nana.

2. The petitioners go on to state that when on the following day a deputation of UPC members went to the police station, it was threatened and dispersed and two leaders Mr. Nkonjok and Mr. Minka were arrested, searched and held for some hours, and Mr. Nkonjok was deprived of his driver's licence without due course.

3. In its observations (T/OBS.5/55, section 1), the Administering Authority states that a summons for breach of the regulation on the sale of alcoholic beverages was drawn up on 4 September 1954 by the Chief of the Brigade of the Obala gendarmerie against Mrs. Joséphine Ndengue, wife of Mr. Pierre Nana.

When Mr. Nana protested against the summons and accused a third person, an investigation was immediately undertaken. Mr. Nana was kept under close watch until the completion of the investigation, at 4 p.m. on 5 September, and the summons was confirmed and forwarded to the judicial authorities.

4. Several persons claiming to be delegates of the local committee of the UPC came to the Chief of the Brigade at 5:30 p.m. on 5 September to protest against the summons. They were shown to the door and were requested to disperse. Two of them, Messrs. David Nkondjock and Joseph Minka, who tried to arouse the people and create an incident, were detained and served with a summons for unlawful assembly and disturbance of the peace. They were released at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. David Nkondjock was asked to show his driving licence as proof of identity when he was charged. This document was returned to him immediately.

5. The Administering Authority concludes that the Chief of the Brigade denies ill-treating the various people involved in this matter and uttering the words ascribed to him.

II. Petition from Messrs. Njimoupain Chouibou and Jean Njitagui (T/PET.5/324)

1. The present petition is a restatement of a complaint contained in two previous separate petitions from the same persons (T/PET.5/188 and 189) to the effect that their houses and land in the Bamoun region were taken over by Mr. Rippert of the Compagnie Ouest Cameroun. They requested the return of their land, the payment of 15 million francs and 13 million francs for property destroyed.
2. In its observations (T/OBS.5/11), the Administering Authority stated that the land in question had been conceded to Mr. Rippert after a palaver on 20 April 1935 and after the usual procedure had been followed. At no time during the proceedings did the petitioners raise any objection.
3. By its resolution 957 (XIII), the Council noted this statement and requested the Administering Authority, however, to carry out a further investigation of the complaints of the petitioners and to report to the Council as soon as possible.
4. In the present petition, the writers claim that the land was occupied by Mr. Rippert in 1928, and not in 1935. They state that they have no knowledge of any palaver nor did anyone in the neighbourhood witness the event. Moreover objections by indigenous inhabitants to statements by Europeans are never taken into account by the Administering Authority. They further state that on the day that Mr. Rippert inspected the land they were driven from their huts by a body of riflemen at 4:00 p.m.
5. The petitioners conclude that by daring to complain about their land they lay themselves open to arbitrary imprisonment by the Administration.
6. In the special information (T/OBS.5/54, section 2) submitted in respect of resolution 957 (XIII), the Administering Authority observes that the petitioners were given a hearing by the local authorities and that they stated that they had nothing to add to their previous statements. Accordingly, since no evidence whatever had been supplied, the Administering Authority wound up the investigation without taking any action.
7. In its observations on the present petition (T/OBS.5/55, section 2), the Administering Authority refers to this information and adds that it can therefore only repeat its previous observations.

III. Petitions from the Vice-Chairman of the Union des Populations du Cameroun (T/PET.5/325) and from the Association des Notables Camerounais, local branch of Bafang (T/PET.5/330) dated 5 and 11 August 1954

1. Both these petitions emanate, the one indirectly and the other directly, from the Association of Cameroonian Notables, local branch of Bafang. The principal complaint is that the Chief Subdivisional Officer summoned a meeting of the notables and informed them that he had dismissed Mr. Miafo Tchoula from the office of General President of the Association, replacing him by Mr. Léonard Kuenkong. In the first petition an account is given of certain statements allegedly made to Mr. Tchoula by the Chief Subdivisional Officer, from which it would appear that he had interfered because Mr. Tchoula had sent a congratulatory telegram to Mr. Um Nyobe.
2. The petitioners complain that Mr. Kuenkong is Anti-Cameroonian, that he was previously expelled from the organization for unworthy conduct and for professional incompetence and that the Association has brought a suit against him under Articles 379 and 401 of the Penal Code.
3. On this point, the Administering Authority states in its observations (T/OBS.5/55, section 3), that in its reply to a previous petition (T/PET.5/290) it has already stated that the Association des Notables Camerounais is not a registered association and therefore has no legal existence. At that time, the Association described Mr. Miafo Tchoula as a chef de quartier. This, however, is a title rather than an office, since the most recent census showed that the quartier consisted entirely of Mr. Miafo Tchoula's family.
4. The Administering Authority goes on to state that Mr. Tchoula, who claims to be the General President of the Association des notables camerounais, was expelled by the Association des Notables Bamiléké. He seems to have gathered a certain number of people around him by giving them the cards of the latter Association, which he kept when he was expelled. Mr. Léonard Kuenkong is the President of the Association des Notables Bamiléké. The local authorities have no knowledge of any proceedings instituted against him.

5. Finally, the Administering Authority reports that the Chief Sub-divisional Officer denies having uttered the words ascribed to him. He also denies having had an interview with Mr. Miafo Tchoula at the time and on the subject referred to by the petitioners.

6. The second petition contains, in addition, certain not clearly formulated complaints about the situation in the Mixed Commune of Bafang and suggests that Mr. Jacques Wendi, a skilled worker, fourth class, might be the cause of the disorder and disturbance of the peace there. It therefore asks that he be transferred. [This complaint, which is not commented on by the Administering Authority is repeated in T/PET.5/330/Add.1, which was received only on 18 April last and is out of time.]

IV. Petition from the Secretary-General of the INDECAM (T/PET.5/328)

1. Protests are made in this petition against two recent decisions of the Administering Authority.
2. The first concerns the re-instatement as a clerk in the Civil and Financial Service of Mr. Théodore Mahi Matip. The petitioners write that Mr. Matip, who was formerly employed at police headquarters in Yaoundé, was indicted by the juge d'instruction for "fraudulent conversion of funds intended for the purchase of passports and fiscal stamps" and that as a result he was suspended from his duties on 10 October 1950. They write further that he is a very active member of the UPC and "is well known for his extreme and exceptionally violent proselytism". The petitioner contend that "this reinstatement is regarded as an insult to be deeply resented by Cameroonian civil servants, who see in it a clear miscarriage of justice ...".
3. On this point, the Administering Authority confirms (T/OBS.5/55, section 4) that Mr. Matip was indicted and suspended from his duties in 1950. When the Correctional Court at Yaoundé decided by its judgment of 17 July 1953 to dismiss criminal charges, Mr. Matip was reinstated by decision No. 4234 of 6 August 1954 and requested to report for duty at his new post. Mr Matip then asked for six months' leave, which was not granted to him. After two formal notices, he categorically refused to take up his duties. He was then brought before a disciplinary board for refusing to obey orders, under the decision of 3 December 1954. He was dismissed after a hearing by the disciplinary board, by an order of 8 March 1955. The order conferred on him the right to reimbursement of the contributions to the local Pension Fund which had been withheld from his pay.
4. The second protest concerns the decision to elect a chief for the Bafia community at Douala, although they had already regularly elected Mr. Oscar Bang as chief. They state that this decision was "the result of a campaign of intimidation, slander and threats, carried on by a handful of regular trouble-makers led by the defeated candidates for the chiefship to which Mr. Oscar Bang was elected".

5. On this point the Administering Authority points out that the appointment of Mr. Oscar Bang has not yet become effective. A preliminary conference was held a year ago by the chef de secteur, in order to fill provisionally a gap which was detrimental to the interests of the people. Oscar Bang then obtained a large majority. The conference could only be provisional because the census of the Bafia area was then incomplete and because the conditions linking certain ethnic groups to that quartier had not yet been clearly determined. The Bafia Sub-division comprises three large tribes, the Bafias, the Yambassa and the Sanaga, and a considerable number of various clans, such as the Balom, the Bafeuk, the Bapé, the Yambetta and the Lémandé. Before appointing Bafia and Yambassa chefs de quartier (the Sanaga chef de quartier had already been elected), it was important to determine which of those various clans should be grouped respectively under the Bafia and Yambassa chiefdoms. Since the conference, the Administration has concerned itself with determining conditions of residence and with taking a complete census of persons originating from the Bafia Sub-division. This operation has now been completed, and a conference to appoint the Bafia and Yambassa chefs de quartier will be held in the near future.

6. The petitioners declare that INDECAM which has always stressed its willingness to co-operate loyally with the Administering Authority, "is now anxious because the French administration appears to be unwittingly playing the game of notorious agitators and extremists...". They wish the Administration "to deal more firmly with the doubtful elements of the population, who are for the most part members of, or sympathizers with, the Communist-dominated Union des Populations du Cameroun".

V. Petition from the Permanent Secretary of the "Union des Populations du Cameroun" of Boumnyébé (T/PET.5/335) undated

1. The petitioner writing on behalf of Boumnyébé Branch of the UPC, declares that Mr. Um Nyobe is the only spokesman of the Cameroonians before the United Nations and expresses support for the unification and independence of the Cameroons. He complains that racial discrimination exists "beyond measure" and attacks the Catholic clergy for interfering in politics.
2. He then goes on to complain of lack of progress in the Ngambé (Babimbi) sub-division, despite the fact that it is densely populated and has several so-called paramount chiefs. Everywhere else, there are no schools or dispensaries and because there are only bush tracks the inhabitants must walk 300 kms. carrying their loads, to sell their produce in the only market place at Songmbengué. Nevertheless taxation rates are going up sharply.
3. He asks that special attention should be given to the Sub-division, when a Visiting Mission next visits the Territory.
4. In its observations (T/OBS.5/56, section 1), the Administering Authority notes that all the questions raised in this petition have been mentioned in previous petitions, in particular petition T/PET.5/217, relating to conditions in the Babimbi Sub-division, on which the Trusteeship Council has already adopted resolution 983 (XIII).
5. The Administering Authority states that it is implementing this resolution so far as its financial resources allow. In particular it has tried to increase the number of motor roads in order to make life easier for the indigenous inhabitants in this mountainous and almost inaccessible region. 6,300 children are at present enrolled in public and private schools. In 1954 Government clinics alone provided 65,000 consultations to some 33,000 patients. In 1954 there were four controlled markets at Songmbengué, Ngambé, Keleng and Kibot. The Sub-division is 75 kilometres long at its longest and 50 kilometres wide at its widest. It includes an almost uninhabited mountainous region.

VI. Petitions relating to a land dispute at Bayangam (T/PET.5/341 and Add.1, 379 and 405)

1. The following petitions all deal with a land dispute arising from the establishment of a Catholic Mission Station in the village of Bayangam:

Petition from the "Comité du Foyer du Progrès de la Jeunesse Bayangam" (T/PET.5/341 and Add.1)

Petition from the Bafoussam Branch of the "Foyer du Progrès de la Jeunesse Bayangam" (T/PET.5/379)

Petition from Mr. Maurice Simo (T/PET.5/405)

One of the cases arising out of the dispute, namely, that of Mr. Maurice Simo, was first brought to the attention of the Trusteeship Council in a petition (T/PET.5/102) on which the Council adopted resolution 461 (X) and was further examined in connexion with T/PET.5/118 (resolution 778 (XII)). A second case, that of Mr. Ngongo Tazieme was raised in T/PET.5/255 on which the Council adopted resolutions 1152 (XV). In effect by these resolutions, the Council noted that the persons, who objected to the Mission taking over the land, were still in possession of the land.

2. The petitioners now complain that the plots in question were seized by the Catholic Mission in 1950 and 1951 and that the crops and trees thereon were destroyed. Mr. Simo claims to own his plot and to have effectively occupied it from 1940 to 1950. He states that he and his neighbour Mr. Ngongo Tazieme protested to the authorities when the land was seized. The case was heard before the Court of Second Instance at Dschang which ordered that his land be restored to him. Despite this, the Mission did not return their land, but constructed permanent buildings thereon. Mr. Simo appealed to the Ratification Chamber of the Court of Appeal at Yaoundé, but by its judgment, it pronounced the total loss of his land without any payment of compensation for the land or for the damage done or any land in exchange.

3. The other petitioners add that Mr. Ngongo is about 85 years of age and has thirty children and add that the land in question is about 3 1/2 hectares in area. They complain that land cases such as the present are referred by the Administration to customary courts composed of chiefs who favour their policies and who fail to observe the property rights guaranteed by Bamiléké custom. Instead the Administering Authority considers the land the property of the customary chiefs.

4. The petitioners conclude that the Catholic Mission by its actions has caused moral and physical disturbances to the village.
5. In its observations (T/OBS.5/56, section 2), the Administering Authority gives a detailed account of this complicated dispute. [Since it is fairly lengthy and virtually impossible to summarize, members of the Committee are referred to the document in question. If the discussion in the Committee should warrant, it could be included in extenso in the report of the Committee to the Council].

VII. Petition from Mr. Mardus Mouaha (T/PET.5/346) dated 21 October 1954

1. The petitioner complains of discrimination practised against him because he is a supporter of the movement for the unification and independence of the Cameroons. This discrimination took the form of (i) dismissal from his employment in a private company, (ii) refusal of the local authorities to grant him a transport permit to operate a lorry, the only means by which he can provide for the upkeep of his large family, and (iii) the withdrawal of a local scholarship from his brother, who was also refused the use of all school equipment.
2. He asks for the intervention of the United Nations on his behalf to the end that discrimination against him may cease.
3. With respect to (i) the Administering Authority observes (T/OBS.5/56, section 3) that it was found upon investigation that Mr. Mouaha, who was discharged because his post was abolished, did not complain to his employer, to the Labour Inspectorate or to the competent court. The local authorities cannot take such action on his behalf.
4. The substance of (ii) was dealt with in a previous petition (T/PET.5/250) concerning which the Council, by resolution 1149 (XV) drew the attention of Mr. Mouaha to the statement of the Administering Authority to the effect that if he makes a new application for a licence to operate a public transport vehicle, this request may be taken into consideration if he undertakes to the authorities to comply with the relevant regulations.
5. With respect to (iii), the Administering Authority notes that the petitioner's brother is at present a day student in the third class at the Nkongsamba College. His boarder's scholarship was withdrawn after consultation with the class council, on account of serious and repeated breaches of discipline and misconduct: bullying, maltreatment of new and young pupils, unauthorized absence several days before the school holidays, repeated nocturnal sallies from the boarding-school and adultery. He was expelled as a boarder and threatened with expulsion as a day student if he persisted in his refusal to submit to school discipline. His work is, moreover, poor and does not justify exceptional leniency.

VIII. Petition from the Syndicat des Membres de l'Enseignement Officiel,
C.G.T. Yaoundé (T/PET.5/347), dated 16 October 1954

1. The petition deals with the question of the training of indigenous teachers. In spite of statements over the past three years to the effect that a teacher-training school would be set up and of the approval by the local assembly of such a project, nothing has been done. Instead, the training schools for assistant teachers which have been established as a substitute for a proper teacher-training school are in effect only supplementary courses, and are intended to secure a larger number of poorly paid junior teachers to provide backing for the French teachers under whom they work. These teacher-training courses only lead up to the diploma of moniteur d'enseignement général and the graduates are recruited from primary school graduates having no previous training in teaching. Furthermore, a considerable saving in the cost of education could be made if those student-teachers who are now sent to France for costly training periods of only three months, could be trained at a proper teacher-training school in the Territory. In addition, the heavy expense of having French teachers in the primary schools would be avoided.
2. The requests which the petitioners submitted to the local authorities on 9 October 1954 are reproduced and are as follows:
 1. The establishment of a teacher-training school for the training of qualified staff.
 2. The substitution of the title "Training schools for assistant teachers" by "supplementary courses".
 3. Participation of indigenous teachers in the deliberations of the Higher Educational Advisory Board.
3. In conclusion, the petitioners authorize the representatives of the Union des Populations du Cameroun and the Jeunesse Démocratique Camerounaise to present their case.
4. In its observations (T/OBS.5/57, section 1) the Administering Authority states that it gives in its annual reports particulars of its policy regarding the development of educational facilities in the Cameroons. During the

Trusteeship Council's fifteenth session, the Special Representative of the Administering Authority for the Cameroons gave detailed explanations relating to all the points raised in this petition.^{1/} The Administering Authority considers that it has nothing further to add to the information furnished.

^{1/} See T/SR.567. A brief reference to the training of teachers is contained in the recommendation on educational advancement adopted by the Council at its fifteenth session.

IX. Petition from Mr. Joseph Ndjem (T/PET.5/356) dated 2 November 1954

1. The petitioner complains that he was dismissed from his job without justification and claims financial reimbursement, which he requests the Secretary-General to help him obtain.
2. The petitioner was employed as an assistant checker of produce, cocoa-grading staff, Department of Agriculture from, so he states, 15 June 1953 until his dismissal on 1 March 1954. Following an incident on 31 January 1954, in which a Mr. Brunet, assistant supervisor of agricultural produce at Ambam, slapped his face in public, the petitioner wrote to the Chief of the Ntem Region. The reply was a dismissal notice, stating no reasons.
3. After requesting several times that he be returned to his place of origin, he was granted 1000 francs C.F.A., which he collected from the Agency on 11 October 1954.
4. However, he claims expenses amounting to 6000 francs C.F.A., monthly wages or damages and interest, including monthly wages, amounting to 9.365 francs C.F.A., also wages for holidays, overtime and travel expenses. He was informed by the Labour Inspector, Yaoundé that all he was entitled to was the 1000 francs C.F.A. in lieu of a week's notice, which sum he has collected.
5. He further complains that the provisions of the Labour Code are not being applied to Africans.
6. The Administering Authority explains (T/OBS.5/57, section 2) that the petitioner, while employed in the Division of Control of Processing of Produce at Ambam, addressed a slanderous letter about his immediate superior to the Regional Agronomist in February 1954. On investigation, the facts mentioned by the petitioner were proved to be false or deliberately distorted and it was decided to dismiss Mr. Ndjem. In conformity with the Labour Code and after the Department of Labour had been notified, the person concerned was given eight days' notice and provided with a warrant entitling him to free transport to the town in which he had been recruited. If the petitioner considers that he is entitled to damages for wrongful dismissal, he is free to apply to the Labour Tribunal. Although informed that this course is open to him, the petitioner has not applied to the Tribunal.

X. Petition from Mr. Pierre Girbard Ombang (T/FET.5/375) dated 2 November 1954

1. The petitioner states that the indigenous inhabitants in the French Cameroons live in slavery. They are forbidden to join the UPC and employees in the shops in Bafia have been dismissed for holding UPC cards.
2. The petitioner goes on to complain that they have no rights to their own forests, that one Mr. André Hiliman was fined 5000 francs CFA for felling wood for use in his bakery.
3. The petitioner writes further that between 6 and 15 September 1954 the Chief Subdivisional Officer ordered more than 9 tons of cocoa burned. The petitioner complained of this to members of the Territorial Assembly and was later informed that the High Commissioner had ordered the Chief Subdivisional Officer to reimburse the owners.
4. The petitioner complains that on 6 October he was called to the Chief Subdivisional Officer and asked who had authorized him to make a complaint. Furthermore, each day for a week two to three guards were sent to his house every day because of his complaint. Persons who requested compensation were beaten and imprisoned for two to three days. One, a Babimbi, was "mortally beaten" and imprisoned for a day when he came to claim compensation for 7 sacks of cocoa. A few people have been reimbursed, but only partially.
5. The petitioner also claims that numerous unjust arrests have been made. Inter alia he cited the case of two women who were arrested and fined 500 francs for arriving late at a census taking and of a number of men who were fined including a Mr. Bafoli who was fined 2000 francs because his daughter was absent from the census, although she had been married for a year. He also accuses the Chief Subdivisional Officer of having unmercifully beaten a man who came to complain that his house had been demolished in order to build a school on the site.
6. In its observations (T/OBS.5/57, section 4) the Administering Authority states that the petitioner is a person in whom little trust can be placed. In consequence of a complaint lodged by one of his compatriots he was recently sentenced to one month's imprisonment, a fine of 10,000 francs and 30,000 francs damages. In addition, in December 1954, he was sentenced to four months'

imprisonment for usurpation of office. His hostility towards the subdivisional chief goes back to the time, in April 1954, when the chief dismissed him from his post as storekeeper for disobeying his foreman's orders.

7. The Administering Authority confirms that Mr. Hiliman was ordered, by the Department of Water and Forests, to pay certain fines; the case did not go to court but the payment was agreed to after the Water and Forest Service had specified particulars in three reports dated 1 June and 14 October 1954. The offences in question were:

1 June - Cutting firewood, amount to two lorry-loads, without a permit; felling two trees in the "protected category.

14 October - Unauthorized felling of timber (repeated despite warning).

8. The Administering Authority agrees that cocoa waste was destroyed early in September 1954. This was done by an official responsible for produce control in compliance with former instructions which had in fact been withdrawn. The total waste thus destroyed did not exceed 750 kilogrammes. The Chief Regional Officer ordered an inquiry to ascertain the amount of cocoa thus destroyed and the owners of the cocoa, with a view to compensating them. The petitioner tried to interfere with this inquiry which was conducted by a Cameroonian agricultural assistant. He even tried to take over the inquiry himself, including on his list the names of villagers who had no cocoa plantations. On being prosecuted for usurpation of office, he was sentenced by the magistrate with extended powers at Bafia to four months' imprisonment. However, as a result of the trouble he had caused, many false declarations were made and the Administration paid to various planters compensation for a total of 4,630 kilogrammes of cocoa waste.

9. The Administering Authority explains that Mr. Ombang was summoned to the subdivision two or three times in connexion with the preparation of the case against him for usurpation of office and the hearing of witnesses. The persons who came forward in connexion with this case were neither beaten nor arrested. However, on 26 October 1954, a person named Hel Sakéo, of the Babimbi race, appeared at the Chief Subdivisional Officer's office completely drunk. So far as it was possible to understand him, he stated that Pierre Ombang had urged him to come and apply for compensation for some cocoa. He

seemed to have been incited to cause a scandal. On being called upon to leave, he lay down on the ground and shouted. He was charged with drunkenness in a public place and remained in custody until the following morning but was not beaten. After this person had been released and informed of the nature of the charge against him, Mr. Pierre Ombang spread the rumour that he (Hel Sakéo) had been beaten and was bleeding. Hel Sakéo was immediately brought to the clinic for an examination by the chief nurse who certified that he bore no sign of a beating but that he was suffering from bleeding haemorrhoids.

10. The Administering Authority goes on to state that a census was taken at Ndikiniméki in October and was announced fifteen days in advance. Mr. Pierre Ombang and the UPC Committee tried to incite the villagers to boycott the census. Notices to the population having remained unheeded, the Chief Subdivisional Officer proffered charges against eighteen persons (out of a population of 3,000): fourteen were fined 1,000 francs (settled out of court); four were sentenced by the court to eight to ten days' imprisonment and fined 500 to 1,000 francs. No woman was imprisoned; the persons proceeded against were all heads of families. Mr. Bafoli was fined 1,000 francs for having deliberately sent his son to work outside the census area on the day when a census card was to have been made out for him. Each absence was considered on its own merits and all valid excuses were accepted.

11. The Administering Authority explains with regard to the last complaint that in October 1954, the Chief Subdivisional Officer lent a machine to the chief of Makénémé village to level a site on which the native had built a school on their own initiative. When the work was completed, a person named Paul Ndjanko complained to the Chief Subdivisional Officer that crops belonging to him had been destroyed. He was invited to bring his complaint before the customary court but was certainly not beaten. An administrative inquiry was instituted nevertheless; it disclosed that no hut had existed on the site in question and that the complainant apparently was not entitled to the use of the land. He has brought his complaint against the village chief before the magistrate with extended powers at Bafia, who is investigating the case.