

TC/VM.1949/9  
3 September 1949

ORIGINAL:ENGLISH

SEP 13 1949

Visiting Mission to the  
Trust Territories in West Africa

MASTER FILE

CAMEROONS UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION:  
SUMMARY OF PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONSCONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. Petitions referred to the Visiting Mission -----	1
II. Petitions Disposed of by the Council -----	6
III. Petitions pending before the Council -----	7
IV. Communications -----	7
V. Index -----	8

I. PETITIONS REFERRED TO THE VISITING MISSION

1. Petitions from St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance, London.

dated 28 November 1947 (T/PET.4/2)

examined during the 3rd Session.

a) Subject (T/PET.4/2)

The petitioner calls to the attention of the Council an article in "the Catholic Citizen" concerning the customs of compulsory and child marriage prevalent among the chiefs of the Tikar communities in the Bamenda Division of the Cameroons under British Administration.

b) Observations of the Administering Authority (T/178)

The Administering Authority states:

- 1) that the article mentioned has reference to no particular case;
- 2) that it is its policy to endeavour to achieve a gradual modification of custom and at the same time to ensure that individual hardship and cruelty is prevented.

c) Discussions (T/SR.80; T/SR.91; T/PV.80)

At the 7th Meeting, 23 June 1948 [T/SR.80 (p.3-10) and T/PV.80 (p.4-61)] the Council examined the petition.

At the 18th Meeting, 7 July 1948 [T/SR.91 (p.2-3)], it adopted the resolution 38 (III).

d) Resolution 38(III) (T/189)

The Council:

- 1) condemns the customs of compulsory and child marriage;
- 2) notes that the Administering Authority is endeavouring to achieve a modification of customs;
- 3) requests the Administering Authority to keep it informed on the steps taken and the progress made to end such practices;
- 4) decides to bring the problems to the attention of the first Visiting Mission to the Territory concerned.

2. Petition from the Bakweri Land Committee, Buea

dated 24 August 1946 and 17 November 1947 (T/PET.4/3;

T/PET.4/3/Add.1; Add.2; Add.3)

examined during the 3rd and 4th Sessions.

/ a) Subject

a) Subject (T/PET.4/3)

The petitioners claim:

- 1) that approximately 580 square miles of land in the Victoria Division of the Cameroons under British Administration, which had belonged to the Bakweri people, were seized by the Germans when they had occupied the Territory and transferred to individuals, missionary groups and companies;
- 2) that after the First World War, when Great Britain had been given the Mandate for the Territory, the plantations of the Germans were sold by auction, generally to their former German owners, and that other lands were declared Crown Lands;
- 3) that most of the land in question is now controlled by the Cameroons Development Corporation; and
- 4) that the Bakweris, having been deprived of their most fertile lands, have had to resort to difficult and uneconomical farming on rocky mountain slopes, causing great hardship to them.

The petitioners request:

- 1) that all lands in the Cameroons under British Administration known as Crown Lands be designated "native lands" and controlled by the natives;
- 2) that all alienated land of the Victoria Division which formerly belonged to the Bakweris be returned to them;
- 3) that compensation for exploitation of these lands be given to the Bakweris; and
- 4) that mission lands, except those containing ecclesiastical and education buildings, be returned to the Bakweris without compensation for exploitation.

3. Observations of the Administering Authority (T/182)

The Administering Authority, after describing the conditions of ownership of landed property before and under British Mandate, states:

- 1) that the Nigerian Government's plans for the future of the plantations were fully explained to the Bakweri Clan Council and the Bakweri Land Committee who agreed that the formation of the Cameroons Development Corporation was in the best interests of the Cameroons people; and
- 2) that a Senior Administrative Officer has already been posted to the area in question to investigate the matter raised in the petition with a view to ensuring that the local inhabitants had adequate land for their needs.

/ c) Discussions

c) Discussions

I. During the 3rd Session (T/SR.80; T/SR.91; T/PV.80)

In a communication dated 9 April 1948 (T/PET.4/3/Add.1), the petitioners requested that their representative be granted an opportunity to make an oral presentation in support of their written petition.

In accordance with rule 80 bis of the Rules of Procedure, the President of the Council, having ascertained of the Administering-Authority that there were no substantial reasons why the matter should first be discussed in the Council, informed the petitioners through the Secretary-General of the Council's willingness to grant their representative an opportunity to make an oral presentation during the 3rd Session.

However, in a cablegram dated 16 June 1948 (T/PET/4/3/Add.2) the petitioners stated that, owing to financial difficulties, their representative would not be able to appear before the Council at its 3rd Session, and requested that consideration of their petition be postponed until the next (4th) Session.

At the 7th Meeting of its 3rd Session, 23 June 1948 [T/SR.80(p.11-18 and T/SR.80 (p.61-102)] the Council decided to postpone the examination of the petition, as requested by the petitioners.

At the 18th Meeting, 7 July 1948 [T/SR.91(p.16-17); T/PV.91] the Council adopted the text of a letter to the petitioners in which they were informed of the postponement of the examination of their petition and of the Council's willingness to hear an oral presentation in support of it; their attention was called to the investigations which had already been set afoot by the territorial Government and they were informed that a Visiting Mission would visit the Territory some time in 1949.

II. During the 4th Session (T/SR.123; T/SR.124; T/SR.125; T/SR.160; T/PV.123; T/PV.124; T/PV.125; T/PV.160)

In two further communications dated respectively 7 September 1948 and 1 December 1948 (T/PET.4/3/Add.3), the petitioners

- 1) stated that the investigation undertaken by the Administering Authority had no bearing on their demands;

/ 2) noted with

- 2) noted with interest the coming of a Visiting Mission;
- 3) informed the Council that, owing to circumstances beyond their control, they had decided not to send a delegate for an oral presentation, and
- 4) submitted their proposals for the future operation of the Cameroons plantations.

At the 7th, 8th and 9th Meetings of its 4th Session, on 1 February, 2 February and 3 February 1949 [T/SR.123 (p.17-20); T/SR.124 (p.6-9; T/SR.125 (p.15-18 and T/PV.123 (p.72-97); T/PV.124 (p.31-46); T/PV.125 (p.57-67)]7, the Council discussed the procedure to be followed in examining the petition, in particular as to whether it should make a fuller study of the question before taking a final decision, or adopt a resolution at once.

At the 44th Meeting, 23 March 1949 [T/SR.160 (p.7-9) and T/PV.160 (p.38-58)]7, the Council adopted the resolution 80 (IV).

d) Resolution 80 (IV) (T/326)

The Council charges the Visiting Mission to West Africa with full investigation of the problems raised in the petition, upon which the Visiting Mission would present its recommendations to the Council not later than the 6th Session.

## II. PETITIONS DISPOSED OF BY THE COUNCIL

1. Petition from the Oversea Settlers Association, Munsdorf (Germany)  
dated 30 May 1947 (T/PET.4/1)  
examined during the 2nd Session.

a) Subject

The petitioners request that about 1,000 persons of German origin, former residents of the Cameroons under British Administration, East Africa and Dutch East India, be allowed to return to these territories.

- b) Observation of the Administering Authorities [T/71 and T/PV.32 (p.56)]

This petition concerns former residents who have been dealt with in accordance with the policy of the British Government which received the general approval of the Council during its 1st Session.

c) Discussion

At its 5th Meeting the Council examined the petition [T/PV.32(p.58-76), T/SR.32].

At its 14th Meeting, it adopted the resolution 16 (II) [T/PV.41 (p.26-28), T/SR.41].

- d) Resolution 16 (II) (T/107)

The Council decides that no action is called for.

### III. PETITIONS PENDING BEFORE THE COUNCIL

#### 1. Petitions from the Mengen Community and Wedikum Community League, Bamenda.

dated 14 February 1949 (T/PET.4/5)

not examined.

##### a) Subject

The petitioners, after describing at length the history of the land dispute between the Bali and Mengen tribes in the Bamenda Division, complain that the Administration has followed and is still following a land policy favouring the Bali tribe at their expense. They allege that in 1921, their homes were burnt and they were driven off land which was rightfully theirs, and that Mr. W. E. Hunt, at that time District Officer in the area, made decisions in favour of the Bali tribe.

The petitioners request

- 1) that the British Government give a pronouncement on Mr. Hunt's policy in the Bamenda Division, and
- 2) that their lands which have been wrongfully taken by the Balis be immediately released.

##### b) Observations of the Administering Authority

Not received yet.

### IV. COMMUNICATIONS

#### 1. Letter from West African National Secretariat, London.

dated 6 February 1946

##### a) Subject

Protests against the intention of the British Government to place the Cameroons and Togoland under international trusteeship.

#### 2. Telegram from the Cameroons Federal Union, Lagos

dated 22 August 1949

##### a) Subject

Denounce the activities of Chief Manga Williams whose visit to the United Kingdom under the British Council's sponsorship is suspected by the Cameroonians as an attempt to sabotage their demands for freedom and prejudice.

3. Telegram from the Secretary of the Bakweri Land Committee, Lagos  
dated 30 August 1949

a) Subject

- 1) Informs the Council that Manga Williams is not representative of the Bakweris, and
- 2) suspects him to be an agent against Land Committee's interests.

V. INDEX OF PETITIONERS

	<u>Page</u>
Bakweri Land Committee, Buea -----	2
Barry, F. - See St. Joan's -----	2
Bwana, Max - See Bakweri -----	2
Cameroons Federal Union -----	7
Deuitz, von - See Oversea -----	6
Endeley, Daird Maffarey Ma Lififfafa - See Bakweri --	2
Ewoma, J.E.M. - See Bakweri -----	2
Ewoma, H.W. - See Bakweri -----	2
Fawty, E.F. - See Mengen -----	7
Iloma Mbanje - See Bakweri -----	2
Jaffa, J.M. - See Bakweri -----	2
Loka Lingange - See Bakweri -----	2
Malafa, P. - See Bakweri -----	2
Manda Linvonjo - See Bakweri -----	2
Mengen Community and Wedikum Community League, Bamenda -----	7
Mokege, J.M. - See Bakweri -----	2
Molinge Ngalo - See Bakweri -----	2
Molute, Y.M. - See Bakweri -----	2
Monono Monde - See Bakweri -----	2
Moujimlo, A.E.Harry - See Bakweri -----	2
Manga Mbele - See Bakweri -----	2
Njia Ngando - See Bakweri -----	2
Oversea Settlers Association, Wunsdorf (Germany) -----	6
St.Joan's Social and Political Alliance, London -----	2
Wanjave, E.N. - See Bakweri --	2
Wedikum Community League, Mengen Community and -----	7
West African National Secretariat -----	7
Williams, Manga - See Bakweri -----	8