

UNITED NATIONS
TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



GENERAL

T/PET.4/68
3 May 1951

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

INDEXED

MASTER

PETITION FROM THE EX-SERVICEMEN'S UNION, VICTORIA CONCERNING
THE CAMEROONS UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

5

1951

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Note by the Secretary-General: In accordance with rule 85 and supplementary rule F of the rules of procedure for the Trusteeship Council, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the Trusteeship Council and to the Government of Italy as the Administering Authority of the Trust Territory of Somaliland, a communication dated 17 September 1950 from the Ex-Servicemen's Union, Victoria concerning the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under British Administration. This communication was transmitted to the Secretary-General by the United Kingdom Delegation to the United Nations.

UNITED KINGDOM
T/PET.4/68

COPY

UNITED KINGDOM DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

EMPIRE STATE BUILDING

New York 1, N.Y.

30th April, 1951

The Secretary,
Trusteeship Council,

Sir,

I forward herewith a petition from the Ex-Servicemen's Union, Victoria, British Cameroons, dated 17th September 1950, which was received by the Commissioner of the Cameroons on the 17th January, 1951 and transmitted by him to the Administering Authority who received it on the 6th March, 1951. I should be glad if you could arrange for this petition to be circulated to the members of the Trusteeship Council in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

W.A.C. MATHIESON

(W.A.C. Mathieson)

Alternate United Kingdom Representative
on the Trusteeship Council

Received at United Nations Headquarters: 1 May 1951

/No. M/2

No. M/2.

The Ex-Servicemen's Union,
c/o K.A. Obasi, Esq.,
United Africa Company Ltd.,
VICTORIA,
BRITISH CAMEROONS,

WEST AFRICA, 17th September 1950

The Acting Assistant Secretary-General,
Department of Trusteeship and Information
from Non-Self-Governing Territories,
LAKE SUCCESS - NEW YORK

Thro'

The Administering Authority,
c/o The Commissioner,
Cameroons/Bamenda Provinces,
Buea - British Cameroons.

OBSERVATIONS OF THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY ON OUR MEMORANDUM AS WE SEE IT^{1/}

INTRODUCTION: In view of the statements submitted by the Administering Authority in reply to our memorandum which was presented to the UNO delegation which visited this Trust Territory late last year, has proceeded from certain basic findings which are in themselves incorrect.

2. These findings which are dealt with in this our memorandum (No. M/2) have led to a number of untenable conclusions and remarks which abound in the Administering Authority's report.

3. In dealing with the Administering Authority's Report we do not intend to indulge in recrimination. But it is our ardent desire to point our fingers to those points from where the observations have gone astray, and we would be failing woefully in our duty if we did not do so now.

WE DISAGREE

4. We emphatically disagree with the Administering Authority's Report in dealing

^{1/} Note by the Secretariat: Reference is made to the observations of the United Kingdom (document T/489) on the petition from the Ex-Servicemen's Union (T/PET.4/18). The resolution of the Trusteeship Council concerning the petition is 133 (VI).

with the welfare, Loans, Cameroons Development Corporation & Commercial Firms, as they are erroneous conclusions. Either the U.K. Special Representative was misinformed of the state of affairs in this Trust Territory relative to the lot of Ex-Servicemen, or facts have been misconstrued. We cannot help dwelling in this opinion even though observations were done on 'solemn affirmations'.

UNFAIR

5. On page 4 (T/489) para. 6 under Welfare of the Administering Authority's report, it stated in part, "each division has its own Nigerian Ex-Servicemen's Welfare Association Council on which local Ex-Servicemen, who have a majority representation can voice their complaints. The report went further to say that the Association aims to provide facilities, such as hostels or reading rooms etc". In our very humble opinion such a statement is very unfair to us. The Nigerian Welfare Association for the Ex-Servicemen of the Victoria Division where the petitioners are domiciled has the following members:

1. The District Officer, (Chairman)
2. " Provincial Engineer (P.W.D. Technical Adviser)
3. " Assistant District Officer
4. Chief the Honourable J. Manga Williams (President Federated Council)
5. Mr. K.W.H. Read, (Agent John Holt & Co.)
6. " R.A. Abunaw, (a private businessman)
7. Mr. S. L. Carr (President Ex-Servicemen's Union)
8. Mr. K. A. Obasei (Secretary Ex-Servicemen's Union)

6. It is therefore obvious in the foregoing that the Ex-Servicemen do not have a majority representation in the Council as the Report claims; instead are in the minority having only 25% representation. And it is because we are in the minority in this Council which was instituted to protect the interests of the blind, maimed and helpless war veterans that we have not in any form succeeded in pushing thoroughly home our honest demands. In fact, when our dissatisfaction with the way this Council was being run became unbearable we wrote to the District Officer, (our letter Ref. No. EMJ/V/1/43 of 30/1/50) expressing our dissatisfaction, and advocated that in order to maintain

/efficient

efficient control of the Association's affairs that a paid full-time Secretary be retained. Our request was turned down with the excuse of "no funds". The Resettlement Department whose duty it was to assist in seeing that the Nigerian Ex-Servicemen's Welfare Association Council duties are carried out has also been closed down. The result is that at the moment there is no one solely responsible for the Council's Secretariat duties.

NEGLIGENCE

7. The Nigerian Ex-Servicemen's Welfare Association has been able to provide hostels, clubs and has propositions for buying a band for the Ex-Servicemen in places like Lagos, Aba and Enugu in Nigeria. But is it not disgusting to see that in the whole of this Trust Territory there is not a single hostel or club for the numerous Ex-Servicemen? Yet when we talk of neglect on the part of Government of this Trust Territory in relation to ourselves we are rewarded with terms such as 'agitators' 'troublemakers' etc.

SPECIAL PERMISSION

8. While we agree with para. 7 of the Administering Authority's Report in connection with the grant of £60 by the Regional Ex-Servicemen's Welfare Association Council, we have this much to say, that we are not in any way entitled to hold meetings or social gatherings in this room without special permission to either the President of the Federated Council or the District Officer before meetings are held. In actual fact we do not use the room at all being the Native Appeal Court, and offices of the President of the Federated Council.

NO READING ROOM

9. It is incorrect to have stated that a reading room is being operated by the Ex-Servicemen's Union in this room; for as a matter of fact there is no Reading Room of any kind in the Division run either by us or any other agency. Here again we are forced to mention that our application to run a Reading Room for the public was turned down even though the Regional Public Relations Department, Enugu, sent a number of books for the purpose. The books are still held in the District Office, Victoria, laying waste.

[illegible]

(continued)

CAMEROONS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

12. The Cameroons Development Corporation is now about the most dreadful antagonist of our Union where it has now embarked upon a scheme of mass dismissals of ex-servicemen in its employ. But yet it is the largest employer of labour in this Territory.

WE ASKED:

13. In order to iron out this difficulty we wrote the Corporation time and again asking for interviews only to be told the Chairman cannot 'enter into dealings with outside Unions'. When we still pressed the demand further, it ended in "the Chairman is extremely busy and an interview cannot be granted". Surely we need a new relationship with the Corporation based on constructive planning directed to solving the epidemic and scourge of unemployment now, facing both this Trust Territory and Nigeria as a whole.

14. The case of the Preventive Services should not also go uncommented. This department which is merely out to check smuggling has also closed its doors against ex-servicemen without what they call "the requisite educational qualifications".

WE ENDORSE

15. We are constructed in the circumstances to endorse the views of Mr. Chin-Chen Wang, China's delegate who said, inter alia that he 'wished to draw particular attention to their demand (meaning the ex-servicemen) for wider opportunities of employment and better wages; and their insistence that a lack of educational qualifications should not constitute a bar to employment".

WE DENOUNCE

16. In this connection we denounce the subtle attitude of the Cameroons Development Corporation and the Preventive Services that they should have embarked on such a policy, as this will only help to bring chaos and greater misunderstanding and increased unemployment.

/WE HAVE

WE HAVE HEARD IT BEFORE:

17. The Administering Authority's observations said "that the demand of the petitioners that they should be given jobs and responsible jobs, irrespective of educational and apparently other qualifications, while it betrays a natural tendency to dwell on their needs than their capacities, cannot of course be reconciled with even the minimum requirements of advance in this BACKWARD territory in which Africans of skill and education are relatively so few that they must be employed where they can serve to best advantage.

That is exactly the point. But we must tell the Administering Authority we have heard of our backwardness before. In fact we have heard more of the incapability of the African, of the impossibility of getting Africans to responsible jobs, of the impracticability of getting Africans to discuss their nation's affairs with sense.

But of one thing we are happy, and that is that the term "backwardness" as it applies to us is like the Australian boomerang since its responsibility can all be safely thrown back harder on the Administering Authority.

ASSOCIATES

18. We wholeheartedly endorse and associate ourselves with the statement of Mr. Carpio (Philippines) delegate who "considered that an obligation to give special consideration to ex-servicemen who had fought in defence of democracy was implied in the opening words of the United Nations Charter, which spoke of determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, as well as in Article 76 which listed the furtherance of international peace and security as the first of the basic objectives of the Trusteeship System. While he did not object in principle to the suggestions of the Special Representative, the fact that many countries largely owe their survival to the help of such overseas troops should be urged on these grounds to do its utmost to improve the conditions referred to in the petition. The petitioners might also be advised to get in touch with agencies or associations set up by the Administering Authority to make available to war veterans the special facilities which they deserve".

/We on

We on our part might also add that since it was declared by Britain's World War II Conservative Premier, Mr. Winston Spencer Churchill, that the last war was being fought "to revive the stature of man", and appreciating this declaration the Colonial troops of which we are no exception have co-operated with, and stood by Britain in her critical days. The test is now on, and it is for Britain now to tell us whether our efforts were appreciated.

Already there is war in Korea, and we are bound to query "shall we fight the next war"? Surely, if the encouragement is vindicated we are bound honestly to stand by Britain as loyal subjects of the Empire we have helped so much to build.

RECOMMENDATIONS

19. In view of the foregoing facts and reasons, we are compelled to make the following recommendations:

1. That the Nigerian Ex-Servicemen's Welfare Association Council of the Victoria Division should have a majority representation of Ex-Servicemen.
2. That the Nigerian Ex-Servicemen's Welfare Association Council should retain the services of a paid full-time Secretary.
3. That the Government should establish for the Ex-Servicemen of this territory hostels and clubs and reading rooms.
4. That the loans which are now being sought from the Eastern Regional Development Board and the Eastern Regional Nigerian Ex-Servicemen's Welfare Association Council for the establishment of industries in the Trust Territory now lying in the District Office, Victoria, be given sympathetic consideration and approval.
5. That the Commissioner of this territory who made it specifically clear in his letter No. 102/8 of 27/1/50 to the Ex-Servicemen's Union, Victoria, of his readiness to support schemes, and assist in seeing that loans are granted for suitable projects be requested to give a pathetic consideration to the present loans under review.
6. That the Cameroons Development Corporation and the Civil Preventive Services Department be advised by the Administering Authority to temper with justice their present policy of discrimination against the Ex-Servicemen in respect to employment.

Yours faithfully,
for: THE EX-SERVICEMEN'S UNION
NIGERIA & CAMEROONS - VICTORIA.

.....(Sgd).....?
Secretary

(Sgd) Lilio Carr
.....
President.