



UNITED NATIONS  
TRUSTEESHIP  
COUNCIL



GENERAL

T/PET.4/71/Add.4  
6 December 1951

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

*MASIE*  
28 DEC 1951

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PETITION FROM THE FRENCH CAMEROONS WELFARE UNION CONCERNING  
THE CAMEROONS UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

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 16 November 1951 from the French Cameroons Welfare Union concerning the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under British administration. This communication forms a fourth addendum to the petition set forth in document T/PET.4/71.

COPY

FRENCH CAMEROONS WELFARE UNION.  
HEADQUARTERS' OFFICE, VICTORIA, BRITISH CAMEROONS.

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Motto: Self-Help

No. F.C.W.U./H.Q./1/63.  
P.O. Box 18, Victoria,  
16 November, 1951.

Sir,

Participation in the New Nigerian Constitution by immigrants from  
the Cameroons under French trusteeship and other matters.

I am directed by the Central Executive of the French Cameroons Welfare Union to return cordial thanks for the information contained in your letter No.206/2/96 of the 1st of November. My Union has since had the advantage of studying Trusteeship Council document T/L.200 of July 13, 1951, which also embodies the resolution discussed in your letter under reference. Unfortunately my Union has not been furnished by the Secretariat of the Trusteeship Council with a copy of the oral statement of the special representative (document T/AC.41/SR.13) mentioned in Part "B" of Trusteeship Council document T/L.200 of 13 July, 1951.<sup>1/</sup>

2. I acted as spokesman at the interview of my Union with the Senior Resident, Cameroons Province, at the Native Court Hall at Victoria on the 30th of June, 1951. At this interview I laid emphasis on the fact that the quotation from the observations of the administering Authority on frontier problems at bottom of page nine of Trusteeship Council document T/522 of 9 March, 1950, which reads

The Honourable  
The Commissioner of the Cameroons,  
Commissioner's Lodge, B u e a.

"it is the case that a large numbers of people from the French Cameroons freely enter the British Cameroons to settle or to obtain work on the plantations. They share all civic rights equally with inhabitants of the British Cameroons. Several are members of Native Authorities and one is a member of a Divisional Meeting."

moant that we have full political rights.

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1/ Note by the Secretariat: The official records of the meetings of the Trusteeship Council and the ad hoc committee on petitions, at which the petitions of the "French Cameroons Welfare Union" were discussed (T/AC.41/SR.13 and 14 and T/SR.374) were sent to the petitioners.

3. According to a text-book on "Elements of Civics" published by Mr. S.K. SEN, M.A., Gold Medalist and University Prizeman, Professor of Civics and Economics, Vidyasagar College, Calcutta, India, "Civics" is derived from Latin "Civitas - the city state, and "Civis" in Latin means a citizen. Mr. J.F. Gould is quoted in this text-book as defining "civics" as "the study of institutions, habits, activities and spirit by means of which a man or a woman (and in rudimentary ways, young people) may fulfil the duties and receive the benefits of membership in a political community." Since the immigrants from the Cameroons under French trusteeship domiciled in the Cameroons under British control are more than amply fulfilling their civic duties, it is only equitable, in our view, that they should also enjoy the benefits derivable from such a performance. Again, this definition read in conjunction with the statements made by the Union's spokesman at the interview with the Senior Resident at Victoria on June 30, 1951, and portrayed lucidly in paragraphs six to nine of the attachment to the Senior Resident's letter No.4487/29 of July 10, 1951, addressed to my Union, admits, we venture to suggest, of no other interpretation than that the special representative of the administering authority did in effect mean that the immigrants from the Cameroons under French control were eligible for such civic or political rights as were enjoyed by the indigenous inhabitants of the British section of the Cameroons.

4. Such being the case, we have informed the Secretariat of the Trusteeship Council that we have carefully studied the resolution and have come to the conclusion that paragraph three thereof is, in our opinion, the result of either a cursory study or an inadequate appreciation by members of the Trusteeship Council of the facts adduced in our petition of May 6, 1951, and the letters supplemental thereto. We pointed out to the Trusteeship Council that my Union was fully conversant with the procedure of acquiring United Kingdom citizenship: that the immigrants from the Cameroons under French control domiciled in this territory did not wish to obtain British nationality any more than they regarded themselves a French citizen. Further, we stated that we wished the status of the Cameroons nationality to be recognised and considered that it should apply equally to persons born in the French sphere and in the British sphere.

5. We made it clear to the Senior Resident at our interview that we, as Natives of the French Cameroons domiciled in the British section, looked forward with confidence to the time when the two sections of the Trust Territory would achieve self-government as a single unit, and that we did not anticipate that the British sphere would achieve self-government integrated with Nigeria and separate from the French Cameroons. In this connexion, I am to invite reference to the statement made by Dr. E.M.L. Endeley, the representative of the Cameroons under British trusteeship at the General Conference held at Ibadan, Western Nigeria, from 9th until 28th January, 1950, for the purpose of making recommendations to the Governor of Nigeria and the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the future government for Nigeria.

6. My Union has no intention to embarrass either the British Administering Authority or the Trusteeship Council, but there are occasions such as the present one where stark facts must be faced squarely or searching questions posed without shame or blush. On page fifteen of "The Guide to the United Nations Charter" it is stated, amongst other things,

".....The Conference (at San Francisco, U.S.A., in June 1945) added a whole new chapter on the subject not covered by the Dumbarton Oaks proposals: proposals creating a system for territories placed under United Nations trusteeship. On this matter there was much debate. Should the aim of trusteeship be defined as "independence" or "self-government" for the peoples of these areas? If independence, what about areas too small to stand on their own legs for defence? Finally "self-government" was chosen as the aim, it being understood that this term included independence - if the people of the area desired it and could assume the responsibility - as well as the right to choose some other status as part of a group of territories."

(see also Article 76 of the United Nations Charter). The following questions impose themselves:-

- (a) If the aim under the international trusteeship system is really to accord self-government or independence to the trust territory of the Cameroons when the time is ripe, and as no one could reasonably say at this juncture whether or not the indigenous

inhabitants of the two sections of the Cameroons would on their own volition join the adjacent colonial territories of the administering powers, was it just and proper under the letter and spirit of the U.N. Charter for the Trusteeship Council to advise by implication the immigrants from the Cameroons under French control to acquire United Kingdom citizenship?

- (b) What guarantee have the indigenous inhabitants of the Cameroons that they would ever have self-government or independence when responsible members of the Trusteeship Council like a Mr. YASIN MUGHIR, of SYRIA, "made the point that the Administering Authorities were not required to accord complete independence and self-government immediately, nor within any specified period of time ....."? (compare page 529 of U.N. Bulletin Vol.VII - No. 9 - November 1, 1949).

We, the natives of the Cameroons, can read between the lines as well as other people: it is now dawning upon a good many of us that the so-called international trusteeship system is a political stunt on a grand scale invented for the express purpose of blunting our sense of political serfdom. It now lies with the members of the United Nations to prove to us that we are mistaken.

7. With regard to the latter part of paragraph nine of the enclosure to the Senior Resident's letter already referred to in this letter, I am to suggest that enquiries may be made of Mr. PETER YOKWE LYONGE of Soppo-Wovila near BUEA - he is a high-ranking African employee of Messrs. John Holt & Company Limited, DOUALA - to ascertain whether or not Natives of the British Cameroons domiciled in the French sphere enjoy full political rights if they fulfil the requirements of the limited franchise there. Mr. Lyonge is on furlough and will be returning to Douala shortly.

8. Paragraph twenty-one page thirteen of Trusteeship Council document T/L.200 of 13 July, 1951, says:-

"21. The suggestion of the creation of a special electoral unit for French immigrants was considered impractical, as the immigrants were scattered and a constituency should be a geographical unit."

This matter is, in our view, capable of easy solution. Separate electoral units independent of the ordinary village units were evolved for the benefit of the workers of the Cameroons Development Corporation. As the immigrants from the Cameroons under French trusteeship are similarly located why was not the same procedure adopted in their case? On Present showing there is no doubt that the so-called "French immigrants" have purposely been left out of the picture. In paragraph two of my Union's letter no. F.C.W.U./H.Q./1/46 of July 17, 1951, we made the following suggestion to the Senior Resident:-

"2. It would appear to my Union that the legal difficulties to which you had called our attention during our discussion might be overcome were His Excellency the Governor to exercise - as a temporary expedient and pending a final decision by His Majesty's Government on the issues raised in our petition of May 6, 1951 - the powers conferred upon him under Chapter III (the Central Legislative House - House of Representatives) section 70 (1) of the new Nigerian Constitution. This section reads:

'70(1). The Governor, acting in his discretion, may, by Instrument under the Public Seal, appoint persons to be Special Members of the House of Representatives to represent interests or communities which, in his opinion, are not otherwise adequately represented in the House:

'Provided that the number of such members shall not at any time exceed six."

In this connection, I am to invite your attention to the submission made in the 10th paragraph of our petition dated the 6th May, 1951 addressed to His Excellency the Governor of Nigeria."

We have not as yet been informed of Government's attitude to this suggestion.

9. With regard to the latter part of paragraph two of your letter under reference, I am to say that the members of my Union are not particularly interested in the politics of Nigeria, but they will not remain indifferent to any measure or proposal which might extinguish the distinct political identity of the whole or any part of the pre-1914 territory of the Cameroons, nor will they remain unconcerned over anything which tends to threaten the well-being and better-living for the indigenous population of the Cameroons.

10. Copies of this letter have been forwarded to the Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Trusteeship and Information, United Nations, Lake Success, New York, U.S A., and the Resident, Cameroons Province.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Jabea K. Dibonge),  
Honorary President-General,  
French Cameroons Welfare Union.

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Endorsed to:-

The Assistant Secretary-General,  
Department of Trusteeship and Information,  
United Nations Headquarters, Lake Success,  
New York, U.S.A.

For information, with reference to your letter File No.  
TRI 130/5/02 of 21 September, 1951, and connected correspondence.

(Signed) JABEA K. DIBONGE

Honorary President-General,  
French Cameroons Welfare Union.

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