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PETITION FROM THE BAKUNDU PEOPLE CONVENTION CONCERNING THE  
CAMEROONS UNDER UNITED KINGDOM ADMINISTRATION

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Boa Bakundu,  
Southern Camerons,  
Kumba Division,  
February, 1961

The Secretary-General,  
United Nations Organisation,  
New York.

Dear Sir,

PETITION OF THE BAKUNDU PEOPLE CONVENTION AGAINST SOUTHERN  
CAMEROONS PLEBISCITE RESULTS

The Results of the Southern Cameroons Plebiscite having been critically analysed and examined by this convention from the tribal units to the Divisional basis we have come to the logical conclusion that they depict nothing but an enduring relic of mass ignorance, fanaticism and hysteria on one hand and nostalgia, intimidation deceit and intellectual amnesia on the other. All this contributive factors have helped render the fitting culmination of the endeavours and aspirations of the past forty years to an ignominious debacle.

The good intentions of the U.N.O. to hold a plebiscite in the Southern Cameroons do not present themselves to any contradiction, even though this was not a necessary con-comittant at the time when the different sectors were placed under different flags, If however the feelings of the different tribal groups were investigated and ascertained it would have been kind, if the populations of these tribal groups were recorded in all the administrative divisions it would have

helped the U.N.O. in taking a fair decision on the issue; if a method were established by which a person from the Bamilike group of the Camerun Republic could be distinguished from the one of the Bamenda block or a Balong native of the Camerun Republic from one of the Southern Cameroons fair play should have been exercised; and if foreign monies were prevented from entering the territory through the Cameroons Republic results less alloyed would have been obtained.

There can be no doubt that these grave omissions helped reduce the whole plebiscite to the level of a mere lottery and success for anyone in it does not in any way spell credit for the method. The territory has been placed on the brink of a paroxysm. The effects no doubt may be well-nigh devastating as those now visiting the recent Independent Republic of Congo.

The so much advertised Article 76b of the Trusteeship Agreement has become a mere laudatory epithet, its essence having been lost through the gross negligence of the Administering authority, despite the duty of care and trust reposed upon this body by the Agreement. This agreement itself does not in any way express or imply that on the event of the people demanding full manumission the question of Re-Unification of all the Sectors of the trust territory should be a sine qua non.

If so what other letter of the law supports the Administering Authority in allowing one section of its trust territory to go one way and other section another way.

We hold and maintain, and we are sure the opinion of many would go along with us, that the term "Freely expressed wishes of the people" in its context refers to the TIME when the people would rightly feel that they had reached the stage of manhood and when they should emerge from the garb of political tutelage. It is therefore only the great Humpty-Dumpty who would not want his words to be interpreted in their context but according to what he would want them to mean, who would hold the view that this phrase refers to How the political emancipation of the people has to be achieved. From the latter view we strongly dissociate ourselves.

It must be recalled that there had been nothing like a Cameroun Nation, and therefore the rumpus that a Nation had been split is sheer chicanery.

Hence the question of re-union can only be passed on the score of sentiments. The question of the Southern Cameroons joining either Nigeria or the former

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French Cameroons had been brought on the political stage of the territory because of the said economic instability. The territory has been in association with Nigeria for about 44 years imbibing the same law, culture, education, lingua Franca and monetary system. Unbiased observers mature in judgement by knowledge and experience have always advised in favour of the territory's continued association with Nigeria; the statement of the then Colonial Secretary in 1957 Constitutional Conference is a quintessence of those mature and unbiased advice pregnant with meaning, and it would be sheer complacency, apathy and foolhardiness for us to wave it off with the finger.

Re the conduct of the Plebiscite Petitions to this effect had been forwarded to the Plebiscite Commissioner and Administrator by the Kumba Branch of the Cameroons People National Convention on 25th January, 1961 and in February, 1961. If democracy is not "The cult of incompetence" and if the ballot box should contain the articulate effective declaration of the opinion of the voters, and if a vote should mean trust and responsibility would the end itself not have been defeated by the very fact that there has been gross and mass ignorance, fanaticism, hanky-panky, tribalism, sentimentalism, hysteria and mass intimidation?

In passing we strongly associate ourselves with the views expressed by the Representative of Administering Authority, New Zealand et al as contained in the Report of the Trusteeship Council of 7th August 1959 to June, 1960 viz: "That it was most desirable that before the people voted or decided which of their independent neighbours they should join in freedom they should have a clear idea of the terms of such a Union".

From the figure of Registered voters - 354,163 - less than half a population of over three quarter million people, it would be appreciated that some of the people were deadly against the plebiscite while others were most unacquainted with what was happening around them. And of those who registered about 23,000 did not go to the polls. It goes without saying that of those who voted only about 30% were well informed of the implications and complexities involved in the issue at stake and scarcely any who had any knowledge of what the future had in store for them. On the event of Unification. Is it not therefore an oddity and

anachronism of democracy for a minority to decide for the majority especially on a Major issue of this kind, and would the over-burdened "Freely expressed wishes of the people" have been ascertained if more than half of the population refrained from casting their votes?

Examination of the votes cast in Kumba Division reveal that the Bakundu tribe (north and South) voted solidly for the Green Box. But as it has been the case with other divisions, their somewhat inferior numbers were very highly diluted by the Superior numbers of the Bamenda and Bamilike elements, who voted for the white Box for obvious reasons, that on the aggregate their legitimate desire had been dwarfed to insignificance. The Bakweris of Victoria Division, the Bakossis also of Kumba Division had all been victims to this overwhelming influx of the Bamenda and Bamilike elements. Would justice therefore have been done by allowing the expressed wishes of the indigenous natives to be submerged by the non-natives because of the superior numbers of the latter?

We the indigenous natives of the Division would never never acquiesce on our lashes, nor lay down arms, nor lick the dust at the feet of extraneous elements who feel they can toy with our destiny because of their mob numbers. We can see no immediate solution to the Southern Cameroons issue than the partitioning of the territory. Our cause is with the Federation of Nigeria and any attempt by any block to force Unification down our throats shall be highly resisted to the last man.

We remain,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed)	1. H.N. ELANGWE (H.N. Elangwe)	President
"	2. A.M. ETOTO	Vice President
"	3. D.M. MUKETE	Secretary
"	4. N.M. BEBE (N.N. Bebe)	Member
"	5. SAMUEL ETOE	Member

cc: British Representative  
UNO

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