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PETITION FROM "UNION DES POPULATIONS DU CAMEROUN", DSCHANG BRANCH
CONCERNING THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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UPC Committee
Dschang Branch
Cameroons under French Administration

DSCHANG, 22 July 1955^{1/}

To The Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Sir,

On behalf of the UPC Committee, we have once again the honour to bring the following facts to your kind attention.

On 25 May 1955 war broke out in the Cameroons, for which the local Administration and Mr. Roland Pré, the Governor, are responsible.

This Governor, Mr. Roland Pré, knowing himself to be the guilty party, is diverting the blame by casting it on the members of the UPC in his broadcast message of 1 June 1955, when he made the following statement:

The UPC has established its local committees in the villages of MOUNGO, DOUALA, SANAGA-MARITIME and YAOUNDE.

Undoubtedly the war in Moungo, Douala, Sanaga-Maritime and Yaoundé was between the UPC and the subjugated colonialists, but who caused the war, with looting and damage among the Bamiléké? It was certain tribal Chiefs who are violating Article 10 of the Trusteeship Agreements by opposing the KUMSZE, C.G.T. Trade-Union and Bamiléké movements and the Association of Notables.

1/ Note by the Secretariat: This communication was sent from Bamenda, Cameroons under British Administration.

The destruction of concessions, looting and threats of death in the Bamiléké region are calamities that these tribal Chiefs are organizing with the support of the governmental authorities in the Cameroons.

The Chiefs in question are:

1. NJIATIO Etienne, Chief of the Batcham Mbounda Group, who was imprisoned for three years and who instigated a war against the village of Bangang in 1946. He was reinstated in his functions as Chief upon accepting French citizenship, and this last time he has damaged 16 concessions in his group, etc.

2. TIOGNING, Chief of the Balessing Group, guilty of killing a Cameroonian from the village of Foto Dschang with his lorry ("pik-Up"); the mere acceptance of French citizenship led to his release, leaving justice on that score undone.

The tribal Chiefs named below are mainly responsible for the arson, looting and damaging of concessions, threats of death, and the deaths resulting from these calamities:

1. NJIATIO Etienne, Chief of the Batchem Mbounda Group (damaging and looting of concessions);

2. TIOGNING, Chief of the Balessing Group (killing of a Cameroonian from the village of Foto);

3. NKAMGANG Joseph, Chief of the Bandjoun Group (damaging of concessions and looting of others' possessions);

4. BALENSSAP, Chief of the Balenssap Group (damaging of concessions);

5. TCHINDA, Chief of the Bansa Dschang Group (damaging of concessions and looting of others' possessions);

6. NPANGUI, Chief of the Baloum Dschang Group (damaging of concessions and looting of others' possessions);

7. The Chief of Bagam Bafoussam (damaging of concessions);

8. The Chief of the Batouni Bafang Group (looting and damaging of concessions);

9. The Chief of the Foleutcha Bafang Group (looting and damaging of concessions);

10. Eselem Camil, Chief of the Santchoun Dschang Group (instigating a riot);

11. NITCHEU Jean Baptiste, civil service clerk, registrar at Bafoussam (leading the notorious organized mob).

These lackeys of the colonialists and counterfeit French citizens are engaged in damaging concessions, looting and killing Cameroonians who belong to progressive and democratic associations, because, being French citizens, they have nothing to fear. On committing an offence, they claim to be French citizens and will not be brought before French justice. It is notable that the blame for all these acts against the Cameroonians is being laid upon the UPC.

Mr. Roland Pré, the Governor, frequently makes lying statements vilifying the Union des populations du Cameroun in his broadcast messages, in particular in that of 1 June 1955.

He declared then that there had been a deliberate attempt to organize a riot in that part of the Territory where the UPC had established local committees, in particular at Mounjo, Douala, Sanaga-Maritime and Yaoundé, and he called for joint action to multiply the difficulties of the UPC leaders, since that Association was deferring its projects for the time being.

INTRODUCTION OF IDENTITY CARDS IN THE CAMEROONS

There appears to us to be something strange about the introduction of identity cards in the Cameroons, seeing that the Administering Authority is limiting itself to entering the abbreviation "C.U.F." on the identity card - which stands for "citoyen de l'Union française" (citizen of the French Union) - whereas the Cameroonian bearer of the card has no knowledge of the matter.

Those Cameroonian citizens worthy of the name:

- (a) protest against the use of this abbreviation which incorporates us in the French Union;
- (b) protest against the damaging of concessions, the looting of others' possessions, the threats of death, and the riot of 25 May 1955 for which the French Administration in the Cameroons is responsible;
- (c) demand that true justice be done in the Cameroons on these counts.

The Cameroonians have noted certain remarks of Mr. Charles René OKALA, the representative of the Socialist Party in the Cameroons, in his statement to the Fourth Committee at its 309th meeting, on 17 December 1952. These remarks were to his own individual advantage and not in the interests of the Cameroons, which he claimed to represent in the United Nations.

Mr. Okala stated clearly in that speech (page 10) that it was the English Labour Government that had granted independence to India, Pakistan and Indonesia, and self-government to the Gold Coast and British Nigeria.

And this great preacher made some wild and dangerous statements (page 29), to this effect:

"Lastly, certain Cameroonian parties raise the question of the Territory's immediate independence. ... It presupposes a political coming-of-age, an adequate supply of responsible personnel, and an unfailing machinery of government; it calls for modern economic, industrial and agricultural equipment, an established constitution, a recognized currency, an army, and many things besides....

"We trust ... the Administering Power to recognize in due course ... the moment when we should be granted our independence."

Mr. Charles René OKALA, offspring of the French Administering Power, was very bold in making such strange statements to the Fourth Committee at its 309th meeting.

He commends the fact that independence was granted to the said territories by the Labour Government, but admits that Cameroonian independence will be granted only at such time as the Administering Power thinks fit. Could Mr. OKALA claim that his Administering Power ever granted independence to another territory under its trusteeship? Whom was Mr. Okala representing in the United Nations? It was in the name of the French Administering Power, not the Cameroons, that he recorded his satisfaction in the Fourth Committee.

Mr. Charles René OKALA and his father prefer to say that certain parties are raising the question of independence, and that a territory must enjoy the prerequisites he cited in order to gain that independence. He went on to mention an adequate supply of responsible personnel, and modern economic, industrial and agricultural equipment. Do these prerequisites exist in the Cameroons?

Mr. OKALA may well uphold the Administering Power because he is paid, and well paid, which is not the case with all Cameroonians.

We are undergoing dire sufferings but we trust the United Nations to release us from our bonds.

HOUSE SEARCH BY THE AUTHORITIES AT DSCHANG

About 6 a.m. on 16 July 1955 the police and judicial authorities - the Chief of the Bamiléké Region, his Deputy, the Dschang Magistrate with extended powers, the Examining Magistrate, and the Commandant of the Gendarmerie accompanied by four Cameroonian armed guards - entered the house of our compatriot, NANTIA Victor, Chairman of the Dschang Committee of the UPC, and, in his absence, proceeded to make a search.

Their object was to seize newspapers, broadcast messages, Bamiléké newspapers and certain UPC documents. Our compatriot returned the same day from a two days' stay at NKONGSAMBA.

The pretext for this search by the police and judicial authorities was that they wanted to seize the United Nations reply of 18 May 1955, concerning the UPC Committee's petition of 23 April 1955.

In view of their present terrible sufferings at the hands of the colonialists, and especially of Mr. Roland Pré, the Cameroonians look to the United Nations to intervene, even should the colonialists threaten our lives.

The French Administering Authority in the Cameroons has closed all telegraph offices in order to prevent Cameroonians from petitioning the United Nations. The Trusteeship Council ought to know that if the Administering Authority was carrying out its functions properly it would not need to close all communications offices in the Cameroons.

The police and judicial authorities, including Mr. Rubline, Commandant of the Dschang Gendarmerie, also visited Mr. WAMBA-POKEM, of the village of Fokoué Dschang, where they searched his house on the pretext of seeking UPC documents for seizure. Mr. Wamba-Pokem is the father of Abel NKINGUE, Vice-Chairman of the UPC.

EXPROPRIATION OF LAND IN THE BAMILEKE REGION

Expropriation of land by the Administration is a common occurrence in the Bamiléké region, as elsewhere throughout the Cameroons.

We give below the names of our compatriots whose lands that they have occupied all their lives have been expropriated:

1. FEUKENG, Theodor, Bafou Dschang
2. TAMONGOU, Bafou Dschang

3. TANGOUTEM, F. Fofou-Tongeng, Dschang
4. MITA NJIAGUE, Bafou Dschang, murdered on 14 April 1955
5. MANKEU, NKEMZUGNI, and MANIKENG.

The threat of expropriation in the Bamiléké territory, particularly in respect of the lands which the Compagnie Pastorale has occupied free of charge for several years past, hangs unceasingly over the indigenous owners.

On 8 July 1955, Mr. FAURT, Agent for the Compagnie Pastorale, stopped the wives of the said MANKEU, NKEMZUGNI and MANIKENG from working in the fields that they have occupied all their lives. He forcibly took possession of three hoeing tools which the women were using in their work.

LEVYING OF MARKET LICENCE FEES

It is strange that the French Administering Authority in the Cameroons has just introduced a forced levy in all periodic markets - a so-called market licence fee - in the sum of 20 francs against an undated ticket, although no provision is made in the Cameroons for exacting such dues in respect of any labour.

We have noted with satisfaction the letter from the United Nations of 18 May 1955 in reply to our petition of 23 April 1955. This was the reply that led to the odious search organized by the Government authorities. As a result of this reply, too, our compatriot Stanislas Nguelemo obtained justice in respect of his land, a matter dealt with in the first petition.

We place our trust in the United Nations in begging it to settle a date for the granting of our independence and the unification of our two Territories.

We count upon your support and beg you to examine our petitions and to take appropriate action upon them.

For the Officers of the UPC Committee

(Signed) NANTIA Victor

Chairman, Dschang Branch

Cameroons under French Administration
