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PETITION FROM THE ASSOCIATION "LIENS CULTURELS DE LA JEUNESSE CAMEROUNAISE"  
CONCERNING THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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DOUALA, 30 May 1955

The "LIENS CULTURELS DE LA JEUNESSE CAMEROUNAISE" Association.

P.O. Box 362

Douala, Cameroons

To: The Secretary-General of the United Nations, New York

Sir,

At this, the most tragic time in the history of our country, associations, even cultural and non-political bodies standing aloof from the doctrines of all political parties, are compelled to raise their voices in alarm in order to safeguard the threatened future of their native land. That is why we are writing to you today.

The French Government which has never, in the United Nations and before the colonial peoples, adopted a conciliatory attitude when the question arose of putting into practice the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, is faced with the Cameroonian people's growing awareness of their national claims and wishes to strengthen its position in the Cameroons and restore the indigenat system by double-faced political trickery. Within the country the massacres of the people and the arrest of the Cameroonian people's representatives assure it

of the submissiveness of the masses, who are threatened with death, and remove critics of its policy. Abroad, propaganda based on false news and disgraceful lies, sparing no effort whatever the cost, is intended to confuse world public opinion and prevent persons of good will from disapproving of this Machiavellian policy. We are convinced that this tactic will not catch the representatives of the United Nations off guard, but we feel that it is our duty, in order to enable them to take the necessary firm decision, to deny the arguments of Roland Pré, the High Commissioner.

The numerous statements of Mr. Ruben UM NYOBE, the people's representative to the United Nations, and the rapid rise of Nationalism were disturbing to the French Government. It had to put an end to the progress made by the Cameroons towards its noble destiny. For that purpose it required an energetic High Commissioner. Thus it was natural to appoint Mr. Roland PRE who, as is known, had steeped French Guinea in blood as High Commissioner of the Cameroons.

Immediately upon his arrival in the Territory he came to the conclusion that nothing but a blood-bath would arrest the forward march of the Cameroons. Thus after declaring to the Minister that "he was convinced that the Administrator had the means of combatting UPC activities", he stated at a meeting of Chiefs that "if the UPC trend continued it would end with shooting". Moreover a Colonial Administrator dared to state that "only a trial of strength would ensure the Administration's victory over the U.P.C.", and the Presse du Cameroun of 26 May informed us several days before the incidents of notices requesting persons possessing firearms to take precautions".

However he required an opportunity for his "trial of strength". He considered that the policy of provocation, incitement and brutality was the shortest way to a massacre. All U.P.C. meetings were dissolved, active members were either beaten and injured or arbitrarily arrested, their houses destroyed or burnt down; the persons responsible for this campaign are armed soldiers, as on the field of battle. The wide publicity given to this brutality absolves us from further comment. Have not the Paris newspapers Le Monde, Aspects de France, France Observateur - condemned this situation?

The campaign that was undertaken was designed to bring about a massacre, which today has plunged almost the entire Cameroons into mourning. Soldiers from the Cameroons and French Equatorial Africa, using modern weapons (tanks, machine guns, aircraft and rifles) opened fire on a poor people who had only sticks and machetes to defend themselves. The dead, shot in broad daylight or in the dead of night and burnt, are counted by the hundreds. Whole built-up areas consisting of more than 100 huts are burnt down. The constant threat of mass arrests hangs over the population. Warrants for the arrest of the U.P.C. leaders have been issued.

Today, after plunging our country into a state of mourning unheard of by our people and after plundering an innocent people because it was acting in accordance with the United Nations Charter, the Trusteeship Agreements and the French Constitution, Mr. Roland PRE wishes to justify his actions by unfounded arguments:

1. Repression of a U.P.C. insurrection

We would like to know whether Mr. Roland PRE was confronted by an "armed insurrection" when he was planning "to use force", when he was planning "shooting" to wipe out the U.P.C., and when he was maltreating members of the U.P.C. in broad daylight and completely unlawfully.

Can it be said that there was an insurrection at MBANGA where the disorders which resulted in 14 dead and almost 80 wounded by bullets were due entirely to an attempt by the Administration to dissolve a peaceful meeting of the U.P.C. held on 22 May on premises which fully satisfied the requirements of the law?

Can it be said that there was an insurrection at DOUALA, the scene of serious incidents, where the disorders were caused by the Administration's provocations?

(a) The High Commissioner organized a meeting of his henchmen on 22 May, on the day when U.P.C. was to have held its conference, he brought in soldiers in civilian clothes whose task was to provoke the members of the U.P.C. on their return and to touch off a violent brawl which would require the intervention of the police and the army. Can it be said that an insurrection took place when carrying out the High Commissioner's plan to the letter Mr. Maah Georges and his

men, heaped unpardonable insults on passing members of the U.P.C. (adventurers, extremists, communists...)? We would like to know whether the well-known soldier wearing civilian clothes, was suppressing an insurrection when armed with a machete, he began to massacre the members of the U.P.C. because in reply to insults they said "Roland Pre, go home"? We would like to know what the soldiers in civilian clothes were doing at a meeting of "Cameroonians", and what was the purpose of the five lorries full of armed soldiers, which contrary to usual practice, were stationed eight hundred metres from the premises?

(b) Are we to be told that there was an insurrection in the New-Bell district on the same day when at 4 p.m. a lorry full of armed soldiers stopped in front of a hut and, without any warrant, tried to arrest a young man who was eating peacefully.

(c) We would like to know whether there was an insurrection in the market at New-Bell on 25 May when soldiers appeared there and pillaged everything?

When at the end of a carefully prepared campaign of provocation, Mr. Roland PRE has massacred the peaceful population of the Cameroons the U.P.C. is made the scapegoat for everything, so that he can justify himself before the United Nations and prevent it from listening to the Cameroonian people.

The Cameroonian people have killed Europeans.

Although the Cameroonian people flung themselves at Europeans and their cars at DOUALA, it is common knowledge that this occurred only after four persons had been killed and about twenty wounded by bullets between 2.30 and 3 p.m. Moreover, this outburst was only momentary and at about 3.30 p.m. Those who managed to escape withdrew under a hail of bullets to their homes. It would be well for the Presse du Camcroun which stated that the first shot "was probably fired by a demonstrator" to denounce this outrage; perhaps this demonstrator was the European policeman who mowed down Cameroonians like ripe corn. Europeans and Africans alike were struck by the bullets which showered down from the AEROPLANE.

Was the burning of Douala accidental?

The fire at Nkomondo broke out at about 10 p.m. on Friday, 27 May when under the curfew it was forbidden to leave home and when guards were patrolling the district. They revealed their presence by shots, which rang out from time to time during the fire. How could any person, however bold, dare to leave his home without running the risk of losing his life or being caught? How is it that to this day the guards have never stated what caused the fire? No reasonable person will believe the lies of the criminal as a result of all this unconvincing deception.

All we know is that what was attempted during the day, and proved unsuccessful owing to the vigilance of the people, had to be accomplished during the night when the entire population was forbidden to leave their homes. How can it be explained that these events occurred simultaneously throughout almost the entire Territory?

This was due to the plan of Mr. Roland PRE who could not have made sure of overcoming the U.P.C. by destroying only one of its centres. Now juggling with facts, he alleges that a premeditated insurrection took place, an insurrection which, as we have seen above, was carried out by his armed forces, under his planning

The number of victims

In order to conceal the people's discontent the Administration has estimated the number of persons who flocked to the scene of the Douala massacre at 2,000, which is not a tenth of the actual number? Moreover, the persons who flocked to the scene represent only an insignificant proportion of those who could have come had they not been prevented from doing so by work. It is useless today to close one's eyes to the reality of Cameroonian nationalism.

What should one think of the Cameroonians who support the criminal activities of Mr. Roland PRE?

It is well known that in dependent countries the Administration never ceases to exploit the gullibility of some indigenous inhabitants who, wishing to receive favours or to satisfy their personal ambitions, do not hesitate to

go against the truth, either through their own activities or by willingly affixing their signatures to obviously official texts. We realize that in this specific case, by closing their eyes to the innocent blood shed by their compatriots, sacrificed in a just cause, a handful of Cameroonians could be assembled to support Mr. Roland PRE. The recruiting campaign is already in full swing. But we are convinced that this stratagem will surprise nobody and we remain convinced that the United Nations is well aware that under a French colonial administration it is practically impossible to reach a unanimous decision on problems involving the authorities. Accordingly, we hope that attention will be paid only to the overwhelming majority of Cameroonians who disapprove of Mr. Roland PRE's policy.

It is clear therefore from the preceding observations that the allegation of a U.P.C. insurrection is completely unfounded and that the methods used to conceal Mr. Roland PRE's heinous crime are debasing and humiliating.

Our association, as we have stated above, does not receive directions from any political party, or support any existing movement. Our support of the U.P.C. and our hostile attitude to the Administration in this specific case is based only on a desire to tell the truth, a truth which must be proclaimed because the future of all of us is threatened.

We realize that the French policy of integration in the Cameroons is on the brink of success, to the detriment of the Cameroonian people, yearning for liberty. We are convinced that if the United Nations treats the recent massacres with indifference, the integration of the Cameroons as a colony in the French Republic will be inevitable. The people's representatives have been annihilated, the people weakened and threatened by recent events, the indigénat system restored, and nothing more stands in the way of the realization of France's plan. That is the real purpose of the recent massacres; that is the drama behind our fate; that is why we are compelled to cry out for help to all Free Nations while there is still time.

Mr. Roland PRE is already organizing demonstrations to celebrate the maintenance by force of France in the Cameroons. He is already proclaiming that the U.P.C. has been checked and formally prohibits membership in that party (Conference of New-Bell of 31 May 1955).

We therefore think that if the United Nations is aware of its responsibilities towards the peoples of the Trust Territories and if it intends to retain its prestige and respect its own institutions, then the time has come for it to prove it by doing justice to the Cameroonian people who are in mourning and apprehensive about their future.

We consider that the three following steps must be taken if the problem is to be solved:

(1) A special visiting mission should be sent out without delay to study the situation on the spot in order to ascertain the true state of affairs.

(2) The immediate repatriation of the present High Commissioner of the Cameroons, suspension of the proceedings against the leaders of the U.P.C. and the unconditional release of persons arbitrarily arrested, who in the present circumstances are the only persons who could receive the coming mission.

(3) A study of the steps to be taken for the achievement of our independence.

I have the honour to be, etc.

For the Association,  
The Office of the Executive Committee.

(signed) Dallé Moukoko Rémy  
(Chairman)

(signed) Mbassi Edjenguelé Jonas  
(Secretary)

(signed) Makoubé Emmanuel  
(Vice-Chairman)

(signed) Makani Hubert  
(Assistant Secretary)

(signed) Tchounda Takala Conrad  
(Treasurer)

(signed) Kona Albert  
(Member)

(signed) Edemé Célestin  
(Assistant Treasurer)

(signed) Tengassa P. Benoît  
(Member)

(signed) Ndjilé Logo  
(Member)

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