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PETITION FROM THE LOCAL COMMITTEE OF THE "UNION DES POPULATIONS DU CAMEROUN" OF MBAFAM CONCERNING THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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UNION DES POPULATIONS DU CAMEROUN

Cameroons branch of the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain

Local Committee of the U.P.C., Mbafram.

MOTION

The Committee of the U.P.C., Mbafram, meeting in regular Assembly at its special meeting place at Mbafram on 6 April 1955,

Strongly protests against the continual arrests of active members of the U.P.C. and the small planters' union at Mbafram-Bayong, and the corrupt measures used by Francois ORABONA, Colonial Administrator, Chief and Mayor of Bafang.

On 25 March 1955, our comrade FONGANG Avit, planter at Mbafram, was arrested, detained and tortured by F. ORABONA, Chief of the Bafang Subdivision, without just cause, and in violation of articles 5 and 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, worded as follows: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" and "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile".

We make no mention of the arrest of women for non-payment of tax, which is already dying out in the Territory.

Our comrade FONGANG Avit is not only being detained in prison at Bafang, leaving his two wives and children in misery, but he is compelled to work as a prisoner. The U.P.C. therefore requests the application of article 41 of the Penal Code (article 41, Act of 19 March 1928, article 50):

"The proceeds of the work of each offender imprisoned for a misdemeanour shall be devoted in part to the general expenses of the prison, in part to the payment of fines and legal expenses, in part to procure some comforts for the offender, if he so merits, and in part to be put towards a savings fund for him upon release, as shall be ordered by public administration regulations."

Mr. Francois ORABONA, Chief of the Bafang Subdivision, claims that a complaint concerning land was lodged against our comrade FONGANG Avit, and yet no action was taken when a number of similar complaints were brought by active members of the U.P.C. at Mbafam regarding the uprooting of coffee trees, the harvesting of coffee beans, the destruction of huts, the burning of huts, violation of the privacy of the home, theft, wilful assault and battery, and the banishment of some of them to their homes. On the contrary, Mr. Francois ORABONA, Chief of the Bafang Subdivision, merely encouraged the culprits to commit as many crimes as they could against the active members of the U.P.C. of that village. The reason so many arrests are made at Mbafam is that Messrs. BORNE, Chief of the Bamiléké Region, F. ORABONA, Chief of the Bafang Subdivision, KAMGA Joseph, Chief of Bandjoun (Bafoussam Subdivision) and Mboda Elie, retired official at Bafang and would-be Administrative Chief of Mbafam, were unsuccessful in their attempt to organize a civil war in violation of articles 91, 92 and 93 of the Penal Code. This attempt to start a war resulted in great losses of property by our active members and especially in the thinning of our ranks.

The Committee of the U.P.C., Mbafam, requests the reinstatement of the Customary Chief of Mbafam-Bayong, as important a matter as that of the land belonging to the NGOA-Ekélé community (see resolution adopted by the Fourth Committee of the United Nations in 1954, page 33).

We also request the Administration to cease appointing foreigners, who oppose the interests of the Cameroonian people, as Chiefs and Notables of this village. The refusal to reinstate the Customary Chief of Mbafam-Bayong is a violation of articles 13, 14 and 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Considering that the Administering Authority denies the acts of retaliation and persecution against the active members of the U.P.C. (see document T/C.2/SR.108, pages 3, 4 and 5 referring to the 1952 petition of the U.P.C. of the Bamiléké Region).

We request the immediate release of our comrade FONGANG Avit and the reinstatement of the Customary Chief of Mbafam-Bayong, in accordance with articles 13, 14 and 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We also request the application or the total abolition of the penal law which is partially applied in our territory, especially article 41.

We therefore also request that the right of association be respected and that the Trusteeship Council's resolutions of 1954 be applied with regard to the Bamiléké Region, and that the next Visiting Mission should make an on-the-spot inquiry and enter the prison precincts in order to hear the prisoners and investigate the treatment they receive.

Union des Populations du CAMEROUN  
Committee of Mbafam-Bayong  
P.O. Box No. 46, BAFANG

Mbafam-Bayong, 6 April 1955

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