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PETITION FROM THE FEDERATION DES ETUDIANTS D'AFRIQUE
NOIRE EN FRANCE CONCERNING THE CAMEROONS UNDER
BRITISH ADMINISTRATION AND THE CAMEROONS UNDER
FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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FEDERATION DES ETUDIANTS
D'AFRIQUE NOIRE EN FRANCE
(FEANF)

Executive Committee
6 bis, Cité Rougemont
Paris IXe

Paris, 21 February 1959
The President of the General Assembly,
United Nations,
New York

Ref. No. 81/P/59

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the motion unanimously adopted by the COMITE ANTICOLONIALISTE DES ETUDIANTS EN FRANCE, on 20 February 1959, day of solidarity with the Kamerunian people in their struggle for Reunification and Independence.

I have the honour to be, etc...

For the Executive Committee
Hamat BA
CHAIRMAN of FEANF

FEDERATION DES ETUDIANTS D'AFRIQUE NOIRE EN FRANCE

6 bis, Cité Rougemont
Paris IXe

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The COMITE ANTICOLONIALISTE and its member organizations:

- the Fédération des Etudiants d'Afrique Noire en France (FEANF)
and the Union Nationale des Etudiants du Kamerun, a member of FEANF;
- the Comité de liaison des étudiants d'outre-mer: Martinique, Guadalupe, Madagascar;
- the Union de la Gauche Socialiste (UGS)
- the Parti Socialiste Autonome (PSA)
- the Union des Etudiants Communistes,
on the one hand, and
- the Union des Populations du Kamerun (UPC)
on the other.

Having met in Paris, 6 bis, Cité Rougemont, on 20 February, the day of international solidarity with the Kamerunian people in their struggle for reunification and independence,

- Affirm their full support of the UPC in its heroic struggle for the REUNIFICATION AND INDEPENDENCE of Kamerun;
- Invite the United Nations to take as the basis for discussion the proposals put forward by the UPC for the REUNIFICATION and INDEPENDENCE of Kamerun;
- Note the decision taken by France and the United Kingdom to restore to Kamerun its independence in January 1960, but demand, as a pre-condition, a full and unconditional amnesty and the repeal of the Decrees of 13 July 1955 dissolving certain democratic organizations in Kamerun under French domination;
- Invite the United Nations to be especially vigilant and, in particular, not to allow Trusteeship over Kamerun to be terminated until democratic legislative elections have been held under United Nations supervision, the only guarantee of real independence.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED

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MEMORANDUM OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF KAMERUN STUDENTS (NIGERIA)
TO THE RE-CONVENED SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE UNO MEETING ON 20TH FEBRUARY, 1959 TO
TAKE A FINAL DECISION ON THE QUESTION
OF KAMERUN REUNIFICATION. 1/

Through the President
To the Members of the
U.N. General Assembly,
New York.

Dear Sir,

You are no doubt aware of the grave issues that have warranted the meeting of this reconvened Session of the General Assembly. The National Union of Kamerun Students (Nigeria) wishes in this memorandum to present to you a clear picture of the situation in our country, so that you can be in a better position to take a firm decision in support of Kamerun nationalism and Kamerun reunification and independence.

I. THE HISTORY OF THE STRUGGLE HITHERTO.

The recorded history of Kamerun starts from the year 470 B.C. when the Cathagenian explorer, Hanno, made the first foreign contact with our people and described the Kamerun Mountain as "The on Ochena" which means "Chariot of Fire". In the 15th century a member of European countries established trade relations with our country. The chief of them was Portugal and the present name of our country is derived from the Portuguese word for our main river, "Rio das Camaroes" or the Wouri, as it is more popularly known now. On 12th July 1884 the two great Kings of Kamerun, Akwa and Bell, signed a protectorate treaty for 30 years with Germany on friendly and mutually advantageous terms. This turned out, however, to be oppressed colonialism and the Kamerun people under their reputed Kings resolved not to renew the contract when it should expire on 12th July 1914. Unfortunately the first world war, involving Germany, broke out just before the expiring date. At the close of the war Germany was defeated. Britain and France, who were the immediate colonial neighbours of Germany in Kamerun, then calmly divided our

1/ This memorandum was received by the Secretariat as an enclosure to the letter reproduced above.

country between themselves as a war booty for colonial exploitation. Because of their then influence in world affairs they got the league of Nations during the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 to endorse this. The division was and is arbitrary and an imposition. It has broken up tribes and families in a manner which is more pronouncedly unmerciful than it is anywhere else in West Africa. It is artificial and prejudicial to the Kamerun people. It has arrested the free development of our indigenous culture and is trying to negate the course of history traced and established for us through a rich heritage. It is maintained in despite of topographical and geographical realities. It militates strongly against the linguistic interests, the social advancement and the economic emancipation of our people.

For 12 years since 1947 Kamerun people have been struggling for the reunion of their country. In the Southern British Cameroons the Kamerun United National Congress, which later became the Kamerun National Congress (KNC) advocated reunification of the two sectors of Kamerun until Dr. Endeley came to power, when its leaders revised their political doctrine and began to advocate integration into Nigeria. This marked the birth of the KNDP that factor of the KNC that wanted to continue the struggle for reunification of their country. The K.N.C. recently found an ally in the Kamerun Peoples Party (KPP) the party that had always opposed the idea of reunification. The Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP), on the other hand, has continued faithfully to champion the cause of reunification, and also recently found an ally in the One Kamerun Party (O.K.) At present, though the masses, the students, the intelligentsia, and the workers desire reunification, the political parties are still divided into the two afore-mentioned hostile camps. In the Northern British Cameroons any move to establish a movement that may agitate for reunification, is alertly throttled and the British Government in cooperation with the Northern Nigerian Government continue to keep the masses completely ignorant of the political problems at stake and to work slowly for annexation. The movement that championed the cause in the French Cameroons, the Union of the Populations of the Cameroons (U.P.C.) was banned by the imperial power in 1955 and its leaders forced to go underground. Those of its leaders who crossed to the British Cameroons to be able to work more overtly were in 1957, in colonial solidarity with France, deported by the British authorities and

are now obliged to reside in different countries abroad. The situation in the French Cameroons is still marked by instability, insecurity, repression, and the refusal to allow the return of the U.P.C. to legality.

This is the state of affairs in both sectors of Kamerun while the reconvened session of the U.N. General Assembly is sitting to take a final decision on the reunification of the country. With this state of affairs, it is not enough for the U.N. merely to approve reunification. Care must be taken to see that peace and any cause of probable future disruption are removed. The U.N. must ensure that Reunification is achieved in an atmosphere of calm and tranquility and of brotherly feeling among Kamerunians themselves. This cannot be when certain sections of the people are repressed for democratic political activities, shut up in prisons, forced to go underground or obliged to remain in exile, or while certain political parties are refused the liberty to practice in legality and full freedom. We believe that in a democratic set up, the vote and not the bayone should be the weapon of combat, and wish you in the next two chapters to understand the stand of Kamerun people everywhere and what they consider to be the indispensable conditions that can guarantee a lasting solution.

II. THE STAND OF KAMERUN PEOPLE EVERYWHERE

The manner in which the National Union of Kamerun Students (Nigeria) sees the entire political situation at home, which is also the way most Kamerun people everywhere see it, is clearly indicated in the Resolution (approved at the end of this memorandum) that was unanimously adopted at the first congress of the Union recently held at the University College, Ibadan, NIGERIA. The Resolution depicts the situation as it exists at present in all the three administrative units of Kamerun and calls upon the reconvened Session of the General Assembly to take concrete adequate measures (towards a solution) which we now wish to amplify.

III. SOLUTION CERTAIN TO GUARANTEE LASTING PEACE AND SATISFACTION

The National Union of Kamerun Students (NIGERIA) wishes, Sir, to emphasize that in calling upon YOU to support a solution to the Kamerun problem along the following lines, it not only believes that it is the manner of solution which is certain to guarantee lasting peace, stability and satisfaction, but also that it is the most rational and the most democratic.

/...

We believe

(1) that the present reconvened session of the General Assembly should see to the immediate re-establishment of all and full political liberties in Kamerun, particularly in the French Cameroons and in the Northern British Cameroons through

- (a) guaranteeing freedom of movement and assembly everywhere
- (b) the propagating by anyone of his own political programme without hindrance
- (c) the reinstatement of banned political organizations
- (d) the freeing of all political prisoners and return of political exiles
- (e) guaranteeing freedom of the press for nationalist organization as well as for other bodies.

We believe that unless this is done any plebiscite will be like that which was conducted by the French Government in French Togoland which falsely showed that an overwhelming percentage of the people desired integration into the French Union under Prime Minister Grunitiley. The French and present French Cameroonian Governments have always argued that the U.P.C. for example was very unrepresentative. We see no reason then why they should fear its working in the open and in legality. We believe that if any section of the Kamerun people are to be given a political defeat, they should be given it democratically and in fair play, so that they can receive it with a spirit of sportsmanship, which will guarantee cooperation, peace and tranquility.

(2) That the present reconvened session of the General Assembly should see to the organization, and supervision of a general referendum throughout the three administrative divisions of Kamerun on the question of reunification, that in doing this the following point should be observed

- (a) The referendum should be held not earlier than 1st of June, i.e. at least three months after the establishment of full political liberties, and not later than the 30th of June this year.
- (b) Only persons of Kamerun origin, that is by birth and nationality be allowed to vote.
- (c) Arrangements be made for Kamerunians resident in the neighbouring West African countries like Nigeria, Gabon, Chad and in Europe, America and India etc. to vote.

/...

(d) No restrictions other than the lower age limit of 18 should debar any Kamerunian from voting.

(e) The interpretation of the results of the referendum with regard to the wishes for each of the three administrative units of Southern British Cameroons, Northern British Cameroons and French Cameroons should be left to the United Nations.

(3) that the present reconvened session of the General Assembly should empower its Commission that will organize and conduct the referendum in June, to remain in the Territory immediately after the referendum to organize and conduct a general election not later than 1st November throughout the territories that shall have opted to reunify for a Constituent Assembly that would have the right to establish the governmental organs of a reunified Kamerun and to declare the independence of the Country on 1st January, 1960.

We have no doubt Sir, that you are aware of the gravity of the problem that has warranted the reconvening of a session of the General Assembly. The subject is fraught with many implications, but it is our hope that you shall view it with all objectivity. You realize that the souls, lives and happiness of millions of people are at stake. It is our hope that you will set about your task with a sense of responsibility and a non-partisan spirit.

THANK YOU.

NATIONAL UNION OF KAMERUN STUDENTS (NIGERIA)

ILLEGIBLE NASAH

President

ILLEGIBLE

Secretary Ngwang

Other Members

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. KUTH TUBONG | 8. ILLEGIBLE |
| 2. HAAGBOR | 9. ILLEGIBLE |
| 3. ILLEGIBLE | 10. ILLEGIBLE |
| 4. ILLEGIBLE | 11. ILLEGIBLE |
| 5. ILLEGIBLE | 12. ILLEGIBLE |
| 6. ILLEGIBLE | 13. ILLEGIBLE NCHINDA |
| 7. S. NENG | 14. |

/...

RESOLUTION UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED BY THE FIRST CONGRESS OF THE
NATIONAL UNION OF KAMERUN STUDENTS (NIGERIA), held at the
University College, Ibadan, Nigeria on
Sunday 1st Feb. 1959 2/

The National Union of Kamerun Students (NIGERIA), having made a careful study of the political situation in both sectors of Kamerun, has come to the following conclusions:

- I. That the masses of the people on either side of the frontier are solidly in favour of Unification and Independence.
- II. That in the Sector under British Administration
 - (a) In the South
 - (i) the K.N.C. was voted into power in 1954 because it advocated reunification of Kameruns
 - (ii) the said party and its ally the K.P.P. which formed the Government of the Territory up to 24th Jan. this year when new elections were held, have been rejected by the masses at the polls for supporting integration with Nigeria.
 - (iii) the KNDP that favours reunification, with its ally the O.K. has been voted to power on that ticket
 - (iv) Of the 137,174 votes cast at the elections 75,326 were cast for the candidates who stood for reunification i.e. the KNDP candidates and 51,425 for those who stood for integration i.e. the KNC/KPP alliance while 10,423 went to independents
 - (v) most of the areas and people who voted for the integrationist candidates are areas and people we personally known to be pro-reunification, and to have voted those candidates for their personal considerations rather than for their integrationist ideology
 - (vi) most of the victorious KNDP candidates are people who neither are wealthy nor have made any particular mark in public life, and therefore people who were voted merely because of the political ideology of their party

(b) In the North

- (i) there is not the slightest measure of political autonomy
- (ii) the territory has been artfully annexed to Northern Nigeria in everything but name.
- (iii) the masses rose in 1953 to a popular demand lead by the Kamerun Socialist Convention to secede from Nigeria but the Administering Authority swiftly damped down on them by deposing the Emirs and leaders who were the rallying point of their aspiration (the deposition of the Emir of Dikwa is a case in point)
- (iv) the Emirs and traditional leaders of Northern Kamerun have been purposely vested with power of death sentence in judicial verdicts
- (v) the hand picked pro-Nigerian Emirs hold out these powers to menace any attempts of articulating political opinion that is not in favour of the goals of the Administering Authority.

III. That in the Sector under French Administration

- (i) both Government and the Administering Authority have openly declared in the United Nations to be in favour of the reunification and independence of Kamerun
- (ii) they have asked for a plebiscite for reunification before 1st Jan., 1960 the date of independence.
- (iii) the same government in accord with the administering authority does not want elections before Independence as prescribed by the Trusteeship agreement and the Charter of the United Nations.
- (iv) the present situation in the Sector, however, remains characterized by
 - the absence of fundamental liberties
 - the banning of popular political movements (like: the U.P.C., J.D.C., and UDEFEC).
 - and increasing repression which daily causes suffering to innumerable families since 1955.
- (v) nothing durable or worthwhile can be envisaged or realized in Kamerun while a section of the population is in exile, driven underground, or languishing in jail and while popular political movements remain under ban,

THE UNION THEREFORE

1. Demand

(a) the immediate return to normal political life in the country by

- And end to military and judiciary repression
- the proclamation of a total and unconditional amnesty
- the legalizing of the banned nationalist movements
- the establishment of all public liberties

(b) the organization in the Sector under French Administration of a Week for National Reconciliation in order that the advent of Independence will be in an atmosphere of enthusiasm and unity.

2. Call on all Kamerun peoples, all political parties, all trade unions, all traditional Associations, and all moral and spiritual forces in the country to help the students to make this week a complete success.

3. Note with pleasure the steadfastness of the KNDP and One Kamerun Party to the cause of reunification and call on them and all other persons or groups who believe in reunification to form a UNITED FRONT in this struggle.

4. Congratulate the U.P.C., the J.D.C., the UDEFEC for their intransigent struggle for reunification and independence, which has now produced promising results.

5. Approves the decision of the All-African Peoples Conference held in Accra that 20th February, 1959 be observed all over Africa as KAMERUN DAY

6. Note with satisfaction the declaration of the Nigerian delegates at the said All-African Peoples Conference, in which they disclaimed any responsibility for the deportation of Kamerun leaders and supported the struggle of Kamerun people for national unity and independence.

Call on them to take steps to have the deportation orders revoked and to express their complete solidarity with the Kamerun people by all means at their disposal on February 20th 1959 in their struggle for self-determination.

7. Call on all Kamerun Students Organization to call a Pan-Kamerun Conference as soon as possible after the return to normal political life in both territories to discuss and examine the national problems involved in the reunification of the two sectors

8. Call on the reconvened Session of the U.N. General Assembly holding on 20th February 1959 to appoint a special Commission.

(a) to conduct in both territories before 30 June 1959 a plebiscite on the problem of reunification

(b) after the plebiscite to conduct elections in both territories to a Constituent Assembly before November 1959, which will constitute the first Parliament of a reunified Kamerun and will have the right to declare the independence of Kamerun on 1st January 1960.

(c) to see that the plebiscite and the elections are completely supervised at every stage by its members

Call on the reconvened session of the U.N. General Assembly to take all necessary steps to ensure that normal political life is established in Northern Cameroon and in particular to ensure that campaigns by all Kamerun political parties for the plebiscite and for the elections are conducted in a free atmosphere.
