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PETITIONS CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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I. Petition from the "Comité de base" of the UPC at Makondo (T/PET.5/363)
dated 10 November 1954

1. The petitioners express their support of Mr. Um Nyobe and protest against the political activities of the clergy, in particular those of the Sanaga Maritime region.
2. The petitioners declare that on 12 October 1954, the Catholic Mission at Edéa announced in all the Catholic churches of the region that "any catechist who is found to belong to the UPC will be dismissed from the catechism service and will have to give up the medal of his rank". Further that "any Catholic who joins the UPC shall no longer be entitled to the Catholic sacraments because he will have joined another faith". And that "any catechist or Christian belonging to the UPC who receives a Sacrament by trickery and without the knowledge of the priest must realize at once that he has unworthily received the Sacrament".
3. The petitioners protest against the fact that members of the clergy have forced some people to sign blank papers which they later fill in with contents unknown to the signers.
4. The observations of the Administering Authority concerning this petition are contained in T/OBS.5/52, section 1 and will be included in the draft report of the Standing Committee.

II. Petition from the "Comité de base" of the UPC at Mboue-Edea (T/PET.5/364)
undated

1. The petitioners express their support for Mr. Um Nyobe and complain of general conditions in the Territory, claiming that there are more than 500,000 unemployed in the towns of the Cameroons whose families are maltreated and receive no assistance; that pupils are dismissed from schools; that only members of ESOCAM are able to purchase a gun or become Government employees; that members of the UPC and the CGT are unlawfully arrested and that persons who submit claims or petitions are brought to court and sentenced.
2. The petitioners complain further that the Catholic Mission interferes in politics and say that "in 1945 the Catholic Mission shot more than 30 persons and did not carry out any mission work at all".

3. During the elections for the Territorial Assembly in June 1951, the Catholic Mission is said to have threatened to excommunicate those who did not vote for their candidate. Later in the same year the Catholic Mission "taught its Christians that it is no longer allowable for a Christian to attend political meetings in defence of his interests". The petitioners also protest that Father Aibi of Edéa forced members of his congregation to sign blank forms "which he will fill in and send to ATCAM for a loan, so that the officials of the Catholic Missions can be well paid and so that the Catholic school children will no longer pay for their lessons".
4. The petitioners charge that in spite of the obligations which devolve upon the Administering Authority under the Trusteeship agreement and the Charter, the people of the Trust Territory have not been taught concerning the United Nations Charter either in schools or in the Churches. Instead, they say, the Administering Authority has been "rigging the election of Deputies in order to make sure that although there are Deputies, Senators, Councillors, Delegates, etc. in the Cameroons, there are no longer any indigenous inhabitants among these categories".
5. The Administration is also charged with alienating land from the indigenous inhabitants, particularly through the activities of the Department of Woods and Forests.
6. The petitioners then go on to record their dissatisfaction with the alienation of the British Cameroons and with the fact that the Territory is a part of the French Union and that the Council of the French Union no longer has "adequate Councillors or members of the indigenous population of the Cameroons elected publicly without political interference".
7. With respect to agriculture, they complain that Europeans are taking advantage of the growers by telling them that their cocoa is of poor quality.
8. The observations of the Administering Authority concerning this petition are contained in T/OBS.5/52, section 2, and will be included in the draft report of the Standing Committee.]

III. Petition from Miss Annette Eleanore Biyaga (T/PET.5/368) dated 10 November 1954

1. The petitioner complains that only two hospitals exist in the Territory - one for Europeans, the other for Africans. She states while European women receive complete bedding in their delivery room, African women receive little or no bedding at all. She complains further that no kindergartens exist beyond Douala itself and that "a hundred kilometers away there is not even a school. Infant Mortality is rife because of the midwives."

2. She complains that a petition signed by forty-eight women was seized by the authorities at the UPC headquarters. [This presumably refers to the search of the UPC Headquarters in Douala on 5 November complained of in T/PET.5/351 and numerous other petitions.]

[3. The observations of the Administering Authority concerning this petition are contained in T/OBS.5/52, section 4, and will be included in the draft report of the Standing Committee.]

IV. Petition from the Committee of the UPC at Bouassom (T/PET.5/378) dated 21 November 1954

1. In a cable, dated 21 November 1954, the petitioners protest that UPC members at Bouassom were arrested by Chief Akama with the connivance of the local administration. The petitioners declare that the persons arrested were detained for thirteen hours without food and that the reason for their arrest was not known.

[2. The observations of the Administering Authority concerning this petition are contained in T/OBS.5/53, section 1, and will be included in the draft report of the Standing Committee.]

V. Petition from the Secretary-General of the Central Committee of the UPC, Mbalmayo (T/PET.5/383) dated 14 November 1954

1. The petitioner, whose request for a hearing was granted by the Fourth Committee at the ninth session of the General Assembly, complains that the cable informing him of the date of his hearing did not reach him in time to make the necessary preparations and he attributes this delay to the Mbalmayo post office.

2. The petitioner protests against the fact that the Administration forbade the population to contribute towards the cost of his journey to New York. He encloses a copy of a memorandum from the chef de subdivision in which it is stated that certain unauthorized persons are making collections in the subdivision and that the persons concerned do not hesitate to intimidate the villagers in order to obtain the money. The memorandum prohibits any collection unless authorized.

3. As he was not heard before the General Assembly he now requests a hearing before the Trusteeship Council at its next session. This request has already been rejected by the Trusteeship Council, which decided instead at its 565th meeting on 27 January 1955, to inform the petitioner that he could present his complaints to the forthcoming Visiting Mission. It may be also noted that Mr. Nkondou has by a letter dated 15 March 1954 (T/COM.5/L.100) requested the Council to reconsider that decision.

4. The petitioner also writes of the difficult position of the indigenous planters as a result of a slump in cocoa during the main selling season. He asks the Trusteeship Council to take action to ensure that the cocoa is paid for at prevailing world prices or, if this is not practicable, he suggests that a rebate should be put aside in the form of a fund for the benefit of planters who wish to obtain agricultural machinery. He also asks that the premiums for quality produce amounting to 8 francs a kilo, which he complains are never paid or are paid only at the whim of the services concerned, should be paid in full to the planters entitled to them.

/5. The observations of the Administering Authority concerning this petition are contained in T/OBS.5/53, section 2, and will be included in the draft report of the Standing Committee.]

VI. Petition from the "Union democratique des femmes camerounaises du centre de Loum" (T/PET.5/384) dated 19 November 1954

1. The petitioners claim that the only official school in Loum is not satisfactory and that the only dispensary, which is frequently without adequate supplies, is in the charge of a male nurse who is totally lacking in the knowledge of medicine. Moreover, the children of the surrounding villages, such as Balondo, Babong, Bonalebe, Bwanibwa etc., receive no schooling whatsoever. These villages are also without any medical facilities and there are no roads leading from one village to another.

/2. The observations of the Administering Authority concerning this petition are contained in T/OBS.5/53, section 3, and will be included in the draft report of the Standing Committee.]
