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Chairman: Mr. Frederick H. BOLAND (Ireland).

AGENDA ITEM 13

The future of the Trust Territories of the Cameroons under French administration and the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration: special report of the Trusteeship Council* (A/4092, A/4093/Rev.1, A/4094, A/C.4/395, T/SR.953-963) (continued)

HEARING OF PETITIONERS (continued)

At the invitation of the Chairman, the petitioners took places at the Committee table.

1. Mr. Joseph AMOUHOU (Confédération générale du Travail-Force ouvrière) said that the organization he represented, whose views coincided with those of the immense majority of Cameroonians, was waging a relentless struggle against colonialism and dictatorship and for the right of the Cameroons to self-determination. The Cameroons had originally been occupied by the Germans and had then been arbitrarily partitioned by the League of Nations; it had only become aware of its national character at the end of the Second World War. In 1948 the Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC) and many other movements had been set up with the common aim of achieving unity and reunification, the only difference between them being the methods they advocated.

2. As regards independence, the great majority of Cameroonians asked that it should be proclaimed on 1 January 1960. The only people to hold any other view were those who attached greater importance to personal interest than to the interests of the country and who believed that without them the Cameroonian nation would not exist.

3. As regards reunification, Cameroonians under French administration could not believe that Nigeria wished to separate their brothers from them. They had been satisfied with the success of Mr. Foncha in the elections in the Southern Cameroons. They held that reunification should not be stipulated as a preliminary condition to independence. They requested the United Kingdom to give independence to the part of the country it administered on the same day that the rest of the

*In accordance with General Assembly resolution 1281 (XIII).

country obtained it. The Cameroonian State would choose its own régime and would itself settle the question of official languages.

4. He expressed satisfaction at the adoption of the amnesty law on 14 February 1959,^{1/} which should allow for national reconciliation and the return of exiles.

5. In paragraph 128 of its report on the Cameroons under French administration (T/1427 and T/1434^{2/}) the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, had named the Force Ouvrière among the movements which called for the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly and the holding of new elections. The Force Ouvrière did in fact think it essential to find suitable replacements for the elected members from Sanaga-Maritime who had been assassinated. As the Government had, however, decided that by-elections would be held in the area on 12 April, after the preparation of new electoral lists, there was no further reason for holding new general elections.

6. He called upon the United Nations to grant the Cameroons complete and effective independence unconditionally, to terminate the trusteeship and to reunify the two parts of the country on 1 January 1960.

7. Mr. Magnus MUKOKO-MOKEBA (Kamerun Students Association in America) thought that the time had come to desist from controversy about the tragic events and the political and administrative mistakes of the past. The Association he represented wished to express its thanks to the United Kingdom and France for their trusteeship and to the United Nations Trusteeship Council for overseeing the administration of the country; it requested, however, that in order to fulfil the desires of the Cameroonian people and to respect the Charter, the Fourth Committee should take decisions such as to accomplish definite objectives.

8. First, the whole nation should become completely independent. After freedom had been attained the nation must start to develop an "African personality". Foreign domination had been a great impediment to social, educational and cultural advancement of many countries in Africa. It must be remembered that any eagerness displayed by France or the United Kingdom to grant independence was motivated by the desire to absorb the two sectors of the country into the French Community and the British Commonwealth. Cameroonians, wherever they might be, should be on their guard against such manoeuvres by imperialists who had not given up their policy of dominating the peoples of Africa.

9. Secondly, the different sectors of the Cameroons should be united to form a healthy and prosperous nation. The different parts had always formed a single cultural and religious entity. Some of the major dialects

^{1/} See A/C.4/395.

^{2/} Transmitted to Members of the General Assembly by a note of the Secretary-General (A/4092).

of the Cameroons were commonly spoken in both sectors. Inter-marriage between the people of the two sectors was common. The current political boundary between them offered little resistance to the movement of the people to and fro. There was a reasonable volume of trade between the sectors notwithstanding the tariff barriers. In remote areas there were still some people who had failed to perceive the fact that their country had been divided into British and French spheres. The fact that French on one side, and English on the other, were the media of instruction in the schools was not an obstacle likely to stand in the way of early reunification because for the moment only about 20 per cent of the people were literate. With efficient administration the people would be taught both languages since there would be compulsory education. The United Nations must therefore organize and supervise a plebiscite in the two Trust Territories to ascertain the desires of the people. For that purpose all banned political parties should be recalled and legalized. The elections should take place separately in the Northern and the Southern Cameroons under British administration so that the two areas could take a decision regarding integration with Nigeria or secession from that country and reunion with the area under French administration.

10. Thirdly, in the Cameroons under French administration, fresh elections should be held before independence as the preceding elections had been held under military pressure.

11. He called upon the community of nations to help the Cameroons liberate itself from foreign domination and set up a modern State free of bonds likely to compromise its sovereignty and capable of contributing to the maintenance of peace and security in the world.

12. In reply to Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France), Mr. MUKOKO-MOKEBA (Kamerun Students Association in America) said that there were seven Cameroonian students in the United States and that he himself was studying at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

13. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France) asked the petitioner when he had left the Cameroons.

14. Mr. MUKOKO-MOKEBA (Kamerun Students Association in America) said that with the Committee's permission he would not reply to that question.

15. Miss BROOKS (Liberia) noted that the petitioner had requested further elections in the Cameroons under French administration before independence but only after all banned political parties had once more been legalized. If the general amnesty which had been announced was put into effect was there any reason why all the political parties should not be authorized to reconstitute themselves? If the political parties were not authorized, she asked whether the petitioner would prefer independence to be postponed until after 1 January 1960.

16. Mr. MUKOKO-MOKEBA (Kamerun Students Association in America) said that he would reply at a later stage to the question put by the representative of Liberia.

17. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) noted that the petitioner had requested the United Nations to organize a plebiscite in the Cameroons under French administration on the subject of the reunification of the two Camer-

oons. He believed that there were no divergencies of views on that point in that Territory.

18. Mr. MUKOKO-MOKEBA (Kamerun Students Association in America) said that if the General Assembly was absolutely certain that the Cameroons under French administration desired unification, that would give him great pleasure and the task would as a result be lightened, but he doubted whether the Committee was really convinced of the fact.

19. Mr. SOPIEE (Federation of Malaya) noted that the petitioner had said that after freedom had been attained the nation must start to develop an "African personality", and that foreign domination had been a great impediment to social, educational and cultural advancement of many African countries. The petitioner also suggested that language was no obstacle to unification of the Cameroons under French administration and the Cameroons under British administration as both languages—English and French—would be taught under a compulsory system of education. Should it be concluded that he envisaged the achievement of unification through the teaching of English and French to all? How did that fit in with what the petitioner had said about the development of an "African personality" and the effects of foreign domination on African society, education and culture?

20. Mr. DE MARCHENA (Dominican Republic) asked what the Kamerun Students Association in America understood by "African personality".

21. Mr. MUKOKO-MOKEBA (Kamerun Students Association in America) said that by Africans with an "African personality" he meant Africans who were proud of their race and capable of being masters of their own fate. By developing such a personality, Africans would outgrow the feeling born of foreign domination that they were primitive and inferior.

22. As regards the question of official languages, he did not believe that a knowledge of English and French, the literatures of which were so rich, would jeopardize the development of an African personality.

23. Mr. Félix Roland MOUMIE (Union des populations du Cameroun) said that the problem of the Cameroons was a test for the International Trusteeship System. Its solution, on which the peace of Africa depended, would set a pattern for all the other African countries under trusteeship. It could be said that there were two mutually exclusive solutions of the problem of the Cameroons, one in accordance with the principle of self-determination and another which would attach more importance to selfish motives than to the higher interests of the population as a whole.

24. The UPC had always kept out of personal quarrels and was prompted only by a desire to serve the Cameroonian people. Even its opponents had recognized its disinterestedness and the political honesty with which it had always acted.

25. No one could challenge the United Nations' right to supervise developments in the Cameroons, and the Prime Minister of the Cameroons under French administration, Mr. Ahidjo, himself had recognized that the United Nations General Assembly alone was qualified to confirm a country's wishes and to declare the termination of a trusteeship. As the Trusteeship Council and the Visiting Missions were bodies acting under the authority of the General Assembly, it was impossi-

ble to maintain that the General Assembly had no right to alter their decisions and recommendations. Lastly, as long as the Trusteeship Agreements between the United Nations and the Administering Authorities remained in force, it was the duty of the United Nations to satisfy itself that the purposes and principles of the Charter were being respected in the Territory concerned. The hearings it granted to inhabitants of the Territories concerned were one of the means the Assembly could adopt to ensure that the purposes of the Charter were being carried out.

26. Two sovereign States could decide to unite without requesting the approval of the United Nations; but, in view of the manoeuvres of certain Powers to prevent the admission of Guinea to the United Nations, most Cameroonians feared that until the Cameroons had genuinely representative bodies, it would be in danger of being integrated willy-nilly into the French Community, whose members did not enjoy complete equality.

27. With regard to the representative character of the UPC, even its bitterest enemies recognized that it was by far the most representative organization in the Cameroons. It was precisely because of its popularity that it had been dissolved. Colonial history proved that only strong parties were dissolved by administering Powers. In a confidential letter to Mr. Pierre Messmer, the French High Commissioner in the Cameroons at the time of the elections of 23 December 1956, Mr. Gaston Defferre, who had then been Minister for Overseas France, had stated that the French authorities' principal aim was to split the UPC so as to prevent it from winning the election.

28. The reports of the last Visiting Mission (T/1426 and Add.1^{2/}, T/1427 and T/1434^{3/}) had now been made public. The French Press had noted that those reports were extremely flattering to the present Cameroonian Government and to France. However, it should be noted that in making two separate reports on the Cameroons, the Visiting Mission gave the impression that the artificial division of the Territory was an accomplished fact. By proposing that the Northern Cameroons should become part of Northern Nigeria, without prior consultation of the people, the Visiting Mission had exceeded its powers and acted contrary to Article 76 b of the Charter; in fact, the Mission had been requested to consider what method of consultation should be adopted, and Article 76 b provided that the wishes of the people concerned should be ascertained before any solution of the kind proposed was adopted. That had been done in Togoland and there was no reason why it should not be done in the Cameroons.

29. The UPC welcomed the Administering Authority's statements regarding the amnesty law. The UPC had expressed its desire for reconciliation long before 1959, but the desire for reconciliation should be expressed in deeds, and the amnesty should therefore be general. However, the committee which was to consider the kind of offences committed by the persons coming under the amnesty law would be composed of magistrates and various public figures; but as there were no Cameroonians in the judiciary body, that meant that the committee would remain under French authority. Moreover, the decree dissolving certain parties

would not be repealed, so that a person who had been amnestied might be arrested and sentenced immediately afterwards for reorganizing a party that had been dissolved. The amnesty must be complete and unconditional, as the senior member of the Cameroons Legislative Assembly had urged in that Assembly on 14 October 1958.

30. It was necessary to hold new elections for several reasons. First, the present Assembly had been elected for the sole purpose of discussing the draft Statute of the Cameroons with the Government of the French Republic. Secondly, the elections of 23 December 1956 did not reflect the will of the people. They had been held in an unhealthy social and political atmosphere and Mr. Defferre himself had stated that they could not be considered to reflect the will of the people unless an amnesty was first granted; but the amnesty law had not been promulgated. Moreover, the official figures for the results of the elections and for the participation of the electorate were far from correct. There had been many more abstentions than those given in the official figures and the action of the UPC had not been restricted to Sanaga-Maritime only. Thirdly, it could not be argued that, because the present Assembly had been elected for five years, no new elections could be held before the end of its term of office. Indeed, in other African territories, the people had been consulted merely to end a cabinet crisis. At all events, Mr. Kemajou, the President of the Cameroons Legislative Assembly, did not rule out that possibility, as he had stated at the Committee's 846th meeting that the time had come for Cameroonians who had resigned themselves to exile once more to take up the burden of their responsibilities for the progress of the Cameroons. Fourthly, elections were necessary if the Cameroonian Assembly was to be really Cameroonian. There were seven French representatives in the present Assembly. Were those French representatives to be allowed to draw up a constitution for a country which was not their own? Lastly, as Sir Andrew Cohen, in speaking of Togoland under French administration, had said to the Committee at its 705th meeting, held during the twelfth session of the General Assembly, elections held on the basis of universal suffrage and with outside observers would produce an Assembly whose representative character could not be questioned.

31. If it was dealt with in an irresponsible manner, the situation in the Cameroons might grow worse and threaten the peace of the whole of Africa. What the Cameroonian people wanted was a sincere reconciliation. For the good of his country, he himself was willing to meet Mr. Ahidjo and explore all possible ways of achieving a genuine slackening of tension in the Cameroons.

32. Miss BROOKS (Liberia) asked what percentage of the population of the Cameroons had been supporters of the UPC at the time of its dissolution. She also asked what the UPC's programme was and what date it would set for the achievement of independence if it came into power as the result of elections.

33. Mr. MOUMIE (Union des populations du Cameroun) replied that before its dissolution the UPC had been by far the most representative political organization in the country. Its purpose was to strive for the independence and unification of the Cameroons and to promote the welfare of the population. If it came into

^{2/} Transmitted to Members of the General Assembly by a note of the Secretary-General (A/4092).

^{3/} Transmitted to Members of the General Assembly by a note of the Secretary-General (A/4093/Rev.1).

power as the result of elections, it might be inclined to consider that independence should be achieved earlier than 1 January 1960.

34. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France) asked how Mr. Moumié had come to know about the confidential letter he had mentioned in his statement.

35. Mr. MOUMIE (Union des populations du Cameroun) said that he preferred not to reveal the source of his information but the letter had been published in several French and Cameroonian newspapers, which had not been prosecuted. The information could therefore be taken as accurate.

36. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France) asked in what newspapers the letter had been published.

37. Mr. MOUMIE (Union des populations du Cameroun) said he could not give the names of all the newspapers in which it had appeared. The letter had been published in the Cameroons about the middle of 1956.

38. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France) pointed out that the bad French in which the letter was written and the stupidity of its contents were such that it could not have been written by Mr. Defferre.

39. Mr. MAGHERU (Romania) asked what Mr. Ahidjo's attitude was to the talks proposed by Mr. Moumié.

40. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France) said that he would transmit the Romanian representative's question to Mr. Ahidjo.

41. Mr. VIDIC (Yugoslavia) asked what would be discussed during the proposed talks between Mr. Ahidjo and Mr. Moumié.

42. Mr. MOUMIE (Union des populations du Cameroun) said he preferred not to reveal his intentions until his proposal had been accepted.

43. Mr. MUFTI (United Arab Republic), referring to Mr. Moumié's statement that the present Legislative Assembly had been elected for the sole purpose of discussing the draft Statute of the Cameroons, asked whether that statement was not corroborated by article 2 of the Decree of 16 April 1957.^{4/}

44. Mr. MOUMIE (Union des populations du Cameroun) reserved the right to answer that question the following day.

45. Replying to a question from Mr. EL-RIFAI (Jordan), Mr. MOUMIE (Union des populations du Cameroun) said he did not know to how many years of imprisonment he had been sentenced.

46. Mr. NJOYA (France), Minister of State of the Cameroons under French administration, supported by Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France), stated that Mr. Moumié was covered by both the first and the second amnesty laws and was free to return to the Cameroons without interference.

47. Replying to a question from Mr. ALAMI (Morocco), Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France) explained that the Legislative Assembly had decided that the seven French representatives who had been elected on joint lists and not as representatives of the French citizens living in the Cameroons, would sit in the Assembly

until 1 January 1960. After that date, they would no longer have seats in the Assembly.

48. Mr. NJOYA (France) said that the Cameroonian Government did not intend to reduce the membership of the Legislative Assembly. New constituencies had been created, which would mean an increase in the number of representatives, even after the seven French representatives had ceased to be members of the Assembly.

Mr. Michalowski (Poland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

49. Mr. Charles ELLE MBOUTOU (Union sociale camerounaise) said that his organization was one of the most representative political parties in the Cameroons. It was represented in the Legislative Assembly, its General Secretary was a member of the Government and its members were in the majority in many municipal councils. It was glad to note that the political development programme for the Cameroons—with independence as the goal, to be attained in progressive stages of self-government—which its General Secretary had outlined to the United Nations on 17 December 1952^{5/} had been achieved point by point. The various stages of self-government which had followed the enactment of the *loi-cadre* of 23 June 1956 had led to the adoption by Mr. Ahidjo's Government of a timetable with 1 January 1960 as the date set for Cameroonian independence and termination of the trusteeship. The people represented by the Union sociale camerounaise were firmly determined to achieve total and unconditional independence on that date. Moreover, it was their earnest desire to see their country, which had been arbitrarily divided after the First World War without regard for the long-established ethnical ties between its peoples, reunified before 1 January 1960. In order to allay the apprehensions of the inhabitants of the Cameroons under British administration, he categorically denied the allegations of certain newspapers that the purpose of unification was to draw them into the French Community. The decision whether or not to belong to any particular political or economic community was one to be taken by the Cameroons itself after it had achieved independence and reunification.

50. With regard to the amnesty, the Union sociale camerounaise at its most recent national congress had asked the Cameroonian authorities to consider without delay the possibility of granting as broad an amnesty as possible to all those who deserved it, in other words, to all those who had acted unwittingly. The Cameroonian Legislative Assembly had complied with that request by adopting the amnesty law, by a substantial majority, on 14 February 1959. That law gave concrete form to the spirit of reconciliation with which every Cameroonian was imbued.

51. The present Assembly would not have fulfilled the terms of the political contract into which it had entered with the inhabitants on 23 December 1956 until independence had been achieved. There could therefore be no question of dissolving the Assembly and holding general elections in the Cameroons in 1959. Moreover, to do so would not be in the interest of the Cameroonians who had left the country in 1955, for they would first have to return to the Cameroons under the generous provisions of the amnesty law, resume their

^{4/} For the text of this Decree, see *Official Records of the Trusteeship Council, Nineteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 3, document T/1314.*

^{5/} See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventh Session, Fourth Committee, 309th meeting.*

activities and plan their campaigns if they wished to be elected to the Assembly.

52. His party's view was not shared by some of the petitioners now in New York—those who had instigated the violent incidents of 1955-1956 because they had not wanted elections: they had known then, as they knew now, that they represented nothing and that the people's verdict would be simply to repudiate their programme. Now that independence was coming without them and in spite of them, they were doing everything they could to delay it.

53. In conclusion, he hoped that the General Assembly would give its blessing to the political, economic and social progress France had brought about in the Cameroons, under United Nations supervision and in conformity with the Trusteeship Agreement; endorse the conclusions concerning the Cameroons under French administration set forth in the report of the Trusteeship Council (A/4094); and vote in favour of total independence for the Cameroons on 1 January 1960.

54. Mr. TOURE (Guinea) was glad to note that all the petitioners agreed that the amnesty law might serve as a basis for reconciliation. Bearing in mind what Mr. Elle Mboutou had said on that subject, he would like to know whether the petitioners now in exile would be able, upon their return to the Cameroons, to participate in the elections as members of the parties which had been dissolved, in other words whether the decree providing for the dissolution of those parties could be revoked by the Government of the independent Cameroons.

55. Mr. BEHLE (France), Minister of Labour of the Cameroons under French administration, said that the Cameroonian Government intended to allow everyone to whom the amnesty law applied the widest latitude to resume normal political activities. He pointed out, however, that the UPC had disintegrated as a political party and that those of its leaders who had remained in the Cameroons had never been able to agree among themselves on a list of candidates for the elections in which they had taken part. That accounted for their defeat. He felt that the question concerning the abrogation of the decree providing for the dissolution of certain parties was pointless.

56. Mr. Philippe MBARGA MANGA (Bureau national kamerunais de la Conférence des peuples africains) said that the Bureau over which he presided, which had been set up immediately after the All-African People's Conference held at Accra in December 1958, was composed of the political, trade-union and traditional progressive movements in the Cameroons which had endorsed the programme laid down at Accra. Under that programme the Bureau national kamerunais had established as its objective the accession of the Cameroons to true independence, which in his opinion implied an unconditional amnesty, the dissolution of the present Assembly and the election, under United Nations supervision, of a constituent assembly.

57. The amnesty law recently adopted by the Legislative Assembly did not meet the unanimous wish of the inhabitants for an unconditional amnesty which would reconcile all Cameroonians before the country achieved independence. The present Assembly, which had been elected to give an opinion on the draft Statute provided for in the *loi-cadre*, should have been dissolved in May 1957. Moreover, during the debate on the Statute, the French Government had rejected every amendment that had been proposed, just as during the

debate on the present Statute providing for internal self-government it had rejected an amendment which would have debarred French citizens from voting or standing for election in the Cameroons. By the Conventions it had concluded with the Cameroonian Government, France had taken back with one hand what it had given with the other in the self-government Statute. Moreover, there were seven French citizens sitting as deputies in the present Assembly; if it were transformed into a constituent assembly, as was contemplated, the seven Frenchmen would take part in drafting the constitution of the independent Cameroons, a most irregular procedure. The reason most of the deputies were opposed to the dissolution of the present Assembly was that they were reluctant to give up the scandalous material benefits they enjoyed, which were ruining the country.

58. All those reasons made the dissolution of the present Assembly and the holding of new elections, under United Nations supervision, imperative; thanks to the amnesty, the supporters of the UPC would be able to take part in the elections and that would be the surest way of finally restoring calm in the country. Moreover, the new elections could not but strengthen the position of those who were re-elected, as had happened in Ghana, where Mr. Nkrumah had not hesitated to arrange for new elections before his country had achieved independence, in spite of the fact that he had already been in power, backed by a substantial majority.

59. In conclusion, he urged the United Nations not to forsake the Cameroonian people on the eve of their independence but to continue to afford them its protection to the end.

60. In reply to questions from Miss BROOKS (Liberia), Mr. MBARGA MANGA (Bureau national kamerunais de la Conférence des peuples africains) said that Frenchmen residing in the Cameroons enjoyed dual French and Cameroonian citizenship, which was not the case for Cameroonians residing in France. The seven French deputies to whom he had referred had been elected to the Territorial Assembly before it had become the Legislative Assembly. While it was quite natural that Frenchmen who lived in the Cameroons should take part in the discussion of the budget, since they were taxpayers, they should certainly not be allowed to participate in drafting the constitution of the independent Cameroons.

61. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France) said that, contrary to what the petitioner had said, Cameroonians residing in France enjoyed absolute reciprocity of rights and would continue to do so until the Cameroons achieved independence. Moreover, from 1 January 1960 onwards there would be no Frenchmen in the Cameroonian Legislative Assembly. The 1956 elections had been by a single college, in other words every Cameroonian had been called upon to vote for candidates, regardless of race. In those elections, which Mr. Mbarga Manga held to have been irregular, he had obtained 5,000 votes and had been defeated by Mr. Mbida, who himself would shortly appear before the Committee as a petitioner.

62. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) said that it was his understanding, contrary to the petitioner's statement, that the sixty amendments to the Statute proposed during the debate in the Legislative Assembly had all been accepted by the French Government.

63. Mr. MBARGA MANGA (Bureau national kamerunais de la Conférence des peuples africains) said that the amendments to the first Statute had been rejected en bloc. He would provide details at the next meeting. In the case of the present Statute, an amendment to exclude Frenchmen residing in the Cameroons from voting or standing for election had been rejected by the French Government.

64. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France) explained that there had in fact been eighteen amendments. Only one had been rejected, in order to ensure reciprocity of rights between Cameroonians and Frenchmen until the present Statute ceased to be in effect.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.