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

AGENDA ITEM 13

Report of the Trusteeship Council (A/3822) (continued)

HEARING OF PETITIONERS (continued)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Félix Roland Mourié, representative of the Union des populations du Cameroun, Mr. Ndeh Ntumazah, representative of One Kamerun, and Mr. Michel Dookingue and Mr. Jean Ngounga, representatives of the Union nationale des étudiants camerounais took places at the Committee table.

1. Mr. NGOUNGA (Union nationale des étudiants camerounais), recalled his description, at the previous meeting, of the measures taken by the Ahidjo Government against members of the Paris Bar. He outlined the circumstances in which Mr. Kaldor, after a statement in which he had denounced the crimes the Administration was causing to be committed in order to justify its propaganda, had been expelled from the Cameroons under French administration and had no recourse available to him, since there was no Bar in the overseas territories. Mr. Kaldor had said that a lawyer could remain in the Cameroons only if he refrained from denouncing the intrigues of the Administration, which in order to make sure that the charges fitted the motives it wished to invoke did not hesitate to vitiate by irregularities both the preliminary investigations and the findings of the courts.

2. Those repressive measures had been applied even in the case of Cameroonian students. After a few months' lull the Ahidjo Government had resumed the practices of the Mbida Government. In support of that statement he gave examples of searches made at students' dwellings and of the arrest and detention of students, providing details of each case and stressing the arbitrary nature of the measures taken. He thought that the aim of the French authorities was to intimidate and silence the two student organizations, the Fédération des étudiants d'Afrique noire en France and the Union nationale des étudiants camerounais, a few days before the arrival in the Territory of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, in order to prevent their telling the truth about the clandestine war being waged by the colonialists. In addition, it was very difficult for Cameroonian students to obtain passports even to return to their country. It frequently happened that those who had received inter-

national scholarships could not travel to the countries which had awarded them, for lack of a passport.

3. At the time when all those repressive measures were being taken against the Cameroonian people, the Ahidjo Government and the High Commissioner of the Cameroons had issued appeals to the members of the maquis calling upon them to return and promising them that outlaws who presented themselves voluntarily to the authorities would not be subject to any reprisals. They had doubtless thought that the "combing out" operations would compel the patriots to come out of the maquis. There could, however, be no serious response to those appeals to return, for several reasons. The first was that the authorities were asking the members of the maquis simply to renounce their political claims. The second reason was that the Ahidjo Government had not the means to guarantee the safety of the outlaws once they returned to their villages, for the maintenance of internal order in the Cameroons was not within its jurisdiction but within that of the High Commissioner as provided in the Decree of 16 April 1957 setting forth the Statute of the Cameroons. Moreover, most of those who had in fact presented themselves to the authorities in order to avoid death were now in concentration camps, despite the assurances given by the High Commissioner; that had been the fate of Mr. Makon Martin, departmental chairman of the Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC). The third reason was that the members of the maquis who responded to the authorities' appeals might be charged with reconstituting dissolved organizations, as had already happened. The fourth reason was that the authorities which had made that appeal were still hunting down those who were suspected of sympathizing with the UPC or who simply did not approve of the régime established under the loi-cadre of 23 June 1956. To approach the problems created by the tragic situation in the Cameroons as did the Ahidjo Government and the High Commissioner of the Cameroons was not indicative of any desire to solve them. The Cameroonian students sincerely believed that it was the obstinate refusal of the authorities to deal with those problems in a suitable manner which had driven them to assassinate Mr. Um Nyobé, General Secretary of the UPC, in September 1958. It would have been more realistic and more honest on the part of the Administration to have made contact with the UPC in order to bring about a real relaxation of tension, inter alia by granting a total and unconditional amnesty.

4. It was true that the French Government had promulgated an amnesty law in the Cameroons under French Administration on 17 February 1958 but it had been a mere caricature of an amnesty. He read the first article of the law and observed that not only did it not cover all acts committed since 1955 but the amnesty it provided was conditional, since prior consultation of an ad hoc commission and of the Cameroonian Government was required. Furthermore, even

if the amnesty law did cover acts committed since 1955, it would still be ineffective, since the Decree of 13 July 1955 dissolving the organizations of the national movement had not been repealed. In sum, what was required was not only a total and unconditional amnesty but also, and above all, the repeal of the decree dissolving the UPC, the Jeunesse démocratique camerounaise (JDC) and the Union démocratique des femmes camerounaises (UDEFEC), or the suspension of its application. That was the desire of the petitioners who had spoken before the Committee, of the Cameroonian traditional associations, of the people of the areas most affected by the repressive measures, especially those of Sanaga-Maritime, and now, even of Mr. Mbida, the former Prime Minister. Similarly the Trusteeship Council, at its twenty-first session, had invited the Administering Authority and the Cameroonian Government to restore normal conditions in the affected areas (A/3822, vol. II, p. 99), and in resolutions 1067 (XI) and 1211 (XII) the General Assembly had recognized the need to restore order in the Cameroons.

5. At that point in his statement he considered it his duty to stress the responsibility of the United Nations in the tragedy which had been enacted in the Cameroons under French Administration for the past three years. The struggle of the Cameroonian people for national unity and immediate independence, as also their resistance to France's wish for integration, were in keeping not only with the natural right of peoples to self-determination but also with the basic objectives of the Trusteeship System as defined in the United Nations Charter. How, then, could the United Nations not be accused of connivance with, or at least indulgence towards, the Administering Authority when the situation just described was but the outcome of the incidents of May 1955 in connexion with which the United Nations had not even asked for a commission of inquiry to be sent to the Cameroons? The United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories of the Cameroons under British Administration and the Cameroons under French Administration, 1955, had been content to endorse the statements of the Administering Authority, and the only action of the Trusteeship Council, to which the Mission had submitted its report on the Territory (T/1231), had been to commend France. The Cameroonian people had been indignant to find that although they had informed the United Nations of their opposition to the loi-cadre and had abstained en masse in the elections of 23 December 1956, the Trusteeship Council had seen fit to congratulate France upon having applied that very loi-cadre in the Cameroons (A/3595 and Corr.1 p. 126).

6. On the other hand, the Cameroonian people had been delighted at the adoption of resolutions 1067 (XI) and 1211 (XII) by the General Assembly and had noted with satisfaction that the Trusteeship Council, in resolution 1907 (XXII), had made it binding on the Visiting Mission which had just left for the Cameroons, to give a hearing to all petitioners who appeared before it. Since, however, no total and unconditional amnesty law had been promulgated and since the decrees dissolving the UPC, the JDC and the UDEFEC had not been rescinded, that resolution was likely to have only a limited effect.

7. He hoped that his statement would have shown the members of the Committee that the French Government had made no start towards giving effect to the recommendations of the United Nations concerning the

restoration of normal political life in the Cameroons, save, perhaps, for the promulgation of the amnesty law, which was of very limited application.

8. Moreover, the present situation in the Cameroons required something more than recommendations. What the Cameroonian people expected was that the United Nations, which had recognized their unanimous determination to secure the reunification and independence of the Cameroons, should require of France the restoration of the dissolved movements to legal status and the immediate application of a total and unconditional amnesty law, and that it should send to the Cameroons during the first six months of 1959 a commission set up by the General Assembly, with a sufficiently large membership and not including any representatives of the colonial Powers, whose task would be to organize a referendum in the two parts of the country on immediate reunification and independence and to organize in the whole of the Cameroons, which would then be unified, elections to a constituent assembly. The Administering Authorities should agree to take no part either in the referendum or in the elections to the constituent assembly. That meant that the police of both the Administering Authorities should be replaced by an international police force, pending the formation of the first Government of the sovereign State of the Cameroons, whose responsibility it would be to request the termination of trusteeship. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the United Nations would take all the steps which were necessary with respect to the Cameroons.

9. Mr. MUFTI (United Arab Republic) said that the statement made by the French representative at the 774th meeting had been particularly interesting because it had given assurances which seemed to be in conformity with the views often expressed by the General Assembly in the past. That fact should not, however, cause the Committee to lose sight of the present situation in the Cameroons under French administration. The petitioners' statements not only included much valuable information but also gave evidence of a constructive attitude and a desire to co-operate with the Administering Authority. As it had been agreed that the full text of the French representative's statement should be circulated, he proposed that the petitioners' statements should in fairness be accorded the same treatment.

10. Mr. ESPINOSA Y PRIETO (Mexico) supported the United Arab Republic's proposal.

11. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France) said that he could not accept the implication in the remarks made by the United Arab Republic representative that the petitioners, who spoke for no more than a minority of the Territory's population at best, should be treated as though they were on a footing of equality with the Administering Authority and the Cameroonian Government. He could agree to the proposal only on the understanding that the petitioners' statements would not be circulated as official United Nations documents. Also, it should be clearly understood that when the Cameroonian Prime Minister arrived neither he nor other members of the French delegation would engage in exchanges with the petitioners.

12. Mr. BOZOVIC (Yugoslavia) said that if the petitioners' statements were circulated only to the Committee rather than being treated as official United

Nations documents, it should be understood that that decision had been dictated by practical considerations and in no way reflected on the status of the petitioners.

13. The CHAIRMAN said that if there were no objections the petitioners' statements would be circulated to the Committee.

It was so decided.

14. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) expressed the hope that the French representative's statement about the Cameroonian Prime Minister did not mean that the latter would be unwilling to be questioned by the Committee.

15. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France) said that, while he could not speak for the Prime Minister in advance of the latter's arrival, he could give assurances that the French delegation would, as in the past, be ready to reply to any questions put to it by the Committee.

16. Mr. BOZOVIC (Yugoslavia) thought that if, after hearing what would doubtless be a significant statement by the Prime Minister on the present promising developments in the Territory, the Committee was to be able to draw up a satisfactory resolution it would need to take into account all relevant opinions. Hence the petitioners should be permitted to make additional statements at that time if they so desired and the Committee should have the right to ask them additional questions.

17. The CHAIRMAN said that the petitioners and the members of the Committee would be free to submit such additional statements or questions if necessary.

Mr. Félix Roland Moumié, representative of the Union des populations du Cameroun, Mr. Ndeh Ntumazah, representative of One Kamerun, and Mr. Michel Dookingue and Mr. Jean Ngounga, representatives of the Union nationale des étudiants camerounais, withdrew.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

18. Mr. ESPINOSA Y PRIETO (Mexico) said that his delegation had always attributed the greatest importance to the Trusteeship System, which was the logical continuation of the Mandates System and constituted one of the outstanding achievements of the United Nations. He could not help feeling that, if the success which had accompanied the Trusteeship System could have been foreseen in 1945, there might not have been any opposition to the suggestion that that system should be applied to all territories that had not achieved self-government. As it was, that success might yet have the effect of persuading Governments to have recourse to Article 77 c of the Charter and voluntarily to place under trusteeship the many territories whose development gave rise to difficulties. The only difference between the Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories lay in the fact that the Powers that had formerly administered the Trust Territories had been defeated in the First World War and that those Territories had consequently come under international control.

19. The system was indeed operating most effectively, with visiting missions, petitioners, hearings of petitioners and answering of questionnaires. What was, however, most impressive was the fact that the Trust Territories were beginning to achieve the main objectives of the system. The former Togoland under British

administration was now part of an independent State. Somaliland under Italian administration, which had to contend with so many drawbacks, would be independent in 1960; indeed, Italy was to be congratulated on the way in which it was carrying out its mission there. The future of Togoland under French administration was to be discussed as a separate item on the agenda. Western Samoa was on the verge of achieving the objectives set out in the Charter. Nevertheless, there remained one outstanding item in the current report of the Trusteeship Council (A/3822)—the question of the Cameroons. The Trusteeship System was disintegrating, not indeed in failure but as a result of the achievement of the goals which had been set. The Fourth Committee, the Trusteeship Council and the Administering Authorities which had led certain Territories to independence might all be justly proud of the contribution they had thus made to the harmony of the world. He understood that the representative of Yugoslavia intended to appeal to the other Administering Authorities for their co-operation also.

20. His own delegation would be in touch with other delegations on the various subjects which always arose in the consideration of the present item: the revision of the Questionnaire; target dates for independence or self-government; scholarships, and, as in the case of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, the question of the effects of the European Common Market.

21. The year had been marked by an important development affecting both Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories in Africa: namely, the establishment of the Economic Commission for Africa. He would refer to that development at greater length when the Committee discussed the Non-Self-Governing Territories and for the moment would merely remark that the setting up of such a body, in which the independent countries of Africa and those which were not yet self-governing would meet, would have seemed impossible five years earlier; it demonstrated the extent to which there was fundamental agreement with regard to the liquidation of colonialism.

22. He wished to draw particular attention to volume I, part I, chapter VI, of the report of the Trusteeship Council, which dealt with the rural economic development of the Trust Territories and which had been prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1208 (XII), of which his delegation had been one of the sponsors. Nothing could give a better idea of a country than knowledge of its land and land-tenure system. Indeed, the all-important question for the Committee was to learn how the indigenous inhabitants of the Trust Territories were treated in the matter of the distribution of land. The present report concentrated upon two Territories, Ruanda-Urundi and New Guinea, and in both cases it was reassuring. The Administration of Ruanda-Urundi was to be congratulated on its policy of leaving in the hands of the indigenous inhabitants practically the whole of the arable and pasture lands. Similarly, in New Guinea, where the number of foreign landowners was greater, it was clear that the Government took care not to alienate land belonging to the inhabitants. In both Territories great technical efforts were being made by the Administering Authorities in connexion with land ownership and conservation, crop rotation, the introduction of up-to-date methods, and help to the peasants.

23. Turning to the situation in the Cameroons, he said

that that was a question of such importance that it should have been dealt with as a separate item. The French representative had announced at the 774th meeting that the Cameroons under French administration was on the point of achieving its independence. Only a few days before, the same representative had stated at the eighth special session of the Trusteeship Council (937th meeting) that the French Government had agreed to grant independence to Togoland under French administration at the request of the Togoland Government, which had come into power as a result of an election carried out under the supervision of the United Nations. His delegation still felt some anxiety about the tension in the Cameroons under French administration, owing to the disturbances which in fact reflected no more than the great patriotism and healthy nationalism of all sectors of the Cameroonian population. His delegation was of the opinion that in the circumstances an amnesty on the widest possible basis was more essential than ever.

24. He awaited with particular interest a statement from the United Kingdom representative on the question of the Cameroons under British administration. He recalled the efforts of the Guatemalan representative during the twenty-first and twenty-second sessions of the Trusteeship Council to obtain from France and from the United Kingdom target dates for the political future of the vast area stretching from Nigeria through the Cameroons under British administration to the Cameroons under French administration. Some such time-table had now been provided by the Nigeria Constitutional Conference held in London in September

1958 and by the events which the French representative had described at the 774th meeting. As a result, it was clearly essential that there should now be a consultation of the peoples of the Cameroons under British administration. The United Kingdom representative had declared both in the Trusteeship Council and in the Committee that the independence of Nigeria would not mean the absorption of the Cameroons under British administration but that the future of that Territory would be decided in accordance with the wishes of its inhabitants. It might well be that an association of forty years with Nigeria might influence the majority of the population of the Cameroons under British administration to join that great new State which was now appearing on the African horizon. On the other hand, the reunification of the Cameroons and an aversion to partition had been among the main themes in the Committee in recent years and had been voiced before the Committee by the representatives of reputable parties. Both points of view—that of a united Cameroons and that of incorporation of the Cameroons under British administration into the new State of Nigeria—were worthy of respect and equally legitimate. Above all, they were questions which only the Cameroonians themselves could decide. It was therefore essential that the inhabitants should be consulted without further delay. The question put to them would have the advantage of being perfectly simple: they would merely be asked with which of two independent States they wished their country to be associated.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.