

THE KAMERUN PLEBISCITES 1959-1961:

PERCEPTIONS AND STRATEGIES

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## ABSTRACT

The Kamerun Plebiscites of 1959-1961 were crucial to the rise and development of Western Kamerun nationalism. Some of the factors which shaped the events connected with that phenomenon can be traced back to the pre-colonial period. Others emerged from the activities of the colonizers in the region during the colonial and trust period. But, it was against the British activities that a few Western-educated Southern Kamerunians, the political leaders, reacted and, in the 1940s, developed a nationalist movement. In 1953, these new leaders, who had made little headway in their demands of the British, involved the traditional leaders, the a-Fon, in the nationalist movement. The a-Fon who commanded the loyalty and support of most of the region's inhabitants, significantly strengthened and influenced the movement henceforth.

During that crucial period, however, the movement witnessed several conflicts over policy regarding the future of Western Kamerun. In Northern Kamerun, the local authorities advocated integration with Nigeria while some dissident local Fulani and the a-Fon demanded secession from it. In Southern Kamerun, some political leaders stressed integration with Nigeria, others favoured secession from it and ultimate reunification of Kamerun, and, yet, others emphasized immediate secession and reunification. On the other hand, the a-Fon requested secession without reunification. Thus, there were fundamental differences among the political leaders and between them and the traditional rulers. During this period, the political leaders defined and redefined their varying programmes in an effort to win over the Crowned Princes

who refused to budge.

Realizing the firmness of the a-Fon, backed by massive support from the electorate, the organizers concentrated their efforts at the United Nations where they manipulated, confused, and engineered a split within its members. The division within the United Nations and among the organizers forced that organization to concentrate on reaching a compromise rather than finding out what the majority of the Western Kamerunians desired. The outcome of this approach was adverse decisions: in the case of Northern Kamerun, where the electorate, after the first plebiscite, had mistaken the reformed local administration for secession from Nigeria, the United Nations refused to postpone the second plebiscite, and, in the case of Southern Kamerun, it left out secession without reunification, the most popular view, from the plebiscite despite numerous appeals and protests from both regions. In the ensuing confusion in the North and dissatisfaction in the South, the electorate asked and answered their own questions at the plebiscites, interpreting the United Nations' questions to suit their local conditions and circumstances.

This interpreting process was to be expected. In most plebiscites and elections, electors ask and answer their own questions, often with little reference to the larger issues, but the timing of the second plebiscite in the North and the unfortunate wording of the plebiscite questions in the context of politics in the South, contributed not only a good deal of confusion to the proceedings, but also significantly impeded the process of self-determination. Moreover, the conduct of the plebiscites, themselves, was characterized by the abuse of power by those interested groups in and out of authority, and by suspicion and accusation which were sometimes justifiable and sometimes not. Furthermore, the plebiscite undermined the Concert of the



Crowned Princes, the symbol of Southern Kamerun unity, and left sections of the region standing at a distance from, and threatening, each other. Not only had the trust system ended in Western Kamerun on an uncertain note, but the United Nations had been less than effective in applying the principle of self-determination.

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## GLOSSARY

- a-Fon Plural of Fon--a traditional ruler. The British referred to the more powerful of these traditional rulers as either 'Fons' or 'Paramount Chiefs.' Those the British regarded as less powerful were called 'Chiefs' while the least powerful of them, according to the British were simply 'Village Heads.' But in Kamerun, a Fon is a Fon and receives any respect due to a Fon. It should be remembered, however, that the pronunciation and spelling of the word differ from one traditional state and/or ethnic group to another.
- AG Action Group. A Western Nigeria-based political party.
- CCC Cameroons Commoners Congress. A Southern Kamerun political party formed in 1959 by Fon Stephen E. Nyenti. Its political goal was the creation of an independent state of Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration.
- CDC Cameroon Development Corporation. A Corporation of the Nigerian Government which ran the German plantations in Southern Kamerun.
- CFU Cameroons Federal Union. A political organization of Southern Kamerun which operated in the late 1940s.
- CIP Cameroons Indigenes Party. A political party of Southern Kamerun formed in late 1960 by Fon Jesco Manga-Williams. Its political goal was the creation of an independent state of Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration.
- CNF Cameroons National Federation. A political organization of Southern Kamerun founded in 1949.
- CPNC Cameroons People's National Convention. A political party of Southern Kamerun formed in mid-1960 out of a fusion of the KNC and the KPP. Its political goal was the integration of Western Kamerun with Nigeria.
- CWU Cameroon Welfare Union. Originally a Bakweri cultural organization founded in 1939 in Southern Kamerun but, after a short time, it became a political pressure group which then included both Bakweri and non-Bakweri members.
- CYL Cameroons Youth League. A political organization of Southern Kamerun founded in Lagos, Nigeria, in 1940 by a group of Kamerun students. It superseded the CWU, Lagos Branch.
- EKWU Eastern Kamerun Welfare Union. A social and, to some extent, political organization of the Eastern Kamerunians resident in Southern Kamerun. It superseded the FCWU.

FCWU	French Cameroons Welfare Union--the original name of the EKWU.
Fon	A traditional ruler in Kamerun.
Fondom	A traditional state in Kamerun. The plural is 'Fondoms.'
KFP	Kamerun Freedom Party. A political party of Northern Kamerun founded in 1960 to fight the second Northern Kamerun Plebiscite. Its political goal was secession from Nigeria and ultimate reunification of Western Kamerun with Eastern Kamerun.
KNC	Kamerun National Congress. A political party of Southern Kamerun founded in 1953 out of a fusion of the CNF and KUNC. Its political goal altered with time and circumstances.
KNDP	Kamerun National Democratic Party. A political party of Southern Kamerun founded by John Ngu Foncha between late 1954 and early 1955. Its political goal was secession of Western Kamerun from Nigeria with no clearly defined end.
KPP	Kamerun People's Party. A political party of Southern Kamerun founded in 1953 by Paul M. Kale. Its political goal altered with time and circumstances.
KUNC	Kamerun United National Congress. A political organization of Southern Kamerun formed by Jabea R.K. Dibonge in 1951 during a split within the CNF.
KUP	Kamerun United Party. A political party of Southern Kamerun founded in 1959 by Paul M. Kale. Its political goal was the creation of a Smaller Kamerun State, a state of Western Kamerun.
Lion	A term of respect by which Kamerunians address their traditional rulers.
NCNC	National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons. An Eastern Nigeria-based political party.
NEPU	Northern Elements Progressive Union. A Northern Nigeria-based political party with leftist inclinations.
NKDP	Northern Kamerun Democratic Party. The first political party of Northern Kamerun founded in early 1959 to fight the first Northern Kamerun Plebiscite. Its political goal was secession of Northern Kamerun from Nigeria, unification of Northern and Southern Kamerun, and ultimate reunification of Kamerun.
NPC	Northern People's Congress. The major political party of Northern Nigeria with conservative inclinations.

- OK        One Kamerun. A political party of Southern Kamerun formed in 1957 by Ndeh Ntumazah. It was a disguised rejuvenation of the UPC and its political goal, among others, was the reunification of Kamerun.
- UMBC      United Middle Belt Congress. A political party of the middle belt of Nigeira.
- UPC       Union des Populations du Cameroun. A political party of Eastern Kamerun which operated in Southern Kamerun between 1955 and May 1957. Its political goal, among others, was the reunification of Kamerun.

## PREFACE

The Kamerun Plebiscites of 1959-1961 were crucial to the rise and evolution of nationalism in Western Kamerun.\* The participants in these plebiscites were of two main categories: the organizers and the respondents. The organizers included the United Nations, the Administering Authority (the British), the Western Kamerun Western-educated political leaders, and the Western Kamerun traditional leaders who acted in some respects as organizers and in others as respondents. The respondents

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\*The choice of the name and the spelling need some explanation. The name given to the whole territory, of which a part is the subject of this study, by its first colonizers was Kamerun. After the partition of this German Kamerun Empire in 1919 between France and Britain, the French called their own section Cameroun and the British called their own part the Cameroons. Officially the French section was referred to first, as the Mandated Territory of the Cameroons under French Administration and, later, as the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under French Administration. The British section was referred to as the Mandated Territory of the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration and, later, as the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration.

But the official nomenclature was hardly ever used. The French simply referred to their section as Cameroun and the British referred to theirs as the Cameroons and occasionally as if it were part of Nigeria. The world population, even up to today, refers to the two sections as the French Cameroons and the British Cameroons. The Kamerunian populace themselves, to a man, pronounce the word as Kemerun; because the British version had an 's' at the end, the English speaking Kamerunians pronounced it Kameruns. The choice of the name "Kamerun" by this study is in conformity with the way those to whom the word refers pronounce it.

The standard use of the word in this study is therefore as follows: Kamerun to stand for the German Kamerun Empire; Eastern Kamerun to stand for the section under French administration until independence in 1960; Northern Kamerun to stand for the northern portion of Cameroons under British Administration and Southern Kamerun to stand for the southern portion of that section; and, Western Kamerun to refer to both Northern and Southern Kamerun. When quoting, however, the exact words of those quoted would have to be adhered to.

consisted mainly of the Western Kamerun traditional leaders and their subjects, literate or illiterate. Both the organizers and the respondents had their objectives involved in the plebiscites. This study dwells upon the objectives of the organizers, on the one hand, and the aspirations and reactions of the respondents they polled, on the other. But, since the plebiscites occurred during the last three years of the rise and development of Western Kamerun Nationalism, attention is also paid to the period preceding the plebiscites.

Sources for this study reflect the fact that there were many groups of actors at the plebiscites. Basically, the sources are the United Nations' documents although they came from a variety of sources. Some of them originated with the United Nations General Assembly, the Trusteeship Council, and the United Nations Visiting Missions to Western Kamerun. Others came from the British and are mainly the United Kingdom Annual Reports first, to the League of Nations and, later, to the United Nations, and statements made by British officials in Western Kamerun, in Nigeria, in the United Nations, and in London concerning Western Kamerun. Still other sources came from the Western Kamerun political leaders consisting mainly of their policy statements in Western Kamerun, Nigeria, London, and the United Nations, of the petitions they addressed to the United Nations, and of the arguments they made at the United Nations and elsewhere. There is no problem with these sources originating from the organizers.

The same thing cannot be said regarding sources originating from the respondents. Originally, this study was to use interviews as a means of obtaining information at the grass-roots level while making allowance for



human inability to recollect feelings and ideas held fifteen or seventeen years earlier and for human tendency to colour the facts after the event. But the present writer had to confine himself to the petitions which these actors at the grass-roots level addressed to the United Nations during the plebiscites period.\* These petitions are, therefore, the main sources at the grass-roots level.

Nevertheless, there are a number of problems involved in this source. Many of them are direct translations of phrases and idioms from the various Western Kamerun languages into English. As a result, someone whose first language is English might not be able to understand exactly what the petitioner is attempting to communicate. This was not, however, a major problem to the present writer. To be sure, a few of these petitions were troublesome but, after some consultation with Nigerian and Kamerunian students, the petitioners' ideas were easily understood. Secondly, the petitioners were actively involved with the plebiscites. This is both an asset and a liability. Because the petitioners were active participants, their feelings, sentiments, objectives, in short,

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\*Although oral evidence always has its limitations, interviews would still have performed an important and useful part in this study. But, a number of problems and considerations stood in the way of the present writer conducting such interviews. First, the writer found it financially difficult to make the attempt. Secondly, for such interviews to be exhaustive and fruitful, a lengthy period would have to be allotted to them, and such an amount of time was not available to the writer. Thirdly, and more importantly, even if money and time were available, such interviews would have been of limited value when conducted by either the present writer or any Kamerunian at this point in time. At a time when most former Southern Kamerunians claim to have voted for the reunification of Kamerun, it is unlikely that many would be willing to say earnestly to any Kamerunian interviewer how they felt at the time of the plebiscite and how they perceived the phenomenon.

their perceptions of the plebiscites at the time were preserved; this gives a more accurate picture of the situation to the scholar. But, because they were active participants with differing objectives and perceptions, there was bound to be a high degree of suspicion and exaggeration in whatever was reported. However, having been active at the plebiscites himself, and having read through these petitions disinterestedly, the present writer has come to the conclusion that, when the petitions are stripped of the elements of suspicion and exaggeration, the basic ideas reported were for the most part, accurate. Experience has thus enabled the writer to cope with this second problem.

The next problem might be put in form of a question: who wrote the petitions for the illiterate? The literate did. How can one then be sure that the ideas expressed were those of the illiterate rather than those of the writer? Letter-writing in Western Kamerun of the time was not a commercial affair. Moreover, the illiterate did not just pick any literate from the street and ask him to write his letter; letter-writers for the illiterate were usually family members (of whatever level of education), trusted friends and close associates, some of whom were teachers. Perhaps more importantly, the majority of the petitioners, other than those written by the literate for themselves, were written on a group basis. The secretaries of these groups shared the objectives and attitudes and more or less transmitted these to the United Nations.

The next problem, possibly the most important, has to do with those petitions which the United Nations officials summarized. Usually, when one event occurred in Western Kamerun, say the arrest of one political leader, the United Nations could expect to receive between 3,000 and 4,000

petitions dealing with the event as the major issue but including other complaints not always related to the main event. In such cases, the United Nations would declassify the petitions, summarize them into one petition of about ten pages, and then destroy the originals.<sup>1</sup> This was unfortunate because first, the United Nations in the process might have destroyed just those ideas that could be crucial to the student in understanding better the plebiscites and, secondly, by merely stating "some of the petitioners argued that," the summaries make it difficult to know just whom these petitioners were and what they supported. This is a problem which the student may regret but which he can do nothing to remedy.

Closely related to this problem is that of not being able to decide easily which objective held during the plebiscite the petitioner was supporting. In some cases, this is indicated either by the organization issuing the petition, or by the ideas advocated in the petition. Where this is not the case, the present writer uses his personal experience by looking at the geographic area from which the petition originated and makes his decision on that basis. But where this too is not helpful, unless the petition is crucial, it is left out. More than 600 categorized petitions (about 8,000 were declassified and destroyed) were read although not all of them are included in the study.\* The last problem involved those peti-

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\*The present writer has endeavoured to bring nearly all the ideas expressed in the petitions into the study. Petitions left out either expressed ideas already taken from other petitions or they were so vague and so exaggerated as to be of little value. For example, two or three political leaders in Western Kamerun, originally from Eastern Kamerun, might be arrested by the British and repatriated to Eastern Kamerun where they were, for the most part, executed. One petitioner would report the

tions written in French. This would have been a big problem for the present writer. But the United Nations solved the problem by translating them into English.

Other primary sources which ought to have been included in this study are Western Kamerun dailies and memoirs particularly those of Western Kamerun political leaders. There were no dailies in Western Kamerun until late in 1960 when the political parties began to campaign. Then, the particular daily published almost always the contents of the political programme of the party which owned the press, and rehashed only the offers which the party was already making verbally. This has been taken account of from other sources. Memoirs have not been published or even written. Only P.M. Kale, one of the political leaders, wrote something in form of a book but which is actually a mixture of his memoir, a chronological cataloguing of events, and a book of documents. This piece of work has been very useful.

The only other sources included in the study are secondary materials. These include mainly books and journals. Generally, the articles in journals and periodicals exhibit a very poor understanding of the plebiscites and are not, therefore, very useful. The situation is not very different with books. Except for one book, books are useful insofar as

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incident stating the time of the arrest, the time of repatriation, the names of the victims, and the time of the execution. The other petitioner would report that 'the British are going around arresting every Eastern Kamerunian refugee in Western Kamerun and sending them to Eastern Kamerun to be killed.' The arrest, the repatriation, and the execution are common to both petitions, but in such cases, the present writer leaves out the latter petition, and makes use of the former as a fact, when supported by other evidence, or as an allegation when there is no further evidence to substantiate the ideas.

they describe the major events in their chronological order and make use of some important documents, and also direct the student to major sources of the plebiscites. It appears that these secondary sources are not very useful because the authors ignored almost completely sources from the grass-roots level.

The introduction of these grass-roots sources into the study represents the first major change from the existing approaches to the study of the Kamerun Plebiscites. The current literature on the subject has concentrated on the organizers; nearly all of them have studied the subject from the viewpoint of the organizers. Nearly all the authors have concentrated on sources originating from the organizers. Nearly all of them have disregarded the sources originating from the grass-roots level. Nearly all of them have written on the subject from above. Finally, nearly all of them have limited themselves to the number of votes without any serious attempts to find out the meanings of the votes. The outcome of this common approach has been the establishment of several theses which lend themselves to challenge.

With the introduction of this long existing, but never-before-used evidence from the grass-roots sources, this study differs from the existing literature. The evidence from both the organizers and respondents is exploited to its maximum. The subject is studied from the point of view of both the organizers and the respondents. The respondents, for the first time, are given their adequate role in the events. The subject is studied, therefore, both from above and from below. Finally, this study looks at the number of votes but goes beyond the number to find out what the votes actually meant. The outcome of this approach is the establish-

ment of several theses which run contrary to what exist in the current literature. But, since these new theses are the subject of the present study, this preface limits itself to identifying the theses currently existing in the literature.

The first of these assertions depicts a politically disorganized pre-colonial Kamerun.

In 1884 the rest of what is now the Cameroon was inhabited by a multiplicity of tribal groups having little in common with one another, but sharing a general suspicion of and hostility to strangers. Only in the Cameroon north, beyond the tropical rainforest, was there any sense of political cohesion, but it was a cohesion imposed by the Fulani conquests of the early nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

It is important to note that sources from the grass-roots level are not very useful as a means of challenging this assertion. But there are very good and useful secondary sources which did not concern themselves with the plebiscites but which question every aspect of this assertion. With this perception of Kamerun in mind, it was difficult for its author to acknowledge or even attempt to find out what role the traditional rulers of Western Kamerun played in the development of nationalism therein.

The second assertion claims that neither Nigeria nor Cameroun Republic was interested in acquiring Western Kamerun between 1959 and 1961.

Adding to this uncertainty is the publicly-optimistic, privately-pessimistic attitude of responsible Nigerian and Camerounian politicians. Publicly, they favour integration or unification, depending on whether they speak from a Lagos or Yaoundé rostrum. Privately, they admit that anyone who gets the Southern Cameroons acquires an economic and financial liability, and almost come to wishing it on someone else.<sup>3</sup>

Following an assertion like this, one would expect to see no Nigerian or Cameroun authorities involved in anything that would secure any part of

Western Kamerun for either Nigeria or Cameroun.

A third assertion makes John Ngu Foncha, one of the earliest Southern Kamerun nationalists, the rallying point of the reunification-ists. When the Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC), an Eastern Kamerun political party, was banned in 1957, the UPC left "unification" behind as the rallying cry of the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP), Foncha's political party.<sup>4</sup> If the KNDP was the rallying cry of the reunificationists, and Foncha a strong reunificationist, one should, first, expect to find Foncha and the KNDP pursuing a very vigorous reunification policy, and secondly, one would not expect to find another political party claiming and convincingly demonstrating that it was really the only reunificationist party.

The fourth assertion states that reunification as a political idea and objective and nationalism were imported into Western Kamerun from Eastern Kamerun.

Cameroon nationalist sentiment developed first in the French Cameroun and then gradually found its way into the British Cameroons as it grew in strength and intensity. Two dominant themes in the growth of Cameroonian nationalism can be traced in each part of the Cameroon: (1) in the French Cameroun, Cameroon nationalism per se and its outgrowth, the demand for the 'reunification' of the two Cameroons (to use Cameroun nationalist terminology); (2) in the British Cameroons, first, Southern Cameroonian separatism (from Nigeria) and later, under the impetus of ideas and pressures from the east, a mounting pressure in that territory for 'reunification' with the French Cameroun.<sup>5</sup>

To assert that nationalism was imported into Western Kamerun from Eastern Kamerun is to assume four things at least: that there were close political contacts between Western Kamerun and Eastern Kamerun in the late 1930s; that Western Kamerunians did not have any political problems of their own

which could force the rise of nationalism; that nationalism rose in Western Kamerun in about 1947; and, that nationalism rose in Western Kamerun in form of either separation or a demand for independence. To assert also that reunification was imported into Southern Kamerun is to assume that there were no Western Kamerunians who were either bothered by the inter-Kamerun boundary line or saw it as unacceptable, and that an idea cannot be indigenous to two or more different parts of the same territory or region.

The birth and origins of ideas are too difficult to prove or disprove in history. But the existing evidence suggests very strongly that the idea of reunification was as indigenous in Western Kamerun as it was in Eastern Kamerun. To be sure, when the Eastern Kamerunians crossed over to Western Kamerun, the idea became more politicised and gained new strength, but that is no reason to assume that the idea was imported into Southern Kamerun. When the first real attempt at studying the Kamerun plebiscites by Claude E. Welch, Jr. pointed out that the idea was not imported into Western Kamerun,<sup>6</sup> the author who originally made the assertion, without further research, argued simply that there was no way of knowing "for certain either way: what is sure is that it seemed to have found expression in both French and British Cameroons about the same time -- that is, between 1947 and 1949."<sup>7</sup> After this implicit admission of error in a footnote, this same author continued to reassert the error in the same book in which he admitted it.<sup>8</sup> Had this author made further research before reasserting his position, he would have served the academic world much better.

The last of these assertions is the most popularized probably because



it is central to the study. Although different authors have stressed different aspects of it, they have one thing in common, namely, the acceptance of the main assertion: that there were freely and democratically conducted United Nations plebiscites in Western Kamerun between 1959 and 1961.

Following a United Nations supervised plebiscite in which the southern part of the British protected Cameroon voted for Federation with its Eastern French-speaking neighbour, the Federal Republic of Cameroun was formed on October 1, 1961.<sup>9</sup>

What this unidentified author asserted was the existence of a United Nations free and democratic plebiscite in Southern Kamerun in 1961 in which the Southern Kamerunians voted in favour of reunification on a federal basis. The form and nature of reunification was thus known before the electorate went to the polls.

In 1961 a plebiscite was held in the British Trust Territory of Cameroon under the auspices of the United Nations, the result being that the Southern Cameroon opted for unification with the former French Cameroon while Northern Cameroon chose union with Nigeria.<sup>10</sup>

The existence of two United Nations plebiscites in Western Kamerun in 1961 in which the meaning of the votes coincided with the meaning of the United Nations plebiscite questions is thus still asserted.

In February 1961, the Northern and Southern Cameroons voted separately in a plebiscite, by which the 'Southern Cameroons' elected to join 'Cameroun Republic,' and the 'Northern Cameroons' to join the Federation of Nigeria.<sup>11</sup>

The preceding assertion has once more been repeated.

The result of the plebiscite was a clear victory for Foncha's programme in the south, and a decision in favour of Nigeria in the north.<sup>12</sup>

Foncha's programme to which this author refers was reunification. Thus this author asserts that the votes in Southern Kamerun were votes for reunifi-

cation and those in Northern Kamerun were votes for Nigeria.

In insisting on a showdown on the question of reunification versus integration, the British and the U.N. forced on Cameroonians only what they themselves had first and continually demanded.<sup>13</sup>

This author actually has two assertions here: that reunification was one of the United Nations plebiscite questions; and that the majority of the Western Kamerunians demanded reunification and continually for that matter.

One author, however, propagated this assertion once too often.

The alternatives put before the electorate were identical --that is, a choice between joining the Cameroun Republic or Nigeria . . . the Southern Cameroons opted for the Cameroun Republic by a vote of 233,571 to 97,741, while the Northern Cameroons chose to join the Northern Region of Nigeria by a vote of 146,296 to 97,659 . . . The huge margin with which the Cameroun alternative won in the South Cameroons was undoubtedly mainly due to the skill with which Prime Minister John Foncha of the Southern Cameroon managed the plebiscite campaign.<sup>14</sup>

. . . the fact remains that when in 1961, the issue of unification was put to the electoral test in the British Cameroons, a large majority of the voters consciously chose to implement the 'Kamerun idea.'<sup>15</sup>

The 'Kamerun Idea' as far as this author was concerned, had reunification as its hub. As he also indicates, in another assertion, the results of the plebiscite in Southern Kamerun were "an overwhelming vote for unification with the Cameroun Republic."<sup>16</sup>

One author directed his attention only to Northern Kamerun and came out with the most highly sophisticated explanation of the plebiscites in that region but the conclusions still fell within the conventional wisdom.

. . . the issue of the apparent reversal of position in the second plebiscite was, in fact, not a reversal. The Marghi and their pagan neighbours maintained an unchanging position of self-interest throughout. To be sure, they voted more

'against' a choice than 'for' its alternative, but far from failing to understand politics, they adapted party politics to their own institutions, and understanding fully that the party was only a device for achieving goals, they switched parties when the leadership proved insensitive to their will.<sup>17</sup>

The sad thing about these assertions is that they soon get incorporated into text books and they begin to take on the aspect of facts or reality. This has already happened in the case of Northern Kamerun.

In fact there should have been no surprise that Northern Cameroons joined Nigeria. There had never been a strong leader, or a powerful political party, in favour of a merger with French-speaking Cameroon. The people had many things in common with Northern Nigeria, including a language, Hausa. Similarly the fact that most people in Northern Cameroons profess Islam made it easier for them to want to join Northern Nigeria. Before the advent of the British or Germans, Northern Cameroons had been part of the Emirate of Bornu and later when the British administered Adamawa and Benue Provinces as part of this system, they were in fact preserving a 'status quo' which the people saw no reason to alter.<sup>18</sup>

This strong explanation is a consequence of accepting ideas from books that are in themselves suspect.

It is true that the contents of votes, that is, the meaning of votes as opposed to the assumed meaning of them, in most plebiscites and general elections for that matter hardly ever correspond to the larger issues at stake. But, if the authors of these assertions had made any real attempts to find out just how much the contents of the votes in the Kamerun plebiscites differed from the obvious implications of the United Nations' questions, the assertions might not have been questioned. Yet, the majority of these authors failed to do just that. Their conclusions are derived mainly from the number of votes cast for each alternative at the plebiscites. The present writer does not ignore the number of votes

but he attempts to go beyond that and find out the hard contents of those votes. As Johnson<sup>19</sup> and Welch<sup>20</sup> suggest, what is crucial in understanding the Kamerun plebiscites are the issues involved in the plebiscites at the time they were conducted. It may also be added that not only the issues are crucial, but also the way the plebiscites were organized and conducted, how the electorate perceived the plebiscites generally, and the circumstances under which the plebiscites were conducted, namely, the timing of the plebiscites and the questions put to the electorate. Until these aspects are pursued more intensively, the Kamerun plebiscites would have to remain largely unstudied.

The approach adopted in this study is just a beginning in the right direction. The organization and conduct of the plebiscites are probed. The perceptions of the electorate and the meaning of the votes are looked into more carefully. This of course means using sources from the grass-roots which existed and were available to the public as early as mid-1961 but which the existing literature has ignored. The main purpose of this approach, and indeed of the whole study, is to take another look at the plebiscites, to initiate a more intensive study of the plebiscites, to aid scholars in their approach to the study of Kamerun affairs, and more importantly, to attempt to give a more accurate picture of the Kamerun plebiscites by showing what role the traditional leaders and tradition played in the events.

The focus of the study is mainly the Western Kamerun scene and the contact of the Western Kamerunians with the United Nations. Nigeria, Britain, Eastern Kamerun, and France are brought into the study occasionally where appropriate. But the main purpose of the study is to depict

the roles played in the plebiscites by Western Kamerun's Western-educated political leaders, its traditional leaders, and its voting citizens.

In an attempt to accomplish this purpose, the study is organized in seven chapters. Chapter one provides the background to the events: in the case of Northern Kamerun, it is the background to the plebiscites; and, in the case of Southern Kamerun, it is the background to both the rise and development of nationalism in Southern Kamerun and the plebiscites. Chapter two dwells on the rise and evolution of Southern Kamerun nationalism from early 1940s-1953. Chapter three handles the road to the plebiscites in both Northern and Southern Kamerun from 1953-1959. Chapter four looks at the process leading to the United Nations' decisions. Chapter five handles the United Nations' decisions and the response to them. Chapter six dwells on the conduct of the plebiscites in both Northern and Southern Kamerun. The last chapter attempts to examine the meaning of the votes in both Northern and Southern Kamerun. There is a conclusion which attempts to pull the main findings together, and to pose three questions on larger issues which are raised indirectly by the study.

Footnotes - Preface

- <sup>1</sup>U.N., T.C., Examination of Petitions, T/SR.943, April, 1959, pp. 11-12.
- <sup>2</sup>Victor T. Le Vine, "The Politics of Partition in Africa: The Cameroons and the Myth of Unification," Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1964, p. 205 and passim.
- <sup>3</sup>Victor T. Le Vine, "A Reluctant February Bride? The 'Other Cameroons'," Africa Report, Vols. 6-7, 1961-1962, February, 1961, pp. 6, 12.
- <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 6.
- <sup>5</sup>Victor T. Le Vine, The Cameroon Federal Republic, Ithaca and London, 1971, pp. 16-17.
- <sup>6</sup>Claude E. Welch, Jr., Dream of Unity, Cornell University Press, N.Y., 1966, p. 159.
- <sup>7</sup>Le Vine, The Cameroon Federal Republic, London, 1971, p. 17, Foot-note 9.
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 16-17.
- <sup>9</sup>"The Last Federation," West Africa, Nos. 2535-2565, 1966, April 2, 1966, p. 371.
- <sup>10</sup>Peter Hill, "Cameroon Microcosm of African Unity," The Times, Monday, June 30, 1975, London, p. vi.
- <sup>11</sup>Edwin Ardener, "The Political History of Cameroon," The World Today, Vol. 18, 1962, p. 342.
- <sup>12</sup>Neville Rubin, Cameroun: An African Federation, Praeger, London, 1971, p. 88.
- <sup>13</sup>Willard R. Johnson, The Cameroon Federation: Political Integration in a Fragmentary Society, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1970, p. 152.
- <sup>14</sup>Victor T. Le Vine, "Calm Before the Storm in Cameroun?" Africa Report, Vol. 6, No. 5, May, 1961, p. 3.
- <sup>15</sup>Victor T. Le Vine, "The politics of Partition in Africa: The Cameroons and the Myth of Unification," Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1964, p. 209.
- <sup>16</sup>Victor T. Le Vine, The Cameroon Federal Republic, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1971, p. 15.

<sup>17</sup>James H. Vaughan, Jr., "Culture, History, and Grass-Roots Politics in a Northern Cameroons Kingdom," American Anthropologist, Vol. 66, Menasha, Wisconsin, U.S.A., 1964, p. 1094.

<sup>18</sup>T. Eyongetah and R. Brain, A History of the Cameroon, Longman, London, 1974, p. 158.

<sup>19</sup>Johnson, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

<sup>20</sup>Welch, op. cit., p. 225.

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in memory  
of  
my father  
shey  
chem-langhëë

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT IN WESTERN KAMERUN

Northern and Southern Kamerun were technically and legally one and indivisible trust territory under the administration of the United Kingdom. But the societies of these two regions, before and during the colonial period, differed greatly in some respects from each other. As a result, some of the factors which influenced the rise and evolution of nationalism in both regions differed from each other. It seems more appropriate, therefore, to treat each region separately in this chapter.

#### The Northern Kamerun Situation

Prior to the Fulani (Fulbe) intrusion of the early nineteenth century, the geographic region which later became Northern Kamerun comprised four main groups of people. These included the aborigines, the Korofa, the Batta, and the Mandara. Three of these groups acted as invaders and conquerors at one point or the other. The Korofa invaded and conquered the aborigines. The Batta invaded and conquered both the aborigines and the Korofa. The Mandara were the last invaders and conquerors of the society they found in Northern Kamerun.<sup>1</sup>

There appears to have been no assimilation after each conquest. What seems to have happened is that, after each conquest, the conqueror settled separately in one area of the region and, in line with most of Africa of the period, demanded tribute and recognition of authority from the conquered. Before each invasion, the previously supreme group appeared

to have been under one central authority. But after each invasion, the conquered suffered some disintegration resulting in the multiplication of independent authorities within the same group. All this is what, after an investigation, a British anthropologist employed by the Colonial Office seemed to suggest.

Successive waves of Korofa, Batta, Mandara, and Fulani invasions have had a disintegrating effect, which the broken nature of the country has further aggravated, so that it is not unusual to find groups of people living alongside each other, speaking the same language and sharing a common culture, yet fiercely individualistic and mutually distrustful.<sup>2</sup>

But this did not mean political disorganization for the region. If anything, it meant political fragmentation of the region. Each fragment was a political entity ruled over by the Fon or monarch. Some of these monarchies or Fondoms were larger than the others. Some of them were integral parts of larger political entities which were in themselves virtually empires. In some, the authority of the Fon was unlimited. In others, the Fon shared authority with the elders of the state either in a council or otherwise. In either case, the political loyalties of the inhabitants of the various political entities were to the a-Fon. The political power of the hereditary a-Fon was enhanced in some cases by their function as religious and military leaders. Many of them would also band together to face external threats.<sup>3</sup> One of these external threats, which altered the intra-regional relationships, was presented by the Fulani

About the early nineteenth century, the Fulani began to penetrate the region as peaceful immigrants who paid taxes to the indigenous inhabitants they found in Northern Kamerun for grazing their cattle on the land. During the Jihads, many of the Fulani, who had now settled in Northern Kamerun,

embraced Islam and came under the leadership of Modibbo Adama. By 1823, all the Fulani enclaves in the region owed allegiance to Adama. Whenever Adama conquered any area of Northern Kamerun, he installed a Fulani as the supreme authority of the area. The peaceful relations between the indigenes and the Fulani had begun to alter. The Fulani had become masters over their previous masters. Worse still, the Fulani began to enslave many of the indigenes both for themselves and for the yearly tribute to Sokoto. Consequently, the indigenes came to "see Islam as a threat to their cultural identity" and lives, a threat personified by the Fulani.<sup>4</sup>

However, while this was the general perception of the Fulani held by the indigenes, during and after the Jihads, not all the indigenes fell under the suzerainty of the Fulani. A good number of them refused to embrace Islam and to fall under the authority of the Fulani. Yet, the Fulani penetration and invasions accelerated the disintegrative process.

The effect of the Fulani penetration was to dismember [the indigenous] Kingdoms. With some the invaders made treaties, others were converted to Islam, while many withdrew to the sanctuary of the hills. In a few cases a Fulani governor of tact and character acquired some personal influence with his pagan subjects, more especially if he had married the daughters of important local chiefs or had himself been born of such a union.<sup>5</sup>

It appears that the complete domination by the Fulani of the region, which Le Vine has asserted, and the wide-spread adoption of Islam as the religion of the area, which Eyongetah and Brain have stressed, were still a far cry from reality.

Indeed, as late as the 1930s, non-Muslims outnumbered the Muslims in Northern Kamerun. While out of an estimated population of 200,000 in what later became Dikwa Emirate, only about 66,666 were non-Muslims, out of an

estimated population of 208,322 in what later became Adamawa, north and south, about 142,660 were non-Muslims. The grand total of the population then was 408,322, of which 198,996 were Muslims and 209,326 non-Muslims.<sup>6</sup> What seemed to have existed in the region, before the Germans came, was a form of compromise: "Pagan lands in the plains were held on . . . a compromise: the Fulani refrained from harrying the farmers on the understanding that the pagans allowed cattle to graze unmolested up to the foot of the hills and to the broader valleys during the dry season."<sup>7</sup> It was this compromise which characterized the Northern Kamerun society before the New Imperialism, not the domination of the region by Islam and the Fulani.

However, that society had more characteristics than the accommodation between the other groups on the one hand, and the Fulani on the other, before the New Imperialism. There were already five indigenous groups of inhabitants: the aborigines, the Korofa, the Batta, the Mandara, and the Fulani. The first four were organized into several Fondoms which, though probably independent of each other, could come together in the individual groups to face an external enemy. These Fondoms were mutually suspicious and individualistic. But they co-existed with each other. The last, the Fulani, owed allegiance to Yola, the capital of Adama's empire, and through Yola to Sokoto. They attempted to establish an overlordship over the other four groups and to convert them to Islam. But the attempt was not yet completely successful. The relations between the other four groups on the one hand and the Fulani on the other were generally bad because of the latter's slaving activities. However, because the Fulani dominance was far from complete, there existed a form of compromise between the

Fulani on the one hand and the other groups on the other.

Unfortunately, the features of the Northern Kamerun society were lost to the new conquerors. When the Germans subdued Northern Kamerun between 1885 and 1901, they perceived a "well-organized, unified, and extensive" political system ruled over by the Fulbe princes in a "quasi-feudal machinery."<sup>8</sup> Here lay the basis of the German administrative Adamawa Creed: to administer Adamawa well, one must gain the loyalty of its traditional rulers; to gain the loyalty of the traditional rulers, one must recognize their authority and rule through them.<sup>9</sup>

What this Creed or rather policy involved was simple. The supreme authority in Northern Kamerun, aside from the Germans, would be the Fulbe princes. The German residents or commissioners in the region "were not supposed to interfere with the internal management" of the peoples. They were expected "to confine themselves to keeping the peace between [the peoples] and maintaining German rule."<sup>10</sup> But there could be no peace between the other groups on the one hand and the Fulani, who continued to raid for slaves, on the other. Without investigating the cause of the apparent disorder, the Germans instead provided the Fulani princes with guns which they used to effectively enslave and suppress the apparent rebels.<sup>11</sup> With the guns in their hands, the Fulani now regarded the other groups "as fitting objects of numerous slave raids." Indeed, even in 1914, the Fulani took guns from the Germans to fight the British but instead used them to enslave and kill the other indigenous groups.<sup>12</sup> The Germans had, thus, increased the tension in the region before the British came to the scene.

During the British period, the situation was modified but not altered.

This was a consequence of the British reorganization of the region and of British administrative policy. The British perceived and reorganized Northern Kamerun\* as part of the Northern Region of Nigeria (Northern Nigeria hereafter). But Northern Kamerun was not an entity within Northern Nigeria. It was fragmented into three parts, each of which had little to do with the others. Except Dikwa Emirate, and that after the 1930s, all the fragments were parts of different Northern Nigerian Provinces ruled, aside from the British, by the Fulani. Since British administrative policy in Northern Nigeria was to rule through the local traditional rulers, and since the various parts of Northern Kamerun fell under the authority of the Northern Nigerian Fulani traditional rulers, all Northern Kamerunians now fell under Fulani rule. What the Fulani had failed to accomplish during their period and during the German period had now been accomplished for them by the British. The non-Fulani inhabitants of Northern Kamerun were now closer to the Fulani and to Islam, which they perceived as a threat to their lives and cultural identity, than they were ever before.

Fortunately, however, the British administrative policy differed from the German in one respect. The Germans completely denied the existence of any traditional rulers, other than the Fulani, in Northern Kamerun. Initially, the British made the same error but soon discovered the real situation. After some investigations, the British came to realize that the a-Fon (plural of Fon) existed. However, they still made one error; they came

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\*The terms Nigeria, Northern, Eastern, and Western Nigeria, Kamerun, Northern, Southern, Western, and Eastern Kamerun are convenient labels particularly during the 1920s and the 1930s. These were geographic expressions with no real political meaning at the period.

to believe that all the a-Fon in Northern Kamerun had fallen under the suzerainty of the Fulani. Or was it their traditional preference for the Fulani as was the case with Nigeria? Whatever the case, the British attempted to leave the affairs at the grass-roots level in the hands of the a-Fon. Nevertheless, the Fulani remained in control of the affairs at successive levels higher than the a-Fon. The attempt failed partly because the experiment was new to both the Fulani and the a-Fon, partly because the Fulani found it difficult to avoid interfering, and partly because the British were unwilling to bear the financial burden involved in the experiment.<sup>13</sup>

When the experiment failed, the British altered the approach. They confirmed the Fulani as the local authorities in Northern Kamerun and then channelled their energies in two directions. First, they attempted to protect the non-Fulani from Fulani oppression and abuses by deposing the tyrants and to improve the relationship between the Fulani and the non-Fulani. Although the attempt was not very successful, it earned for the British the goodwill and admiration of the non-Muslims who now thought of "the British as their protectors from the Fulani."<sup>14</sup> This admiration would leave a great impact on the plebiscites. Secondly, the British attempted to train some of the a-Fon and their subjects in the art of Western administration so that one day the trainees might be able to handle their own local affairs within the framework of Nigeria.<sup>15</sup> By 1934, the training had had some results. Out of fourteen district heads of Adamawa, eleven were Muslims; three non-Muslims had thus become district heads. Even "some of the 105 village headmen in pagan areas were also pagans."<sup>16</sup> It is significant that some non-Muslims now had authority beyond that of the a-Fon.



What seemed to have resulted from the British approaches to the problem can now be suggested. The British almost completed the process of Fulani domination in Northern Kamerun through their political reorganization of the region. But, by pursuing certain policies, the British reduced the impact of that Fulani domination on the other inhabitants of the region. While this, however, did little to reduce the apprehensions of the non-Fulani for the Fulani, it did win for the British the goodwill and admiration of the non-Fulani. The Fulani and the non-Fulani co-existed tenuously under Pax Britannica, but the suspicion of the non-Fulani for the Fulani remained. All these factors would have an important bearing on the Northern Kamerun plebiscites. But, other factors, stemming out of British educational, social, administrative, economic, and political policies also left a mark on the plebiscites.

British educational policy in Northern Kamerun between 1922 and 1961 was not vigorous. By 1925, there were three elementary schools in the region with a total population of 31.<sup>17</sup> The year 1930 saw only one school located at Mubi with 28 children in attendance. There was another unassisted and unrecognized school at Dikwa Division supervised from Nigeria. Five Northern Kamerunians were undergoing training in Nigeria to become elementary school teachers. The same year, there were about 619 Koranic schools which had little, if anything, to do with Western education.<sup>18</sup> This was another influence of the Fulani and a further threat to the non-Fulani which the British encouraged. By 1938, there were four recognized elementary schools in the region.<sup>19</sup> Shute, the British representative to the Trusteeship Council, gave an accurate description of the situation as it existed in the early 1950s. In "the remote part of the north [North Kamerun] illiteracy

is almost one hundred per cent."<sup>20</sup>

The situation was improved by the late 1950s. By 1958, there were three primary schools in Adamawa north and south, and a fourth was under construction. However, there was no secondary school in Northern Kamerun by the time the British left the region. Nor was there a girls' school. There was a Teacher Training Centre at Mubi. The missionaries ran several elementary schools. The region had one university graduate (supposed to be the first Northern Nigerian to acquire that qualification), B.Sc.Hon., Ibadan, in 1958, and this was "the first time a Northerner . . . attained such a qualification." In addition, two Northern Kamerunians "obtained diplomas in administration and native treasury accounting."<sup>21</sup> It is very important to note that the situation which existed in 1958 was described by members of the Consultative Committee\* who regarded it as a great educational advancement for the region at this period in time.

British welfare policy was perhaps even less vigorous than the education policy. The British neglected all the leper settlements the Germans had left behind and established one central one at Maiduguri, Nigeria.<sup>22</sup> This was a telling difficulty for the Northern Kamerun lepers. However, later on in their period, the British re-established those they had neglected in the region.<sup>23</sup> Between 1919 and 1939, there was no permanent medical service in Northern Kamerun. However, by the 1950s, three medical doctors from

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\*The Consultative Committee, whose function was to advise the Northern Nigerian Government on matters concerning Northern Kamerun, was established by the British in 1955 and, between 1957 and 1958, it was constituted a formal Committee of the Northern Regional Government. Its activities and perceptions will be seen again in chapters three - five.

Nigeria attended to the region only one of whom was on a regular basis. Attempts were also underway to build three permanent hospitals.<sup>24</sup>

The year 1958 saw major improvements. The Northern Nigerian Government and the Native Authorities provided regular medical services. But for a population of about three-quarters of a million, there were still only two hospitals, the one operated by the government and the other by the missionaries. There were ten Native Authority dispensaries and four mission owned and operated ones.<sup>25</sup> Once more, it must be stressed that the 1958 situation was greatly praised by the members of the Consultative Committee.

British economic policy, or lack of it, in Northern Kamerun was one of total neglect. The British undertook no significant economic operations in the region. Brigadier Gibbons, British special representative to the Trusteeship Council, explained, during the trusteeship period, that "Lack of economic justification continue[d] to retard the development of all-season motor-roads in the Northern Cameroons."<sup>26</sup> However, the British did build two roads, totalling 35 miles, to link up some areas.<sup>27</sup> The only other means of communication were the seasonal roads built and maintained by the Native Authorities. In 1958, the Northern Kamerunians who sat in the Nigerian legislatures, and who praised the British, had very little to say in economic terms. There were "numerous numbers of mixed farmers" who were "constantly assisted by the agricultural officials stationed in nearly every big village to give help and advice."<sup>28</sup> When Gardinier studied the situation, he came to the conclusion that there were few attempts, if any, to improve even the quantity or quality of native food.<sup>29</sup>

Administratively, the Northern Kamerunians did not have an adequate

share of the offices in their region. British administrative policy in Northern Kamerun cannot be understood without the principle upon which it was based. Generally, British colonial policy was to have the colonies pay for themselves. Yet, the British spent more time administering their colonies rather than developing them. If the colonies must pay for this administration, the cheapest efficient administrators must be sought. Naturally, such administrators must know both the English language and the British system. During the first decade of British rule, no Northern Kamerunian commanded these qualifications. The Nigerians who, because of their early acquaintance with the British tradition, already had these qualifications, were then used in the administrative service of Northern Kamerun. Reinforced by the British educational neglect of Northern Kamerunians, the employment of Nigerians as administrators in Northern Kamerun became crystalized into a self-perpetuating system. Moreover, by making the Fulani, both Kamerunian and Nigerian, local administrators, the non-Muslim Northern Kamerunians were effectively excluded from any form of administration. Perhaps the situation would best be illustrated by looking at the descriptions of two groups in Northern Kamerun, the one admiring the situation and the other condemning it in 1958.

Those who praised the situation described it as follows. Out of the seventeen members of the Lamido's council in Adamawa Province, seven were Northern Kamerunians. Four Northern Kamerunians of Adamawa Province were members of the Nigerian legislatures. Local government bodies which included District Councils, Outer Councils, and Village Councils were "equally placed accessible to the natives of the Northern Cameroons as to any other persons." Out of the fourteen district heads, eight were Northern Kamerunians,

while seven other Northern Kamerunians held "important Native Authority posts."<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand, like those who praised the situation, those who condemned it limited their comments to Adamawa Province. From the beginning of the mandate system, "the ruling institutions of the indigenous people of the territory [had] been abolished or made into a non-entity." The Districts, except perhaps Bebel, had become "a Colony of Adamawa Emirate [Nigeria] under the Lamido of Adamawa in Yola." The Lamido was appointing "men of his own choice or his own kin to rule the Districts" rather than the "indigenous inhabitants of the area." The districts had become "a place for adventure of the few ruling families from Yola," Nigeria. All the "influential administrative posts" in the Districts were held by people from Yola. As a result of this Yola monopoly, the indigenous inhabitants of the area were left "behind without adequate training to man their own affairs by themselves."<sup>31</sup> As suggested above, the so-called 'Yola monopoly' of administrative posts in Adamawa Emirate was due to the fact that there were few Northern Kamerunians who understood the British system and the English language.

If the desire to have the colonies fend for themselves governed the British administrative policy in Northern Kamerun, the reason the British acquired Western Kamerun governed British political policy in that region. Indeed, all British policies in Western Kamerun as a whole were governed by that reason. The British acquired Western Kamerun in order to extend the Nigerian boundary eastwards and, in so doing, correct the artificiality of the Nigeria-Kamerun boundary line. Yet the British did not take into consideration, as might be expected, cultural and historical factors

which would have helped them correct the artificiality of the line.<sup>32</sup>

Whatever the case, having acquired Western Kamerun for this reason, the British attempted to find out the best Nigerian political units with which to administer the various segments of Northern Kamerun.

This attempt resulted in the following reorganization of the region. Dikwa Emirate, the northernmost area of the region located around Lake Chad, was administered by the British Resident of Bornu, Nigeria. This Resident was responsible to the Lieutenant-Governor of Northern Nigeria. Yola Emirate North of the Benue River, the area south of Dikwa Emirate to the northern end of the Benue Valley, was administered by the Resident of Yola who was also responsible to the Lieutenant-Governor of Northern Nigeria. Yola Emirate South of the Benue River, the area from the southern end of the Benue Valley to the Mambilla escarpment, the boundary with Southern Kamerun, was also administered by the Resident of Yola. As mentioned earlier, although all these segments were united in the Lieutenant-Governor of Northern Nigeria, they had very little to do with each other.

To be sure, there were minor modifications, but Northern Kamerun developed in these associations right into 1960. By 1959, Dikwa Emirate had become Dikwa Emirate Division of the Bornu Province of Northern Nigeria. One of the Yola Emirates had become a Division, Adamawa Emirate Division of the Adamawa Province of Northern Nigeria. The other Yola Emirate had become Wukari Division of the Benue Province of Northern Nigeria.<sup>33</sup> By 1959, therefore, the three fragments had become parts of three different administrative entities of Northern Nigeria and still had little to do with each other.

The implication of these arrangements was significant. In practice,

there was no Northern Kamerun administration between 1919 and 1960 although the region was legally and technically a part of Western Kamerun which was itself a territory distinct from Nigeria. Any Nigerian proper or any Northern Kamerunian could represent Northern Kamerun outside or within the region; there was no distinction made in the region between a Nigerian and a Northern Kamerunian. Had the Northern Kamerunians, or at least the majority of them been satisfied with these arrangements, no real serious reaction against them would have been expected. But, as it turned out, many of them were not happy with the way the region had been reorganized, and when the opportunity arose would register their dissatisfaction.

#### The Southern Kamerun Situation

The nineteenth century political organization of the geographic region which later became Southern Kamerun was not unlike that of contemporary Europe. It consisted mainly of empires and nation states. Nso (Nsaw, Bansa, Bansaw), Bafut, and Kom for instance were empires. Some of the Bali states and many of the Wimbun (Nsungnin, Nsungli) states were nation states.<sup>34</sup> Each of these political entities, whether with an elective leadership or not, had at its head a Fon. The authority of the Fon was a tricky question. When making a decision involving his personal interests, unless curbed within his Council, the Fon was inclined to be dictatorial. But, when making a decision involving the interests of the whole Fandom, he consulted with his Councillors who, in turn, consulted with some of the important commoners who, in their own turn, sounded the opinion of the rest of the society. In decisions involving the interests of the whole Fandom, therefore, the statement of the Fon usually reflected a consensus of the Fandom.

Consequently, if the statement or policy of a Fon conflicted with that of any person who was not himself a Fon, that of the Fon must be taken more seriously, if other things remained equal.

The traditional states, Fondoms hereafter, were very intricately organized particularly the empires. More significantly, they had diplomatic relations among themselves and even with intruders. Bali Nyonga had diplomatic and trade relations with Babessong and with Babungo. The Germans, represented by Dr. Eugen Zintgraff entered into diplomatic relations with the same Bali Nyonga. Central to the treaty between the Bali Nyonga and the Germans was authority. The Bali would help the Germans to subdue the rest of the grasslands of Southern Kamerun and then establish German overlordship. In their own turn, the Germans would make the Bali Nyonga the supreme local authority of the grasslands. To face this unholy alliance of the Bali and the Germans, the Bafut and the Mankon formed a military alliance which gave the Bali-German alliance a thorough thrashing several times.<sup>35</sup>

There was also an intriguing diplomacy between five Fondoms with Tikari (Tikar) and Nodobo\* origins. These Fondoms included Nso, Kom, Bafut, Bum, and Ndu. The smallest of them, Bum (about 5,000 people in 1953), was commercially and strategically situated. It was the entrepot for the Kolanut trade between Northern Nigeria and the grasslands of Southern Kamerun. It was in intermittent hostility with Kom lying on its southern border. But, Bum was "in pacts of friendship with Nso and Ndu."

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\*Tikari and Nodobo are actually the same ethnic group.



The population of Ndu in 1953 was estimated at 8,300 and that of Nso in the same year was 50,000. Nso and Ndu were for the most part hostile to each other. But Nso and Kom were (still are) in alliance. Kom, with an estimated population of 27,000 in 1953, was competing with Bafut (19,000 estimated population in 1953) "for the allegiance of tiny village chiefdoms" (Fondoms).<sup>36</sup>

This diplomacy smacks of the Bismarckian diplomacy of the late nineteenth century. The Bum-Kom hostility was neutralized by the Nso-Kom and Nso-Bum friendships; Nso protected Bum from Kom aggression. The Nso-Ndu hostility was neutralized by the Ndu-Bum and Nso-Bum friendships. The isolation of the Bafut in the group was neutralized by the Mankon-Bafut alliance. While this diplomacy maintained peace among these Fondoms, it gave Nso, Kom, and Bafut virtually a free hand to subdue their weaker neighbours and create empires. Considering all this, it would appear that Le Vine's idea of disorganized, unruly "tribes" warring with each other before the New Imperialism leaves much to be desired.

Indeed, the problem of the period appears not to have been the relationship between Crowns and Crowns. It does not appear to have been the problem of the relationship between peoples and peoples. It was the problem of the relationship between the Crowns and their subjects. There was an international conspiracy of the a-Fon against their subjects: "there was a pact of friendship [between Nso and Kom] involving royal gift exchange and mutual return of run-away wives and slaves."<sup>37</sup> With such pacts, the subjects of the a-Fon could do little more than obey royal decrees without question.

To be sure, Western intrusions, education and ideas, did threaten tradition. But, by the time of the plebiscites only a very generous estimate would have put Southern Kamerunians at 20 per cent Western-educated.

Consequently, any decision any Fon made regarding the plebiscites, was more representative of local opinion and would command greater support among the electorate than decisions made by the new political elite. This situation, of course meant that no Western-educated political leader of tact could act without his eyes looking over his shoulders at the a-Fon. Here lies the key to the understanding of the major part of the nationalist movement in Southern Kamerun. Here lies the key to the understanding of the conclusion of that nationalist movement, the Southern Kamerun plebiscites.

The fourth and final United Nations Visiting Mission to Kamerun immediately before the plebiscites was aware of this situation. As the Mission saw it, although the authority of the a-Fon varies in extent and influence, many of the a-Fon "appear to play a part in public affairs--not only in local administration but also in the shaping of opinion on the main political issues--which none of the political parties proper can afford to ignore." The a-Fon of the grasslands in particular included in their persons "the strongest traditional authorities in the country." The a-Fon submitted that their role was traditional. But, nevertheless, they reserved "the right to interfere with and correct the affairs of the country when it [was] realized that things [were] going radically wrong."<sup>38</sup> The statement of the a-Fon that they reserved "the right to interfere with and correct the affairs of the country . . .," would seem to suggest their authority and influence over the Southern Kamerunians.

Nevertheless, the Mission mentioned one important point which should be borne in mind always. This was that tradition was more pronounced in the grasslands. The grasslands were the most populous areas of Southern

Kamerun. Indeed, Bamenda Division alone in the grasslands could win the plebiscite if only its a-Fon took the same position. Tradition was not very pronounced in some parts of the forest zone. Mamfe Division, mainly in the forest zone and partly in the grasslands, was a watershed between the situation in the grasslands and that in the forest zone. The majority of its a-Fon were still very influential. But others had begun to see a decay in their authority. Further south, in Kumba Division it appeared that the majority of the a-Fon sat sadly watching the decay of their authority. In the southern end of the region, Victoria Division, the a-Fon had almost virtually lost their authority by the time of the plebiscites. All this was the result of Western intrusion into Southern Kamerun.

The first of these intrusions came in the form of slave trade. But this did not seem to have left any significant impact. To be sure, the introduction of slave trade by the West did lead to some skirmishes between some of the Fondoms, but it did not shake the fabrics of the traditional systems.\* Even the Fulani attempts to conduct slave raids in Southern Kamerun were easily repelled. What seemed to have begun the threat to the traditional systems was the long contact of the coastal areas with the whiteman. This means that the dismantling of the authority of the a-Fon was going on in the coastal areas while the grasslands were intact. The forest zone and the grasslands had, thus, begun to move in different directions long before the Germans came to the scene.

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\*Philip D. Curtin, The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Milwaukee, 1969, p. 255 shows that some of the slaves were captured from the Bamenda area of Southern Kamerun. Yet, it is here that we have the traditional systems intact till today.

The movement in different directions by the two areas was aggravated when the Germans colonized Southern Kamerun. German occupation and effective rule of the region began from the south and proceeded gradually northwards. Because the traditional systems of the coastal areas were already weakening, the Germans attempted to rule the area directly and Victoria became one of the most important centres of administration. But, in the interior, that is in some parts of Kumba, Mamfe, and nearly all of the grasslands, the Germans discovered many powerful a-Fon through whom they ruled indirectly. The Germans entered into treaties with these a-Fon and gave them German flags. Central again to these treaties, particularly when the Bali-German attempts had failed, was authority. The a-Fon pledged to "recognize German rule, to supply workers, and to refrain from interference with trade." In one case, the German agent "followed native customs and swore blood friendship with the tribal chieftain, the formality requiring the participants to drink each other's blood mixed in water." On their own part, the Germans promised to uphold the authority of the a-Fon over their subjects. Where there was some struggle for power within any empire, the Germans recognized one of the a-Fon and placed him "in authority over rivals."<sup>39</sup>

This policy had some significant bearings on the political development of Southern Kamerun. By ruling coastal areas directly, the Germans further weakened the traditional systems and, with them, the influence of the a-Fon. The inhabitants of the coastal areas began to make decisions on major issues individually. This process became self-perpetuating with increased Western education, increased literacy, and increased penetration of the area by Western ideas.

On the other hand, the situation in the interior, particularly in the far north, the grasslands, was different. Here, the Germans recognized and confirmed the authority of the a-Fon over their subjects and rivals. The traditional systems, the authority of the a-Fon, and the loyalty of their subjects remained intact. It is thus easy to understand why Western ideas found more receptive ears in the coastal areas and struck no responsive chords in the mental make-up of the grasslanders for so long a time. Indeed, it was not until the end of the thirty-two year German imperium in Kamerun that Western ideas began to penetrate the grasslands.

The end of the German Kamerun Empire came in 1916 as the Franco-British-Belgian forces gathered in for a kill on the Germans in Kamerun. It occurred when the Kamerunians, who saw no reason to get involved in a European family affair, refused to fight: "as far as the Cameroons was concerned there was little or no fighting at all."<sup>40</sup> Without any resistance from Kamerunians, who concentrated their efforts in protecting the Germans in Kamerun from the invading forces, the British gratuitously moved in as peace-makers rather than conquerors. The bitter and long-drawn out wars which the a-Fon of the grasslands fought with the Germans, before being subdued, were thus absent at the time of the British occupation. Due to this peaceful occupation, the a-Fon began to perceive the British as friends rather than conquerors. This friendship would continue as long as the British did not attempt to undermine tradition. Fortunately, the British attempted to uphold tradition through their administrative policy.

British administrative policy in Southern Kamerun followed that of the Germans differing only in one major respect. The Germans accepted the status quo without any qualms. They accepted the fact that there were

central authorities in the interior and that central authority in the coastal areas was decaying. It was not their fault that things were as they were. The best they could do was to accelerate the course of history in the same direction. This was not the way the British saw it.

The British thought quite differently. They agreed that the status quo must be maintained. But what was the status quo? In their minds, the status quo was the situation which obtained in the grasslands. The situation which obtained in the coastal areas was the fault of the Germans. It was their duty to correct this German blunder and preserve the traditions of the people. As they put it themselves,

As regards native affairs, the British policy in the Cameroons follows that of Nigeria, and is an endeavour to rebuild the tribal and ethnological institutions which had to some extent suffered disintegration during the period of direct German administration, to find the hereditary native rulers and to educate them in their duties in that capacity, and to seek their co-operation and help, and to maintain their prestige in all matters concerning the areas under their control.<sup>41</sup>

The main difference between the British and the German administrative policies lay in the fact that the Germans interfered more in the coastal areas of Southern Kamerun than the British did. But, both the British and the Germans were willing to rule through the a-Fon if possible.

This British administrative policy was not to be as easy for all the areas of the region as the British might have thought. In the grasslands and in some parts of Mamfe and Kumba, the hereditary traditional rulers with authority were not in doubt. Here, the British did maintain and uphold their authority and prestige in all matters in the areas under their jurisdiction. The German approach had been replicated in this area. Better still, the British were not conquerors, just the liberators of the

a-Fon and their subjects from the German iron rule.

On the other hand, even when the British discovered the hereditary a-Fon in the south, the British realized that the authority of the a-Fon had, to some extent, been sapped. In that area, the British established local councils which made decisions for the people under the council's jurisdiction. Membership in these councils included the a-Fon and some Western-educated elite, many of whom could not, traditionally speaking, sit with the a-Fon in the same council. Little republics had emerged in the south. To be sure, these councils almost always invariably corresponded with the jurisdiction of either the decaying Fondoms or Fondoms which claimed the same ethnic origins. But, there was nothing traditional in them or in their authority.

In time, these republics were introduced in the grasslands, the South Eastern Federation, Ndop, for instance. But, they differed from those in the south in two major respects. The councils had no authority whatsoever over the subjects of the a-Fon. The councils might take decisions but unless the a-Fon agreed to the decisions, they could never be implemented. Furthermore, the councils could not even take decisions contrary to the views of the a-Fon. Indeed, in the South Eastern Federation, the Western-educated councillors spent more time wooing the Fon of Bafut and the Fon of Nso than they spent thinking about the problems of the Federation. These two a-Fon must agree on any decision before the South Eastern Federation could attempt to implement it.

Like the Germans, therefore, the British modified the situation and the difference between the forest zone and the grasslands, but did not change them. The south and the north were still moving in different

directions with differing outlooks. This situation would have an important bearing on the nationalist movement and on the plebiscites. However, the nationalist movement itself, as a new phenomenon in the region, was the product of the British political reorganization of Southern Kamerun and of the results of that political reorganization.

The British political reorganization of Southern Kamerun reflected British perceptions of the region. The British perceptions of the region themselves were anchored in the principles upon which the British based their acquisition of Southern Kamerun. As was the case with Northern Kamerun, the British acquired Southern Kamerun in order to extend the Eastern Nigerian boundary eastwards and, in the process, fill in the missing links of Eastern Nigeria.<sup>42</sup> Southern Kamerun, in the British mind, was ethnologically a natural part of the Eastern Region of Nigeria,<sup>43</sup> Eastern Nigeria hereafter. As a result of these perceptions, the British Integrated Southern Kamerun with Eastern Nigeria politically and otherwise. In practice, therefore, the terms Southern Kamerun and Southern Kamerunians, except in legal and technical ways, did not have any real meaning.

British economic policy in Southern Kamerun was almost the antithesis of the German economic policy in the region. Before the British came, the Germans had laid down a well-developed infrastructure for the economy of the region comparable to none in colonial Africa of the time. Witness the intra-regional trade system, the plantations, the scientific experiments on all aspects of the economy, the search for ivory, the experiments with and development of palm oil and palm kernels, cocoa, rubber, cotton, ramie, tobacco, coffee, and Kolanuts. Witness the botanical garden, the buildings, the network of roads and railroads, the seaports, the telephone line, the



airstrips and many others.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, "A student cannot escape the conclusion that everything was being done by Germany to get the maximum from the colony."<sup>45</sup> Southern Kamerun stood to gain much in the long-run had the British done the same thing to get the maximum from the trust territory. But the British did not.

Things began to decay as soon as the British took over control of Southern Kamerun. German roads went into disuse. By 1938, the British were maintaining only a total of 185 miles of road.<sup>46</sup> The United Nations (first) Visiting Mission to Kamerun on October 31, 1949, found roads poor, unsatisfactory, and inadequate.<sup>47</sup> Brigadier Gibbons, British special representative to the Trusteeship Council, indicated that improvements could not even be expected. Plans to develop roads were underway, he said, "but in view of the fact that it costs £1,000 to build a single mile of simple gravel road, he was unable to say how far such projects would be carried out in the near future."<sup>48</sup>

The British did not even treat the plantations, the basis of the Southern Kamerun economy as such. At first, the British sought non-German buyers for the plantations. When such buyers were not available, the British sold them to their former owners. Later on, after the Second World War, the plantations became the property of the Nigerian Government run by the Cameroons Development Corporation (CDC).<sup>49</sup> Even the very existence of the plantations was of little benefit to the Southern Kamerunians. "In 1936 the Permanent Mandates Commission learned that 95 per cent of the profits from the banana trade, the territory's chief export, were going to Europeans."<sup>50</sup> In the first year of its operation, the CDC made a profit of £178,275 net and £158,000 was set aside as taxes for the Nigerian Government.

The next year, the CDC made a profit of £343,396 net and £209,000 was also set aside as taxes for the same Government.<sup>51</sup> Even labour in the CDC was not equitably distributed. Between 1955 and 1959, the years for which there are figures, two groups of Nigerians, the Ibo and the Efik-Ibibio, were always the largest single ethnic groups employed at the CDC.<sup>52</sup>

On their own part, the "British undertook no large scale economic program" in Southern or rather Western Kamerun either through "grants or loans." No attempts were made "to improve the quality or quantity of native food or cash crop production, despite the fact that cocoa production was largely in the hands of Africans, mainly in the Kumba division."<sup>53</sup> The unemployment of the Southern Kamerunians who were illiterate could not, therefore, be solved by self-employment on the farms. Worse still, commercial and tradesman activities were monopolized by the Nigerians, the Ibo in particular.<sup>54</sup>

The neglect of the Southern Kamerunians who were illiterate was also matched by the neglect of the Western-educated Southern Kamerunians. Originally, the only Southern Kamerunians who were literate were German speaking. Beyond the traditional systems, this group had an idea only of the German systems. This meant they could not be of much use in the British administration. Yet, administration was the main British industry in Southern Kamerun. For example, out of a total expenditure of £188,427 in 1938, £142,484 (about 76%) went to administratively related functions: Armed Forces £12,396, Police £17,817, and Administration £112,271.<sup>55</sup> Since the literate Southern Kamerunians were not acquainted with English and with the British system, they were virtually, in the beginning, excluded from

this industry.

Administrative posts in Southern Kamerun became filled with British, Nigerian, and other non-Southern Kamerunian administrators, a situation which became crystalized into a self-perpetuating system. Indeed, in the late 1930s, there were only 71 Southern Kamerunians who held any substantial posts in Southern Kamerun. These included: one Supervising Teacher, one Assistant Medical Officer, two Assistant Agricultural Officers, thirty in the clerical service, twenty teachers, twelve midwives and nurses, and five technical staff.<sup>56</sup> It is important to note that the majority of these 71 Southern Kamerunians were from the coastal areas, particularly the Bakweri. In the plantations, the "Bakweri and the Ibo are again numerous" in the "clerical grade" of workers.<sup>57</sup> The disparity in employment between the forest zoners and the grasslanders would contribute to the varying positions taken by the two areas during the plebiscites.

The exclusion of Southern Kamerunians from white-collar jobs could have been rescued had the British paid much attention to the education of Southern Kamerunians and taken steps to halt the employment of Nigerians in Southern Kamerun. But that was not the case. By 1925, there were seven government elementary schools in Western Kamerun (North and South) holding 785 pupils with a staff of 25. The Native Authorities had ten schools with an average attendance of 2,848. The compulsory subjects taught were reading, writing, English composition and grammar, English dictation and colloquial English.

The situation, however, began to improve in the 1930s. By 1930, the number of government schools had reduced to six with an increased population of 1,256. There were twelve Native Authority schools with a population of

990. The Missions had 459 schools, about 90 per cent of which were unassisted.<sup>59</sup> The majority of these unassisted schools, however, taught nothing beyond the Prayer Book. By 1938, the number of government schools was still six. The Native Authorities now had nineteen schools. The Mission schools were distributed as follows: Catholic Mission--47, seven of which were assisted; Basel Mission--161, ten of which were assisted; German Baptist Mission--19, two of which were assisted; and, one Native Baptist school which was also assisted.<sup>60</sup> It was not until 1939 that the Roman Catholic Mission opened the first secondary school at Sasse, Victoria Division. This example was followed ten years later when the Basel Mission opened another secondary school at Bali Nyonga in 1949. These were the only secondary schools in Southern Kamerun at the end of the period in which the British administered Southern Kamerun. Indeed, at the end of the period, only a very generous estimate, as said earlier, could put the population at 20 per cent literate. Moreover, this estimated 20 per cent was concentrated in the coastal areas. The plebiscites thus came when the grasslands, which housed more than one half of the total population of Southern Kamerun, were illiterate and traditional in outlook.

The a-Fon themselves, indeed nearly all the Southern Kamerunians were not at ease with the British welfare and social policies in the region. In 1925, and several years thereafter, Southern Kamerun had four hospitals and three medical officers. These hospitals were distributed as follows: Victoria--56 beds, Buea--25 beds, Mamfe--20 beds, Bamenda--32 beds, and a dispensary was soon to be opened at Kumba.<sup>61</sup> Victoria and Buea hospitals, both in Victoria Division, one of the least populated areas of Southern Kamerun had a total of 81 beds whereas Bamenda Division, which had more

than half the population of Southern Kamerun, had 32 beds in the hospital. The Buea hospital, only about 20 miles away from Victoria, was exclusively for the 281 Europeans in Southern Kamerun, a disproportional majority of whom were resident in Victoria Division. To be sure, the hospital went by the name 'Senior Service' hospital. But, there were not many Southern Kamerunians who could claim to be in the Senior Service grade; the only Southern Kamerunian who could claim to belong to this category came several years later and was himself an Assistant Medical Officer.\*

In general, therefore, British policies in Southern Nigeria, in particular Eastern Nigeria, and this term in practice included Southern Kamerun, were detrimental to the interests of the Southern Kamerunians. The Southern Kamerunians who felt the impact of those policies most were the Western-educated because they were largely excluded from administrative jobs in the region they perceived to be theirs. It is little wonder, therefore, that the first reactions to these policies came from the Western-educated Southern Kamerunians. The reaction began with a search for identity and food.

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\*An Assistant Medical Officer was actually a fully qualified medical doctor who was given this title mainly for two reasons: to assert his inferiority to a white medical doctor; and, to hold him down from aspiring for promotion to the Senior Service category.

Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup>David E. Gardinier, "The British in the Cameroons, 1919-1939," P. Gifford and W.R. Louis, eds., Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1967, p. 540.
- <sup>2</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup>A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, Adamawa: Past and Present, Oxford University Press, London, 1958, pp. 147-149 and passim.
- <sup>4</sup>James H. Vaughan, Jr., "Culture, History and Grass-roots Politics in a Northern Cameroons Kingdom," American Anthropologist, Vol. 66, 1964, pp. 1985-1088.
- <sup>5</sup>Kirk-Greene, op. cit., p. 148.
- <sup>6</sup>Computed from David E. Gardinier in Gifford and Louis, eds., op. cit., pp. 532-538.
- <sup>7</sup>Kirk-Greene, op. cit., p. 149.
- <sup>8</sup>Harry R. Rudin, Germans in the Cameroons 1884-1914: A Case Study in Modern Imperialism, Yale University Press, 1968, p. 186.
- <sup>9</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup>Great Britain, Foreign Office Historical Section, Handbooks No. 111, H.M. Stationary Office, London, 1920, pp 27-28.
- <sup>11</sup>Gardinier in Gifford and Louis, eds., op. cit., pp. 536-538.
- <sup>12</sup>Vaughan, Jr., in American Anthropologist, Vol. 66, 1964, pp. 1085-1088.
- <sup>13</sup>Gardinier in Gifford and Louis, eds., op. cit., pp. 527-238.
- <sup>14</sup>Vaughan, Jr., in American Anthropologist, Vol. 66, 1964, p. 1088.
- <sup>15</sup>Great Britain, Report by His Britannic Majesty's Government on the British Mandated Sphere of the Cameroons for the Year 1923, H.M. Stationary Office, London, 1924, p. 36.
- <sup>16</sup>Gardinier in Gifford and Louis, eds., op. cit., pp. 538-543.
- <sup>17</sup>Great Britain, Report of His Britannic Majesty's Government to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of the British Cameroons for the Year 1925, H.M. Stationary Office, London, 1926, pp. 63-74.

<sup>18</sup> Great Britain, Report by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of the Cameroons under British Mandate for the Year 1930, H.M. Stationary Office, London, 1931, pp. 80-89.

<sup>19</sup> Great Britain, Report by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of the Cameroons under British Mandate for the Year 1939, H.M. Stationary Office, London, 1939, pp. 81, 144-148.

<sup>20</sup> U.N., T.C., United Nations Bulletin, Vol. 6, February 15, 1949, p. 147.

<sup>21</sup> U.N., T.C., Extracts from Memorandum Dated 25 September 1958 of Elected Representatives of the Northern Cameroons in the Nigerian Legislatures, T/1426, Annex IV, January 20, 1959, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> British Report for the Year 1930, p. 97.

<sup>23</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1426, Annex IV, January 20, 1959, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> British Report for the Year 1930, p. 97; U.N., T.C., United Nations Review, Vol. 4, April, 1958, pp. 33-41.

<sup>25</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1426, Annex IV, January 20, 1959, p. 5.

<sup>26</sup> British Report for the Year 1938, p. 109.

<sup>27</sup> British Report for the Year 1930, p. 105.

<sup>28</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1426, Annex IV, January 20, 1959, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Gardinier in Gifford and Louis, eds., op. cit., p. 551.

<sup>30</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1426, Annex IV, January 20, 1959, pp. 3-4.

<sup>31</sup> U.N., T.C., Extracts from Memorandum Dated 5 November 1958 from the United Middle Belt Congress/Action Group Alliance (UMBC/AG), T/1426, Annex IV, January 20, 1959, pp. 8-10.

<sup>32</sup> Edwin Ardener, "The Political History of Cameroons," The World Today, Vol. 18, Oxford University Press, 1962, pp. 343-344.

<sup>33</sup> U.N., T.C., Report of the United Nations Commissioner for the Supervision of the Plebiscites in the Southern and Northern Parts of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, T/1556, April 3, 1961, p. 176.

<sup>34</sup> An analysis of many of these political entities deserves an independent study by itself. The scope of such a study falls beyond the bounds of this study. Consequently, the interested reader is directed to some of the

studies of the subject which already exist. Elizabeth M. Chilver on the Bali (Nyonga) in Prosser Gifford and Wm. R. Louis, eds., Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule, New Haven and London, 1967, pp. 479-511. P.M. Kaberry on the Nsaw (Nso) in Africa, Vol. 29, No. 4, October, 1959, pp. 366-383. P.M. Kaberry, Women of the Grassfields, London, passim. M. McCulloch, M. Littlewood, I. Dugast, Peoples of the Central Cameroons, Ethnographic Survey of Africa, West Africa, Part IX, Vols. 9-11, London, 1954, pp. 11-172. E. Ardener, Coastal Bantu of the Cameroons, Ethnographic Survey of Africa, West Africa, Part XI, Vols. 9-11, 1956, pp. 9-108. Paul M. Kale, Political Evolution in the Cameroons, Government Printer, Buea, August, 1967.

<sup>35</sup> Elizabeth M. Chilver, "Paramountcy and Protection in the Cameroons: the Bali and the Germans, 1889-1913," P. Gifford and W.R. Louis, eds., Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule, New Haven and London, 1967, pp. 483-486.

<sup>36</sup> E.M. Chilver and P.M. Kaberry, "The Kingdom of Kom in West Cameroon," Daryll Forde and P.M. Kaberry, eds., West African Kingdoms in the Nineteenth Century, Oxford University Press, 1967, pp. 127-128.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>38</sup> U.N., T.C., United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, Report on the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under British Administration, T/1426, January 20, 1959, pp. 54-55.

<sup>39</sup> Rudin, op. cit., pp. 183-187.

<sup>40</sup> Paul M. Kale, Political Evolution in the Cameroons, Government Printer, Buea, August, 1967, p. 7.

<sup>41</sup> British Report for 1923, p. 36.

<sup>42</sup> Ardener in The World Today, Vol. 18, Oxford University Press, 1962, pp. 343-344; Gardinier in Gifford and Louis, eds., op. cit., p. 521.

<sup>43</sup> Gardinier in Gifford and Louis, op. cit., p. 521.

<sup>44</sup> Rudin, op. cit., pp. 222-296 and passim.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 277.

<sup>46</sup> British Report for 1938, p. 108.

<sup>47</sup> U.N., T.C., United Nations Bulletin, Vol. 8, March 1, 1950, pp. 208-209.

<sup>48</sup> U.N., T.C., United Nations Bulletin, Vol. 8, April 1, 1950, pp. 322-323.

<sup>49</sup> Gardinier in Gifford and Louis, eds., op. cit., p. 549.



<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 550.

<sup>51</sup>U.N., T.C., United Nations Bulletin, Vol. 8, March 1, 1950, pp. 209-211.

<sup>52</sup>C.D.C., Annual Report[s] of the Cameroons Development Corporation for the Year[s]: 1955, p. 25; 1957, p. 27; 1958, p. 25; 1959, p. 23, Bota, Victoria.

<sup>53</sup>Gardinier in Gifford and Louis, eds., op. cit., p. 551.

<sup>54</sup>U.N., T.C., Petition from the All-Nigerian Union Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Victoria, 21 September, 1959, T/PET 4/L 42, September 30, 1959, pp. 1-2.

<sup>55</sup>British Report for the Year 1938, p. 115.

<sup>56</sup>Kale, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>57</sup>Edwin Ardener, "Social and Demographic Problems of the Southern Cameroons Plantation Area," Aiden Southall, ed., Social Change in Modern Africa, Oxford University Press, London, 1961, pp. 90-91.

<sup>58</sup>British Report for the Year 1925, pp. 63-74.

<sup>59</sup>British Report for the Year 1930, pp. 80-89.

<sup>60</sup>British Report for the Year 1938, pp. 81, 144-148.

<sup>61</sup>British Report for the Year 1925, p. 76.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE RISE AND EVOLUTION OF NATIONALISM IN SOUTHERN KAMERUN 1939-1953

It is very difficult to be so precise as to suggest that such an illusive phenomenon as nationalism rose on a definite date. It is not even easy to trace the development and characteristics of this phenomenon very accurately. The difficulty becomes even greater when a reaction or reactions against specific grievances transform, in time, into nationalism as we know it. However, the difficulty must not be allowed to stand in the way of attempts to suggest roughly when this phenomenon began in a particular region, how it developed, and what its main features were.

The available sources suggest that the first reactions to British policies in Southern Kamerun occurred in 1939, and a few years later, the reactions became transformed into Southern Kamerun nationalism. These sources and evidence also suggest that the reactions were a challenge to the British political reorganization of that region, to the rest of British policies therein, and to the results of those policies. The reactions, the rise and development of nationalism were pacific and constitutional all through.

In the middle of 1939, G.J. Mbene, a schoolmaster in Victoria, formed a Bakweri cultural organization called the Cameroon Welfare Union (CWU). Initially, its membership included only the Western-educated Bakweri. But, when its branches were soon established in the main towns of Southern Kamerun, its membership was extended to include many of the non-Bakweri Western-educated Southern Kamerunians. Through an appeal from Mbene,

Paul\* M. Kale, a Bakweri who left Southern Kamerun for further studies at Sierra Leone but who soon found himself teaching at Lagos, founded a branch of the CWU in that Nigerian City.† The formation of the Lagos Branch, the establishment of its branches in the main towns of Southern Kamerun, and the extension of its membership to include the non-Bakweri, soon altered the character of the CWU. From a cultural organization it became a pressure group.<sup>1</sup>

However, it was a branch outside Southern Kamerun, the Lagos Branch, which set this pressure group into action. This branch prompted the mother branch in Victoria to write a petition to the British requesting representation for Southern Kamerun in the Nigerian central legislature located at Lagos.<sup>2</sup> This request was a direct reaction and challenge to the British political reorganization of Southern Kamerun. Nigeria had been carved out into three political units, namely, the Western, Eastern, and Northern Regions. Only these three political units could be represented at Lagos in their own right. Southern Kamerun was a part of Eastern Nigeria and could not, therefore, be represented at Lagos in its own right. It was ruled from Enugu, the headquarters of Eastern Nigeria, where it did not have separate representation. The Southern Kamerun request for

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\*Le Vine, The Cameroon Federal Republic, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1971, p. 22, has incorrectly substituted Peter for Paul.

†Neville Rubin, p. 83 and Willard Johnson p. 117 have confused this Lagos Branch with the Cameroons Youth League, to be seen presently, founded at Lagos in 1940 by the members of that Lagos CWU branch. The confusion is probably due to the fact that the CYL soon superseded the CWU.

representation at Lagos was, therefore, fundamentally a request for the constitution of Southern Kamerun as a political unit equal in all respects to the other political units of Nigeria. In essence, it was an attempt to assert the identity and unity of Southern Kamerun within the framework of Nigeria. Such an assertion struck at the very heart of the British political reorganization of the region. British reaction to the request could be expected. "In this the Administering Authority and the Union were at daggers drawn."<sup>3</sup>

British reaction to the request did not, however, discourage the Union. Indeed, the Union was soon to carry the assertion one step forward. On June 20, 1940, the representatives of all the branches held a meeting at Victoria. There they decided on three names from which the British could choose at least one to represent the region at Lagos. These names included P.M. Kale--a schoolmaster at Lagos, Charlie Ndobide--a businessman in Kumba, and Dr. Barber--a native of Fernando Po.\* The British instead argued that "because the Cameroons did not enjoy the franchise," the matter of Southern Kamerun representation at Lagos was a privilege and not a right. It is not readily known what the British did with the three names thereafter, but they were never used. So discouraged was the Union that it began to dwindle into oblivion.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of this discouragement and disappearance of the CWU, it registered two important points. By demanding the representation of Southern Kamerun at Lagos, it challenged the way the British had reorganized Southern Kamurun. By selecting names to give to the British, it served

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\*Fernando Po was a Spanish colony.

notice to the British that Southern Kamerunians existed and that they had spokesmen who could make decisions for them. All in all, the CWU asserted a distinctive identity for Southern Kamerun and its inhabitants. This was too important for the Union to be forgotten. Furthermore, the interaction between the Union and the British set the tune for the rest of the period. The Southern Kamerun political leaders for the most part, despite disagreement among themselves, would continue to assert this identity. The British seldom responded sympathetically, and even then belatedly. But, the interaction would, for the most part, be pacific and constitutional.

The CWU was dying out just when another nationalist organization was emerging. This was the Cameroons Youth League (CYL), a possible transformation of the CWU Lagos Branch, founded at Lagos on March 27, 1940. Its members included the Southern Kamerun students and workers in the vicinity of Lagos. Its motto was "Unity and Co-operation." It had several aims. It was out to develop Southern Kamerun in all respects, to work towards the integration of all the Southern Kamerun Fondoms in order to create a Southern Kamerun nation, to preserve all the Southern Kamerun cultures and traditions, to facilitate female education, and to act as a liaison between the Southern Kamerunians and the British, making the latter aware of the desires of the former.<sup>5</sup> The main political objective of the CYL was thus the creation of a Southern Kamerun state. Here was the beginning of nationalism.

This objective was, perhaps, the greatest early challenge to the British political reorganization of the region. The CWU had asserted the identity of Southern Kamerun and its inhabitants, in itself not a mean feat. But, this identity was to be within the framework of Nigeria. The

desire of the CYL to have a nation for Southern Kamerun went beyond that. To be sure, a Southern Kamerun nation could still remain within the framework of Nigeria in form of either a federation or of a confederation. But it could also exist completely outside the framework of Nigeria. British policy did not intend to administer Western Kamerun as a separate political entity from Nigeria. Yet, the CYL decided to work in co-operation with rather than in opposition to the British.

This approach was faulty. The British were under no illusions as to the ultimate objective of the CYL. "The case for separate or autonomous legislature for the Cameroons was initially championed by the Cameroons Youth League."<sup>6</sup> To have championed such an objective when the British felt that the region was best administered as an integral part of Eastern Nigeria, and to have expected the British to co-operate with it, was for the CYL to take delight in self-delusion. The British could concede something, but not that which could stand in the way of the effective administration of the region. Indeed, the British did concede something in 1942. In this year, the British selected Fon Jesco Manga-Williams, one of the Western-educated a-Fon of Bakweri land whose traditional role had been undermined, to 'represent' Southern Kamerun at Lagos.<sup>7</sup>

Some authors, Neville Rubin for instance, have made too much of this Manga-Williams' seat at Lagos. Rubin suggested that the seat gave Southern Kamerun representation at Lagos.<sup>8</sup> But, the British intention was to have Manga-Williams at Lagos as a delegate from the Eastern Region of Nigeria and not to represent a particular political unit. Whatever the case, it is important to note, first, that Manga-Williams was not among those the CWU recommended to the British in 1940 and, second, that only the already

constituted political units of Nigeria could be represented at Lagos in their own right, and Southern Kamerun was not yet such a unit.

Nevertheless, two years after the nomination of Manga-Williams to the legislature at Lagos, the CYL which raised the first nationalist voice channelled its efforts in another direction. In 1944, the Elliot Commission, which established the University of Ibadan and several Colleges of Arts, Science and Technology some years after in Nigeria, visited Southern Kamerun. There, Dr. E.M.L. Endeley, Leader of the CYL, presented it with a comprehensive memorandum on education and the consequences of the educational situation on the employment of Southern Kamerunians. The message was simple: Southern Kamerunians had been neglected educationally; this neglect had made it impossible for them to gain admission into the Nigerian Civil Service; and, the remedy lay in the establishment of post-primary institutions of learning in Southern Kamerun and in the award of scholarships to Southern Kamerunians to these institutions.<sup>9</sup>

What this memorandum seems to suggest is that the CYL sought education in the name of employment, an indication, first, that the Western-educated elite were not happy with British employment policy, and, second, that they saw education as the best means of correcting the situation. In essence, it was a request for Jobocracy--the idea that jobs in Southern Kamerun should be in the hands of Southern Kamerunians. The demand for food had been added to the demand for identity and the demand for a separate or autonomous status for the region. The demand for a nation, although already in a programme, had not yet been raised. But this would not be long in coming. Nevertheless, for the moment, efforts were concentrated elsewhere.

In 1944, some members of the CYL, Kale and Endeley for example, participated in the formation of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe's political party for Nigeria, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). This political party initially was made up mainly of Southern Nigerians --Yoruba, Ibo, and Southern Kamerunians. But the NCNC was not formed without an impetus. Basically, it was a response to the Richards Constitution\* and its four "obnoxious bills." The idea was to have organized agitation against the Constitution. During this agitation the Southern Kamerun members of the NCNC are said to have played a leading part but concentrating on the interests of Southern Kamerun. Endeley pointed out the "special features of the bills which affected the Cameroons." For his own part, Kale went to London as a member of the NCNC "to seek revision of the constitution and repeal of the legislation in an interview with the Colonial Secretary, Arthur Creech Jones."<sup>10</sup>

The important part the Southern Kamerun members of the NCNC played in the agitation was justifiable. The constitution abolished Manga-Williams' seat at Lagos. On the other hand, it provided for thirteen elected members of the Eastern Regional House and for the representation of the Region at the central legislative council at Lagos. Two of these thirteen elected members were Southern Kamerunians.<sup>11</sup> The number of Southern Kamerunians who could now sit in the Nigerian legislatures had been increased from one to two, a number which seemed to recognize the role of the Southern Kamerunians in the agitation. Furthermore, there

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\*Sir Arthur Richards was Governor of Nigeria, 1943-1947, and the Constitution introduced during his Governorship was named after him.



was a net gain for Southern Kamerun. The elective principle which also applied to the selection of the Southern Kamerunians for the Regional House was very significant: it involved an acknowledgement that from then, Southern Kamerunians would have to sit in the Eastern Regional House, if other things remained equal; and, it also gave the Southern Kamerunians the opportunity to choose their own 'representatives.' Although the Southern Kamerunians did not make full use of the elective principle in selecting their two representatives,\* the Richards Constitution which came into force in 1946 and lasted until 1951, was the first time the British ever came close to enfranchising, in principle, Southern Kamerun. This was the significance of the Richards Constitution to Southern Kamerun.

In 1946, when the Richards Constitution came into force, Endeley and his groups founded a political discussion group called the Cameroons Federal Union (CFU). The relationship between the formation of the CFU and the coming into force of the Richards Constitution is not readily known. But the objective of the CFU was clear. It was out to acquire "a separate regional status" for Southern Kamerun; Endeley and his group saw a regional status as the surest way to reduce Ibo influence in Southern Kamerun.<sup>12</sup> A "separate regional status" for Southern Kamerun, of course, carried with it the implication of a Southern Kamerun identity. As a discussion group, however, the CFU did not have the impact comparable to that of the CWU and the CYL. However, while it kept alive the objective,

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\*There were no elections in Southern Kamerun before 1949. What probably happened is that the Native Authorities in the forest zone chose one 'representative' and those of the grasslands chose another.

first suggested by the CYL, a separate regional status, in the minds of its members, it prepared the groundwork for its successor, the Cameroons National Federation (CNF).

The CNF was a political organization founded by Endeley in 1949. The impetus behind its formation was the impending first visit of the United Nations Mission to Kamerun on October 31, 1949. The Federation consisted mainly of the various Improvement Unions and/or Associations of nearly all the Fondoms or ethnic groups.<sup>13</sup> These Unions and Associations were based mainly in the Urban areas. The Unions were of two kinds: the majority of them corresponded exactly with the jurisdiction of the Fandom whose name they bore, for instance, Nso Improvement Union would be limited to the Nso--these were the smaller Unions; others embraced several Fondoms and ethnic groups in the same vicinity, for example, Bamenda Improvement Union--these were the larger ones. In either case, the membership of the Unions consisted mainly of the Western-educated elite and a few businessmen--literate or illiterate; the illiterate businessmen were wooed into the Unions by the elite in an effort to make use of the former's wealth for the improvement of the areas under the jurisdiction of the individual Unions. The Unions were located either at the capital of the Fandom or at the agreed capital of the area: Nso Improvement Union was located in Kimbo (Kumbo) while Bamenda Improvement Union was located in Mankon Town. The attention of the Improvement Unions was almost always invariably directed at the education of those under their jurisdiction and the building of roads to facilitate communication.

The Associations differed from the Unions in many respects. They were composed, in the main, by the labour force, literate and illiterate.

Their main functions were social: helping members in times of difficulties, settling squabbles among their members, meeting once every week or every other week or monthly to drink and exchange ideas, acting as credit societies, disciplining and advising members believed to be acting contrary to tradition or exposing themselves unnecessarily to certain dangers. As organizations of the workers, they were based in the main centres of economic activity such as cities, towns, and the plantations.

The CNF was thus composed of groups whose purposes were originally non-political. But Endeley did not mean the amalgamated group or its parent branches to remain that way. From now on, many of the branches as well as the CNF would be political. The CNF in particular, although numerically tiny, embraced representatives from nearly all the Fondoms and surely all the ethnic groups in Southern Kamerun: it thus had a national character. Furthermore, it was manufactured in readiness for the United Nations Mission to Kamerun, the first time Southern Kamerunians would meet with the organization that was said to rule them.

More significant, however, was the ambitious objectives of the CNF. The CNF had three main political objectives, two of which were very ambitious. The first was to assert the identity of Western, not merely Southern, Kamerun. The second was to bring about the unification\* of Northern and Southern Kamerun into a single political entity. Finally, the CNF stood for the reunification\* of Western and Eastern Kamerun, and this

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\*The words 'unification' and 'reunification' have confused many authors on Kamerun. Initially, Southern Kamerun leaders used the former in relation to Northern and Southern Kamerun and the latter in relation to Western (or Southern) Kamerun with Eastern Kamerun. But later on, they began to use both at different times for either of the relations. They were thus responsible for the confusion of scholars.

"during the years when the Southern Cameroons was less easily distinguishable . . . from Eastern Nigeria."<sup>14</sup>

All the elements of Southern Kamerun nationalism were evident. The CWU agitated for separate identity. The CYL agitated for food, but politically demanded AUTONOMY, NATIONHOOD or INDEPENDENCE. The CFU advocated the overthrow of Ibo influences and possibly discussed unification and reunification. But, it was the CNF which explicitly made UNIFICATION and REUNIFICATION national issues. In a sense, therefore, it was the first contact of the Southern Kamerun nationalist leaders with the United Nations which indicated the mix bag of the Southern Kamerun nationalist programme. The rest of the period would be dominated by agreement and disagreement over which of these elements should be stressed and at which time.

This disagreement and agreement would not be long in coming; the leader and founder of the CNF did not himself believe in reunification. Endeley advocated reunification mainly as a means of developing Southern Kamerun. If he could develop Southern Kamerun without the instrumentality of reunification, he would have nothing to do with reunification. As he himself explained in 1959, the issue of reunification "had originally been raised in 1949" by the CNF, "of which he had been the first President." The motive behind it "had been that the Cameroons under British administration was lagging behind both Nigeria and the Cameroons under French administration." It was believed that reunification would make Kamerun "an economic unit with better prospects of standing on its own feet." But subsequent events had shown the futility of that hope and made reunification a "barren political instrument in the hands of irresponsible and ambitious people."<sup>15</sup> This explanation suggests very strongly, first,

that as far as Endeley was concerned, reunification was a means to an end, not an end in itself, and secondly, that reunification was indigenous to Southern Kamerun. Le Vine's assertions that nationalism and reunification were imported into Southern Kamerun from Eastern Kamerun do not seem to stand too well in light of what has been said so far and in light of Endeley's explanation of reunification.

In either event, the CNF made several demands and statements to the Mission when both groups met in 1949. The system of administering Western Kamerun as an "appendage to Nigeria" was not "in the best interest of the people." Instead of receiving the attention which "its special status is said to require," the territory had been "grossly neglected" because it was being administered as a part of Nigeria. It was necessary to reunite all of Kamerun as it was before 1914. Northern and Southern Kamerun should be united to form a distinct Region of Nigeria under the High Commissioner who should be directly responsible to the Governor at Lagos. Western Kamerun should either be ruled directly by the United Nations or be given independence. Everywhere, the "Mission encountered the cry for more and better education, for compulsory primary education, for secondary schools and for the expansion for vocational and trade training."<sup>16</sup> Southern Kamerun nationalism was now off the ground.

But the Southern Kamerunians appeared confused in their first encounter with the United Nations. On the one hand, they advocated autonomy within Nigeria. On the other, they asked for the reunification of Kamerun which implied severance from Nigeria. Yet on the other, they demanded either direct administration by the United Nations or independence. The Mission's recommendation possibly reflected this confusion. The Mission

emphasized "the need for a careful examination of the desirability and practicability of some administrative, legislative, and budgetary autonomy being established for the Trust Territory."<sup>17</sup>

But, it was in the Trusteeship Council that the British reorganization of Western Kamerun as a whole was criticized. A member of the Trusteeship Council, after studying the British report to the United Nations on the administration of Western Kamerun for that period, criticized what he described as British "continued segmentation and scrambling" of Western Kamerun. This policy, he went on, impeded "progress towards unity and self-government" for the territory. He was not very certain how the British could "give an assurance that the integrity of the Trust Territory would, in fact and not on paper, be preserved." Brigadier Gibbons, British special representative to the Trusteeship Council replied that, "In actual fact, whether or not unification was possible must depend entirely upon the wishes of the people."<sup>18</sup> This was the first hint that some form of consultation might be employed to find out what the Western Kamerunians really wanted.

Meanwhile, other events to which the nationalists of Southern Kamerun could not be indifferent were taking place in Nigeria. Sir John MacPherson, who replaced Richards as the Governor of Nigeria, was reviewing the Richards Constitution and introducing local reforms as early as 1948. These reforms increased political activity in Nigeria including Southern Kamerun. Desirous of avoiding the mistake which Richards made by producing a constitution without any consultation with the Nigerian leaders, MacPherson sought recommendations from the various Regional Houses of Nigeria. The Enugu House met in 1949 to draw up these recommendations. During the discussions, the Southern Kamerunians demanded a separate region

for Southern Kamerun. But the Nigerians argued that such a region would be politically and economically unviable. Being in the majority, they subsequently decided that the demands of the Southern Kamerunians "might satisfactorily be met by representation of the Trust Territory in both the regional House of Assembly and Executive Council and in the new central executive and legislature." The Southern Kamerunians later described the decision as an "imposition" adding that, due to "their minority position . . . they could not press effectively for a separate regional organization for the Trust Territory."<sup>19</sup>

This decision was accepted in January, 1950, by both the all-Nigeria Conference at Ibadan and by MacPherson. The next thing was to show how many Southern Kamerunians would be 'representing' Southern Kamerun in the Nigerian legislatures. The MacPherson Constitution, named after the Governor, provided the Eastern Region with "a single legislative chamber, which comprised eighty elected members, together with six officials and three who were nominated." Thirteen of the 80 elected members were to be Southern Kamerunians.<sup>20</sup>

The MacPherson Constitution was of no political significance to Southern Kamerun. Its identity had not yet been recognized explicitly. It was still only recognized as part of a political unit of Nigeria. The fact that six of its thirteen elected members would sit in the House of Representatives at Lagos, and one would be in the Eastern Regional Executive Council<sup>21</sup> made little difference. The best that can be said for the MacPherson Constitution is that it increased the number of Southern Kamerunians in the Nigerian legislatures.

However, since the MacPherson Constitution was to come into force in

1951, Southern Kamerun had to take steps in 1950 to select its members of the legislatures. The selection of these persons would demonstrate the different directions in which the forest zone and the grasslands were moving. Some elections did take place in the forest zone where tradition had been undermined. But even here, the turn-out was disappointing.

Only 25 to 30% cast their votes and the figures were sometimes as low as 10%. In Mamfe Division, for example, out of fifty primary units, only nine were contested and in Kumba Division the number was as low as two and in Victoria three.<sup>22</sup>

In the grassland, however, the 'representatives' were merely selected by the Native Authorities. In both areas of the region, therefore, the elective principle was not adequately exploited.\* Nevertheless, the selection had been done and the thirteen persons had become the acknowledged political leaders of the region under the leadership of Endeley. All of them were members of the CNF.

But the CNF itself included strange bed-fellows in its membership. The confused demands it made to the United Nations Mission in November 1949 reflected the elements of its programme which its members, individually or in groups, stressed. Some of its members stressed autonomy for Southern Kamerun, in a Region equal in status to the other Nigerian Regions, within the Nigerian framework. These were the autonomists and, later, integrationists and associationists. Others stressed the creation of a Southern or Western Kamerun state (Smaller Kamerun). These were the separatists or secessionists. A third group stressed the reunification of

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\*It is not readily known why there was such a low election turnout. However, it could be due to the fact that the nationalist movement was still confined to the Western-educated elite.



Kamerun (Greater Kamerun). These were the reunificationists and, later, anti-imperialists. Some of them were simply opportunists.

Such an amalgam of politicians required an astute politician or a 'supreme equilibrist' at its helm to keep it together. Unfortunately for the unity of the CNF, Endeley was neither a calculating politician nor a 'supreme equilibrist.' Too soon he let his anti-reunificationist sentiment show. He did not even give his reunificationist critics an opportunity to have doubts about his sentiments. For example, during the preparations for the 1950 elections, he was opposed to the enfranchisement of Eastern Kamerunians resident in Southern Kamerun. The sentimentally pro-reunificationist of the time, R. Jabea K. Dibonge for instance, could not fail to see the internal contradiction between accepting reunification and opposing the enfranchisement of the Eastern Kamerunians living in Southern Kamerun. Furthermore, Endeley became involved in personal feuds with some of the important leaders of the CNF. For example, he quarrelled with Nerius Namaso Mbile the Secretary of the CNF.<sup>23</sup> By not being able to calculate political circumstances, and to balance the apparently unnatural union of politicians and political situations, Endeley was also playing into the hands of politicians who had those qualities, John Ngu Foncha for instance.

Endeley's behaviour at this time and the composition of the CNF were a possible source for disagreement. Indeed, a split within the CNF occurred in 1951. The clash was essentially between Endeley and the pro-reunificationists. Supported by Mbile, and under some pressure from the members of the French Cameroons Welfare Union (FCWU), later Eastern Kamerun Welfare Union (EKWU), and smugglers who traded in goods smuggled across the Inter-Kamerunian boundary, Dibonge founded another political organization, the

Kamerun United National Congress (KUNC). Its objective was "to consider the question of reunification."<sup>24</sup> After a short period of calculation, Foncha broke away from the CNF and joined the KUNC. Including in its membership Dibonge from Eastern Kamerun, Mbile from Kumba Division, and Foncha from Bamenda Division, and with smugglers supporting it,\* it was obvious that KUNC would soon have more backing than the CNF.

The KUNC's programme revolved around independence and reunification. Its motto was "Towards self-government or independence for a United Kamerun." It was determined to create a "cohesive Kamerun nation" to tackle the "political, social, economic, educational and any other problems which may confront the indigenous inhabitants of the Kamerun." Once Greater Kamerun had been established, its inhabitants would have the "status of citizenship of the Kamerun." All this would be achieved peacefully and constitutionally: "the Congress shall engage in a sustained fight in a constitutional manner" to achieve these goals. With these lofty objectives, the KUNC left the CNF with almost no clearly definable objectives and claimed for itself the greater support of those involved in the nationalist movement.<sup>25</sup> The year 1951 was, therefore, a turning point in the nationalist movement. From that year, more splits and reunions could be expected in time. But not until the reunificationists had had an opportunity to test their programme.

The opportunity for such a test came in 1952. In June, 1952, the

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\*Kale, p. 57, reported that the KUNC "attracted a large following of petty traders who were many [sic] in the British section and who traded heavily in almost 75% of smuggled goods from the French Cameroons."

British made an attempt to bring Southern and Northern Kamerun together in a conference at Buea, the headquarters of Southern Kamerun. The purposes of the conference, which the British described as a "striking" event, were twofold: to see how best to expend the profits made available from the CDC for the development of Southern and Northern Kamerun; and, to find out whether the two regions desired unification. Discussions at the conference were amicable and fruitful. Delegates from both regions agreed that unification was something to be effected. The representative of New Zealand praised the attempt and the Trusteeship Council urged the British to arrange many more such conferences. The British promised the Council that the next one would be held as soon as the profits from the CDC for the year 1950 came up for consideration.<sup>26</sup> But, as it turned out, the 1952 conference was the first and the last.

Later on in 1952, the Southern Kamerunians came in contact for the second time with the United Nations via the Visiting Mission. The difference between the political objectives of the CNF and the KUNC came out very clearly in their individual demands from the Mission. The KUNC demanded everything to be found in its programme concentrating on immediate reunification. On the other hand, the CNF was pleased at the "greater political representation" gained in the MacPherson Constitution, but wondered whether this gain "would lead to the realization of the Trust Territory as a political entity." It felt that "a separate region" should be established "for the whole of Cameroons," that is Western Kamerun.<sup>27</sup> Autonomy within Nigeria for Western Kamerun in a Region separate from Eastern Nigeria was thus the goal of the CNF and its members; these were now the autonomists. The establishment of Greater Kamerun was the goal of the KUNC and its

members; these were now the reunificationists. The question then was which of these goals had greater support.

If the two political organizations had wished to know which of the two opposing objectives commanded greater support among the politically active Southern Kamerunians in 1952, they had ample opportunity. The Victoria Federated Council--a union of all the Native Authorities in Victoria Division (Bakweri land) including the Bakweri Native Authority and the Bakweri Land Committee, the Mamfe Divisional Memorandum Committee, the Mamfe Improvement Union, and the Bali Improvement Union were autonomists. They demanded (from the Mission) "territorial autonomy for the Trust Territory." They also felt that the rights of the Commissioner for the Cameroons should be extended to include those of the Lieutenant-Governor. They saw a "separate regional status" for Southern Kamerun "as a step towards the achievement of self-government." The Bamenda Branch of the CYL was silent over the two issues. (By this time, Southern Kamerun had been divided into two administrative units, the forest zone and the grasslands. The forest zone, Mamfe, Kumba, and Victoria Divisions, assumed the name Cameroons Province, a name previously given to all of Southern Kamerun as a Province of Eastern Nigeria. The grasslands, Bamenda, Wum, and Nkambe Divisions, went by the name Bamenda Province.) On this occasion, the Bamenda CYL demanded that the two Provinces be administratively reunited and given its former name, Cameroons Province, in order "to restore the conception of a Cameroons entity." Surprisingly enough, surprising because Endeley and some members of the CNF were included, when acting as a group, all the thirteen 'elected' leaders demanded reunification albeit none of them had any concrete proposals for bringing it about.<sup>28</sup>

It is now possible to suggest which of the two ideas, autonomism or reunificationism, enjoyed greater support among the politically active Southern Kamerunians. Had the majority of the Southern Kamerunians joined the nationalist movement, one could suggest that, because all the 'elected' leaders supported reunification as a group, reunification enjoyed greater support. But, even here one has to be careful; it is not readily known how the 'elected' members of the CNF would have behaved when acting either individually or as a CNF group. Nor is it readily known how the opportunists and/or astute politicians, members of either the CNF or KUNC, would have behaved. The preceding paragraph suggests very strongly that autonomism was more popular in 1952 or thereabout. It seems, therefore, that the popularity which Kale, who was himself very active at the time, awarded to the KUNC was due to the idea of independence, not reunification.

The British, the French, and the Mission in 1952 also concluded that reunification had limited appeal. According to the Mission, the idea of reunification "was closely linked in the minds of the [thirteen] representatives with concern over their minority position in the Nigerian legislative organs and reflected the apprehensions that the interests of the Trust Territory might be subordinated to those of Nigeria." The French and the British authorities in Kamerun came to the conclusion that only a few Kamerunians really wanted reunification. The Mission's conclusion over the issue was that reunification was limited to certain areas of the region and was not even popular in those localities.<sup>29</sup> Whatever the case, reunification would prove to be the most divisive element of all the elements of Southern Kamerun nationalism. But not until the 1953 events in Nigeria and their subsequent results had given it the opportunity to play its role.

In 1953, there was a political crisis within the leadership of the NCNC. Essentially, the clash involved a conflict over NCNC policy and a challenge to Azikiwe's authority over the issue. Members of the NCNC in the Eastern Regional House were split in their support. Some supported the leader of the NCNC in Eastern Nigeria. Others supported Azikiwe, the national leader of the NCNC. On the other hand, the thirteen Southern Kamerunians decided to form a neutral bloc. But Azikiwe and Chief Obafemi Awolowo--leader of the Action Group (AG), a Western Nigeria-based political party, thought they saw an opportunity to secure the allegiance of the Southern Kamerun bloc in their own rivalry in the all-Nigeria political situation. The contest for the allegiance of Southern Kamerun had begun in earnest.

It was Azikiwe who initiated this contest on April 14, 1953. In a policy statement issued from Lagos, Azikiwe declared:

The NCNC recognizes the peculiar position of the Cameroons as A Trust Territory and supports the Cameroons peoples' demand for separate Regional status including a separate legislative assembly for the Cameroons with full budgetary autonomy. The National Council also recognizes and supports the desires and aspirations of the people of the Cameroons for unification of the two sections of the territory under the British and the French, into a single political entity as existed before 1914.<sup>30</sup>

Two weeks later, April 25, 1953, Awolowo joined in the contest and declared in a speech from Ibadan:

It is the policy of the Action Group to be independent in all things but not to be neutral in anything affecting the destiny of any part of Africa. We are not indifferent to the aspirations of the people of the Cameroon. The Action Group supports the demand of Cameroons people for a separate Legislature and a right to self-determination to remain in or outside Nigeria. It is an insult for a country like the Cameroons to remain perpetually, against its will, a Trust Territory.<sup>31</sup>

These two speeches were significant in many respects. The national

NCNC and the AG aimed at breaking the Southern Kamerun neutrality in each other's favour: Azikiwe, in order to have more support in the Eastern Regional Parliament; Azikiwe and Awolowo, in order to boost their strength at the national level. In these attempts, Azikiwe and Awolowo overdid themselves. They offered Southern Kamerun much more than they had offered it in 1949 at the Enugu and Ibadan conferences.

The speeches first had their impact on the Southern Kamerun bloc and neutrality. Before the crisis, two members of the bloc, both from the CNF, held responsible positions in the Nigerian legislatures. Endeley was Minister without Portfolio in the Central Executive at Lagos. Solomon Tandeng Muna was Minister of Works in the Eastern Regional Executive. Endeley's position was not affected by the crisis because it was in the central legislature whereas the crisis involved mainly the Eastern Regional legislature. But, possibly because of his neutrality, Azikiwe's rival in the Eastern Regional House dismissed Muna from his ministry. After these speeches, four of the thirteen Southern Kamerunians--Mbile, Charlie, S.C. Ndi, P.N. Motomby-Woleta, (the Four hereafter), broke the bloc and their own neutrality by supporting the local NCNC leader against Azikiwe.<sup>32</sup> Neither Azikiwe nor Awolowo had set out to break the bloc, just the neutrality in each other's favour. But it was the bloc which broke first and in favour of the local NCNC leader who had something concrete, a ministry at least, to offer. Whoever would have the rest of the bloc (the Nine hereafter) would depend on the turn of events.

When it looked like the Parliament would once more function normally, the Nine refused to break their neutrality. Instead, they demanded that Muna be reinstated in his ministry. On May 5, 1953, the demand was rejected

by a vote of 45 to 32. During the vote, the Four joined with the members of the NCNC who supported the local leader and voted against the demand. On the other hand, the Nine combined forces with those who supported Azikiwe and voted for it. The break between the Four and the Nine was now definitely confirmed. On May 6, 1953, the Four took their usual seats in the Parliament. On the other hand, the Nine abandoned their seats and sat on the public gallery. It is not readily known what effect the action of the Nine had on the Parliament. But, that same day, May 6, 1953, the Parliament came to a standstill and, when it moved, chairs flew across the floor. The lieutenant-Governor of Eastern Nigeria had no choice but to dissolve the Parliament by proclamation on May 6, 1953.<sup>33</sup>

The Nine then set about seeking support in Southern Kamerun. In a message dated May 6, 1953, but published in the Outlook, a Nigerian daily, on May 7, 1953, they reported Muna's dismissal and the refusal to reinstate him, and the dissolution of the Parliament.<sup>34</sup> After this initial reporting the Nine suggested what ought to be done and, in the course of this suggestion, they set about inflaming public sentiment. The refusal to reinstate Muna, they said, was "a deliberate disregard for the wishes and aspirations of the people of the Cameroons." They had broken their connection with Eastern Nigeria because, "as a minority group," they could not "make the wishes of Cameroons people respected" in that legislature. Southern Kamerun must press immediately "for a separate Region." All Southern Kamerunians should be "prepared to make sacrifices." Future elections to the Eastern Regional House would have to be boycotted until Southern Kamerun received "a Cameroons House of Assembly." Every Southern Kamerunian must be firm and loyal to the cause of his "dear country." Every Southern



Kamerunian should "have faith in the future of the Cameroons." Every Southern Kamerunian who could make it was invited to a conference at Mamfe between May 22 and May 24, 1953, to discuss the issues.<sup>35</sup>

After inviting the traditional rulers and their subjects on May 6, 1953, to join the nationalist movement,\* the Nine left for home to interpret the message. In their Land Rover, on their way home, an incident occurred in Ibo land, an incident which did much to help them and to heighten a-Fon-Ibo tensions.† No wonder then that the response to their message was massive and spontaneous as they toured Southern Kamerun lecturing, meeting with the a-Fon, and explaining what ought to be done. (The opportunity to chase away the Ibo had been given to the a-Fon and their subjects.) The Mamfe Conference was held on the scheduled dates and the decision was unanimous: a petition should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies "demanding the creation of a separate and autonomous Legislature for the Trust Territory." On May 28, 1953, Endeley,

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\*Eyongetah and Brain, op. cit., p. 134, have this to say about the invitation. "All native authorities, tribal organizations, chiefs [the a-Fon] and the people of every village and town were asked to send two representatives each to a conference to be held in May, 1953."

†As they drove through Ibo land, the Ibo, who had probably read the message in the Outlook or who knew what was happening and were probably infuriated at the decision of the Nine, stoned their Land Rover in some towns. Once they reported these incidents in their public lectures, the Southern Kamerun latent anti-Ibo sentiment was turned into Ibophobia. Later on, the reunificationists and secessionists would cite this incident to run down the integrationists. The latent anti-Ibo sentiments in Southern Kamerun was perceived differently by the various sections of society: to the Western-educated, it was Ibo domination of white-collar jobs; to the plantation workers, it was against Ibo domination of higher grade offices; to the traders, it was against Ibo domination of commercial activities and their rivalry with the Ibo on this aspect; and to the a-Fon, it was against the lack of respect for Southern Kamerun traditions by the Ibo.

the acknowledged leader, left Lagos for London where he submitted the Petition to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.<sup>36</sup> The Secretary set about studying the Petition.

One of the issues discussed at Mamfe was the amalgamation of the CNF and the KUNC. The Conference called upon the two organizations to merge into one.<sup>37</sup> When Endeley returned from London, steps were taken in that direction. In June, 1953, the Four were relieved of their membership in either the CNF or the KUNC. Mbile was thus relieved of his secretaryship of the KUNC. Having purged the already known opportunists from these organizations, their leaders proceeded to effect a merger. The product was the first political party in Southern Kamerun, the Kamerun National Congress (KNC). Endeley was at its head.<sup>38</sup>

Like the CNF, the KNC included strange bed-fellows in its membership. To be sure, the opportunists had been purged, but, opportunism was not the only problem of the unity of the nationalist movement. Indeed, it was the least of the problems. The bone of contention was the objectives of that movement and leadership was the real problem. As an amalgam of the CNF and the KUNC, the opposing objectives of the two organizations were to be found in the KNC programme. Except for the already known opportunists, the KNC included leaders who stressed different aspects of its programme. Worse still, Endeley was at the head of the KNC. The situation of the CNF had been largely replicated. Another split could be expected whenever Endeley would act as he did earlier. He was soon to do so but not until the opportunists had found a home for themselves and other events had occurred to give him some justifiable confidence.

As soon as the KNC was formed, Kale, an admirer of the parliamentary

system and of the democratic principle, saw the existence of only one political party in the region as incompatible to what he admired. This incompatibility led him to form another political party, the Kamerun People's Party (KPP) in June, 1953. He wished to set the KPP against the KNC "in order to make parliamentary democracy a reality in the Southern Cameroons."<sup>39</sup> Standing poorly dressed and with nowhere else to go, the Four were the first to join the KPP. Indeed, Mbile became its first secretary. But, because Kale came from the same constituency as Endeley and could hardly be elected over Endeley, Mbile was the spokesman for the KPP in the Parliament\* while Kale represented the party outside Parliament.

The objectives of the KPP were interesting. "The primary objective of the KPP was regional autonomy for the Trust Territory and secession from Nigeria when the latter became an independent country." But to achieve this objective, the KPP would work "in partnership as far as possible with Nigeria and other African nationalist political parties." It would also fight to preserve "Cameroons identity within the United States of West

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\*Rubin, p. 86, lost sight of this fact and incorrectly stated that the KPP was formed by the five Southern Kamerunians, including Mbile, who broke their neutrality and voted against Muna's reinstatement. First of all, there were four of these Southern Kamerunians, not five. Secondly, the founder of the party, Kale, was not one of the thirteen Southern Kamerun 'representatives'; Kale was a supervising schoolmaster at Eket, Calabar, Nigeria, and received a letter from Foncha written on May 6, 1953, describing the events connected with the neutrality of the bloc and the dissolution of the Parliament. See Kale, pp. 35-40. The questions which should be asked is: was Kale as disinterested as he claims in forming the KPP? The present writer is inclined to think that the fact that Kale and Endeley came from the same constituency and Kale could hardly be selected over his cousin, Endeley, in the same party, might have had something to do with the formation of the KPP.

Africa, and Africa for that matter."<sup>40</sup> The objectives of the KPP were, therefore, threefold and were expected to evolve in time. The immediate objective was to make Southern Kamerun an autonomous Region within Nigeria as long as Nigeria remained a colony. When Nigeria became independent, Southern Kamerun would secede from it and form a state of its own. In time, this state would be part of either the United States of West Africa or the United States of Africa whichever was possible. Reunification was no part of its programme.

Like its counterpart, the KNC, the KPP included strange bedfellows in its membership. All of them were agreed that reunification was out of the question; Mbile had run away from reunification. Some of them, Mbile for example, talked secession but, like Endeley and reunification, they did not believe in it. On the other hand, others, Kale for instance, appeared to believe in the programme of the KPP. However, the test for the sincerity of the members of the KPP for its programme would come only when Nigeria was about to become independent. For the moment, the party must concentrate on its immediate objective and test its popularity against that of the KNC. The opportunity for all this came in 1953.

By August, 1953, the British had come to a definite decision regarding the Nigerian situation in which the crisis of the NCNC had caused the collapse of the MacPherson Constitution. In that month there was a constitutional conference in London. All the major Nigerian political parties including those in Southern Kamerun were represented. Endeley went as a delegate of Southern Kamerun and Mbile as that of the NCNC. Mallam Abba Habib was selected by the British authorities in Nigeria as the spokesman for Northern Kamerun. As one of those Northern Kamerun Fulani who supported

the British political reorganization of the region, Habib declared at the conference that Northern Kamerun wished to remain a permanent part of Northern Nigeria. Chosen as leader by the Mamfe Conference, Endeley demanded an autonomous Region for Southern Kamerun equal in all respects to the other Regions of Nigeria but within the Nigerian framework. While this demand did not involve Southern Kamerun separatism from Nigeria, it did assert that Southern Kamerun should not be integral part of Eastern Nigeria. At the conference, the Colonial Secretary responded fully to the Northern Kamerun request, and, in principle, partially to the Southern Kamerun request. He was prepared to award Southern Kamerun a Region, on condition, but not a full one. As he put it, if the KNC won the elections to be conducted following the collapse of the MacPherson Constitution, "the issue of a Southern Cameroons Legislature would be a foregone conclusion." The elections were held soon after in the same year and the KNC won all the seats in Southern Kamerun except one in Mamfe Overside\* which S.E. Ncha gained for the KPP.<sup>41</sup>

1953 proved to be a turning point in the history of Southern Kamerun in many respects. For the first time the British recognized explicitly a separate identity for Southern Kamerun albeit on a condition. The condition was fulfilled. There could be no going back. More would have to be gained not lost. The a-Fon had been brought into the nationalist movement effect-

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\*Mamfe Overside lies on the Western side of the River Mfum which acts at some points as the Nigeria-Kamerun boundary. This area of Kamerun is separated from the mainland by this river. From time immemorial the inhabitants of this area interacted more with Eastern Nigeria than with the rest of Kamerun. Their nearest Nigerian neighbours are part of their ethnic group. These factors might help to explain the way they voted.

ively. At Mamfe, the decision to form a political party was made in the presence of the a-Fon who, from then, would give that party their support. This important support was responsible for the overwhelming victory of the KNC over the KPP in the 1953 elections. From now on, no astute political leader would act without his eyes looking over his shoulder at the a-Fon. In other words, the a-Fon as traditional leaders who had the loyalty of the majority of their subjects, literate or illiterate, would be a powerful force to reckon with in the nationalist movement. These traditional leaders in their turn would never abandon any political leader until he had first abandoned them.

They had already indicated this in 1953 (and 1954).<sup>\*</sup> By declaring that it would work in partnership with Nigeria and actually forming an alliance with the NCNC, the KPP abandoned the a-Fon who had seen the opportunity to rescue their traditions by chasing away the Ibo. When the elections came, the a-Fon abandoned it. Perhaps, the situation was best described by Kale who was active at the time and whose political party, the KPP, opposed the KNC which the a-Fon supported.

The KNC was at this time a very popular political party which from every indication enjoyed the confidence of a cross-section of the population, including the various 'Native Authorities' and natural rulers, [the a-Fon].<sup>\*</sup> Its counterpart, the KPP, no less a militant and dynamic political party for the cause of freedom for the Cameroons, embraced the cream of the society, that is, the majority of the educated elements in the Territory, but it suffered tremendous setbacks. It was badly misplaced and misinterpreted as being in favour of the Cameroons perpetuating its association with Nigeria. This was amplified by the fact that

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<sup>\*</sup>As shown in chapter one, the a-Fon were members of the Native Authorities and, indeed, where tradition was still very powerful, the a-Fon had the final say in those councils, for instance, the South-Eastern Native Authority (or Federation).

the KPP was an ally of the NCNC which again did not help the situation because the NCNC was labelled as an Ibo-inspired organization and at this material time the Ibos were not popular with Cameroonians. So popular had the KNC become that when in 1954 elections to the House of Representatives were held the party won all the eight seats.<sup>42</sup>

Later on in the book, Kale re-emphasized this point. The language of the KPP "did not create a ferment in the minds and hearts of the masses† who controlled the votes," particularly as the KPP was branded an Ibo-dominated party.<sup>43</sup> Even the 1958 United Nations Visiting Mission to Kamerun recognized the support the a-Fon gave the KNC at this time. "In the past these [a-Fon] gave their support on the whole to Dr. Endeley."<sup>44</sup> Endeley would continue to enjoy this support as long as he paid attention to the wishes and desires of the a-Fon.

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†What Kale refers to here as the "masses" were the a-Fon and their illiterate subjects since he says in the larger quotation footnoted 42 that the KPP "embraced the cream of the society, that is, the majority of the educated elements in the Territory..."

Footnotes - Chapter Two

<sup>1</sup> Kale, op. cit., p. 21. This source is actually a book of documents and an outline of the chronology of events; this chapter depends heavily on it in these respects.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 21-22.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 21-22.

<sup>8</sup> Neville Rubin, Cameroun: An African Federation, Praeger Publishers, London, 1971, pp. 75-76.

<sup>9</sup> Kale, op. cit., pp. 50-54.

<sup>10</sup> Rubin, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>13</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1426, January 20, 1959, p. 42.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 42-43.

<sup>15</sup> U.N., G.A., Hearings from Cameroons Petitioners, A/C.4/SR.846, May, 1959, pp. 554-556.

<sup>16</sup> U.N., T.C., United Nations Bulletin, Vol. 8, March 1, 1950, pp. 204-211.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> U.N., T.C., United Nations Bulletin, Vol. 8, April 1, 1950, pp. 324-325.

<sup>19</sup> Tambi Eyongetah and Robert Brain, A History of the Cameroons, Longman, London, 1974, pp. 129-130.

<sup>20</sup> Rubin, op. cit., pp. 84-86.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>22</sup> Eyongetah and Brain, op. cit., pp. 131-132.



<sup>23</sup>Rubin, op. cit., p. 85; Willard R. Johnson, The Cameroon Federation: Political Integration in a Fragmentary Society, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1970, p. 122; Claude E. Welch, Jr., Dream of Unity, Cornell University Press, N.Y., 1966, p. 177.

<sup>24</sup>Johnson, op. cit., pp. 122-123; Kale, op. cit., p. 57.

<sup>25</sup>Kale, op. cit., pp. 38, 56-57.

<sup>26</sup>U.N., T.C., United Nations Bulletin, Vol. 13, September 1, 1952, pp. 269-270.

<sup>27</sup>U.N., T.C., United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1952, Report on the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, T/1042, March 16, 1953, pp. 25-27.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 25-28.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Kale, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., pp. 38-39.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 38-40.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 40-41.

<sup>37</sup>Eyongetah and Brain, op. cit., p. 135.

<sup>38</sup>Kale, op. cit., pp. 42, 58.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., pp. 42-43.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>44</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1426, January 20, 1959, p. 54.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE ROAD TO THE PLEBISCITES 1953-1959

The traditional leaders joined the nationalist movement at a time when the differences in viewpoint among the political leaders regarding the future of Western Kamerun were growing deeper. The traditional leaders, except perhaps those of Mamfe Overside, in the case of Southern Kamerun, and some of the Fulani princes, in the case of Northern Kamerun, were not parties to these disagreements. But, coming in contact with the political leaders, it was obvious that, sooner or later, these a-Fon would come to take sides. Once the a-Fon did become involved in the various nationalist programmes, it became difficult for the nationalist leaders to settle their differences and agree on a political future. In a sense, therefore, it was the a-Fon's involvement after 1953 which opened up the road to the plebiscites. Nevertheless, like the historical background, the road to the plebiscites in Northern Kamerun differed from that in Southern Kamerun. It would appear more appropriate, therefore, to treat the situation in each region quite separately although in the same chapter. It would also appear more appropriate to begin with Northern Kamerun where the process began earlier.

#### The Road to the Northern Kamerun Plebiscites 1953-1959

It was the response to the MacPherson invitation in Northern Nigeria which first explicitly showed that there was a difference of opinion about the future of Northern Kamerun. In response to the MacPherson invitation,

Northern Nigeria held a Provincial Constitutional Conference. The Emir of Dikwa and his secretary went to the Conference as spokesmen for Northern Kamerun. At the conference, all the delegates from Northern Nigeria proper declared that Northern Kamerun should permanently be integrated with Northern Nigeria and that trusteeship for that region should be terminated to that effect. On the other hand, the only two delegates from Northern Kamerun, the Emir of Dikwa and his secretary, rejected the idea. Instead they called for the continuation of trusteeship in Northern Kamerun.<sup>1</sup>

The positions taken by the delegates at the Conference were significant in several respects. They showed that there were people in Northern Kamerun who were opposed to integration with Nigeria. They showed that, the Northern Nigerians proper were interested in absorbing Northern Kamerun. (Le Vine's assertion that Nigerians almost came close to wishing Northern Kamerun on Cameroun would appear to make no sense in light of this.) They showed that not all the Northern Kamerun Fulani wished to be permanently integrated in Northern Nigeria. (Eyongetah and Brain's explanation that the Northern Kamerunians voted the way they did because of their cultural affinities with Northern Nigeria does not appear supported). More importantly, they showed that there were people in Northern Kamerun who preferred the trusteeship status of Northern Kamerun to integration with Nigeria. Furthermore, and this too is very important, they registered a clash of ideas between the British and Nigerians on the one hand, and the Emir of Dikwa on the other. But, the Emir of Dikwa was not alone in this respect.

In June, 1952, as seen in the preceding chapter, the British brought

delegates from Northern Kamerun to Buea to discuss with the delegates from Southern Kamerun how to expend the profits from the CDC and whether unification was possible. Delegates from both regions felt that unification was worth pursuing. This desire by the delegates of both regions to pursue unification conflicted with the British political reorganization of Western Kamerun. The second contact of Northern Kamerun delegates outside that region had, like the first, produced results that might not have been expected. From now on, whether fortunately or not, and whether intentionally or not, the spokesmen for that area would be those who had the same mind, those who supported the way the British had reorganized the region. This situation would give the illusion that there was no conflict of opinion in Northern Kamerun regarding its future.

The appearance that there was no conflict of opinion in Northern Kamerun regarding its disposition began to take the form of reality in late 1952. The incident was the United Nations Mission to Kamerun in that year. During that visit, the Mission met several people but wrote its report mainly from the ideas received from the local authorities of Northern Kamerun, authorities who were in support of the status quo for the region. The Mission had thus left the area with the impression that the Northern Kamerunians were satisfied with what obtained in the region adding that it "received no demand for unification from that part of the Trust Territory administered with Benue Province." However, the Mission was not unaware that there was a conflict of opinion over the issue of unification since it reported that the demand for unification was limited to certain localities and was not even popular. Yet, a communication from Adamawa demanded the unification of 'French' Adamawa to Nigeria.<sup>2</sup>

The year 1953, however, confirmed and challenged the idea that the Status quo in Northern Kamerun was almost universally popular. The confirmation took place in the outside world and the challenge came from within Northern Kamerun. As seen in the previous chapter, during the August 1953 London Constitutional Conference, Mallam Abba Habib, the spokesman for Northern Kamerun declared that Northern Kamerun "would prefer to remain within Northern Nigeria."<sup>3</sup> But Habib was not Northern Kamerun. The Emir of Dikwa, himself a Fulani, by rejecting the recommendations of the Provincial Conference at Kaduna that Northern Kamerun be permanently integrated with Northern Nigeria and that trusteeship be terminated to that effect, became the centre of attraction for like-minded Northern Kamerunians. In 1953, some Northern Kamerunians, under the banner of an obscure organization called the "Kamerun Socialist Convention" with the Emir of Dikwa at its head, demonstrated against the status quo and demanded the separation of Northern Kamerun from Nigeria.<sup>4</sup> The full scope and form of this agitation is not known. But several a-Fon as well as the Emir of Dikwa were involved.\*

The response to this protest by the British and the local authorities

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\*What is reported here and in the next paragraph is based partly on the report by the Association of African Students studying in France at the time. These students named only the deposition of the Emir of Dikwa. But, Fon V.H. Bang who was also involved in the affairs, reported from his hide-out in Southern Kamerun, later on, how he and seventeen other Mambilla a-Fon had been harassed and then named a large number of them that had been deposed because of their political ideas; see, U.N., T.C., T/PET.4/L.15, February 20, 1959; T/PET.4/L.18, September 1, 1959. Furthermore, as will be seen later in chapter four, when the Fourth United Nations Mission to Kamerun recommended that Northern Kamerun be permanently integrated with Nigeria without any consultation because there was "no difference of opinion" in the region regarding the issue, the Soviet representative in the Trusteeship Council asked the Chairman of the Mission whether the latter had considered the events of 1953 before writing his report; and, as far as the available sources indicate, no other political disturbance occurred in the region in 1953.

was swift. The British and the local authorities "swiftly damped down on them," deposing many of the a-Fon and the Emir of Dikwa. New a-Fon were hand-picked and installed in the places of these deposed. These new a-Fon were either those already known to be supporters of the status quo or those who promised to support it. They used their powers "to menace any attempts of articulating political opinion that [was] not in favour of the goals of the Administering Authority."<sup>5</sup>

The demonstration and the British response were significant in many respects. The British and the Northern Nigerians could no longer be under any illusions about the real situation. There were many people in Northern Kamerun, Fulani and non-Fulani, who desired the separation of Northern Kamerun from Northern Nigeria. But, there were also many, mainly Fulani or at least Muslims, who preferred integration with Northern Nigeria. The British response was very effective in undermining attempts to make public statements against the political reorganization of the region. Those Northern Kamerunians who had demonstrated had not had enough of freedom of speech and action to want more. More significantly, however, was the damping down on a Socialist organization, an incident which would not be lost to the Socialist countries in the United Nations.

Whatever the case, the mistake which the 1952 Mission made, was replicated by the 1955 Mission. Before the Mission arrived in Northern Kamerun, the British had constituted the first 'political' body for that region called the "Consultative Committee for the Northern Cameroons," (Consultative Committee from now on). This Committee had twelve members (at this time and even four years after): six were selected by local councils. One was the Lamido of Adamawa, the highest local authority in Adamawa

Province of Northern Nigeria.<sup>6</sup> Five were the Northern Kamerunians who by now were sitting in Nigerian legislatures. These included Abdullahi Dan Buram, Ibrahim Demsa, and T. Idirisu all members of the Northern Regional House, and Mormoni Bazza and Abubadar Gurum Pawo both members of the central legislature at Lagos.<sup>7</sup> The 1955 Mission drew its conclusions mostly from the ideas expressed by the members of the group. Though the Mission encountered the cry for unification and reunification, it reported that "this request emanated only from the Southern Cameroons, there being no such desire expressed in the Northern Cameroons."<sup>8</sup> The 1952 mistake had thus been repeated in 1955.

Nevertheless, the Haitian representative to the Council, despite the Mission's report, was skeptical. As he saw it, the "leaders of the Northern Cameroons who desired integration with the Northern Region of Nigeria represented a traditional oligarchy which was not necessarily representative of the masses."<sup>9</sup> As far as the British representative to the Council was concerned, however, the report of the Mission on Northern Kamerun was accurate. As he saw it, the

Administering Authority could not assume the responsibility of pressing for . . . an artificial division between the northern part of the Trust Territory and the Northern Region of Nigeria. So far there had been no manifestation on the part of the Northern Cameroons representatives of the desire for separate political institutions.<sup>10</sup>

Essentially, the British representative was supporting the position taken by the Visiting Mission. He was, however, very careful when he confined his remarks to the views expressed by the "Northern Cameroons representatives."

Whatever the case, the 1955 Mission like its 1952 predecessor, failed

to pick up local dissatisfaction with the Nigerian connection. Not surprisingly, however, the situation of 1953 reproduced itself between 1957 and 1958. There was another review of the Nigerian Constitution at London in May and June, 1957. All the major Nigerian political parties were once more represented. With no indigenous political party in Northern Kamerun, the British once more selected Habib as the spokesman for that region. During the Conference, Habib again declared that Northern Kamerun would rather remain integrated with Northern Nigeria than separate from it. When the Conference resumed on September 29, 1958, Habib stood firm on his previous position. He congratulated Southern Kamerun for gaining a Regional status but declared that Northern Kamerun wished to remain integrated with Northern Nigeria.<sup>11</sup>

With the 'representative' of Northern Kamerun consistently taking this position over the future of the region, the Colonial Secretary could do no more than 'satisfy' Northern Kamerun. Northern Nigeria would become self-governing on March 15, 1959. Northern Kamerun would remain an integral part of this self-governing region. But the Governor of Nigeria would "retain general reserve powers in relation to the Northern Cameroons . . . to ensure the discharge of [Britain's] obligations under the Trusteeship Agreements" for Western Kamerun.<sup>12</sup> Mallam Habib had had what he wanted and the Colonial Secretary was left with the impression that he had acted in conformity with the wishes of the majority of the Northern Kamerunians.

However, the events associated with the 1958 Mission to Kamerun, in Kamerun and in the United Nations, would soon begin to cast doubts on the position so consistently taken by Habib. The fourth and final United Nations Mission to Kamerun came in 1958 and stayed in Western Kamerun



(Northern and Southern Kamerun) for only two weeks. This Mission was led by Benjamin Gerig, the representative of the United States of America. This particular Mission was regarded by those involved in the affairs of Kamerun and the Kamerunians themselves as the most important Mission to the Territory.

Before the Mission had time to meet those in authority in Northern Kamerun, it first came in contact with those who were not in authority and whom the Mission would treat as inconsequential. These were the a-Fon of Mambilla. Since they dare not express their views publicly or even privately to the Mission while in Northern Kamerun for fear of deposition, these a-Fon slipped across the Northern Kamerun-Southern Kamerun border and, in Southern Kamerun, NKambe Division, handed petitions to Gerig. They were led by Fon V.H. Bang of Bang, Mambilla. Their message was simple: if Northern Kamerun could not be separated from Northern Nigeria and made part of Southern Kamerun, then the Mambilla area alone should be separated from both Northern Nigeria and Northern Kamerun and made part of Southern Kamerun.<sup>13</sup> Instead of preserving these petitions for his own report, Gerig brought them to the attention of the Anglo-Nigerian authorities in Northern Nigeria and Northern Kamerun.\*

The response of the local authorities to the petitions by now could be expected. Whether under instructions or not, the District Head of Gembu, as Fon Bang reported,\* went about arresting all those in Mambilla who were

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\*In document U.N., G.A., A/C.4/400, February 26, 1959, pp. 1-2, the Northern Kamerun local authorities stated that they came to know about the Mambilla request that the area be transferred to the Southern Kamerun administration from the Mission which received the petitions from two Mambilla a-Fon while in Southern Kamerun. No reason was given for the

connected with the petitions. Fon Bang, with one of his sons, Joseph Noubuin, was forced to escape to the Southern Kamerun sanctuary. Another of his sons, John Tonga, was arrested and imprisoned in Gembu. Many of the Mambilla a-Fon were forced to sign a renunciation slip to the effect that they did not desire to be part of Southern Kamerun. Those of them who refused to sign this slip were dethroned. Caught in this cleaning up operation were the a-Fon of Mbach, Tamya, Bukudeh, Capbrih, Karah, Titong, Mbamngah, Kumah, Kilayan, Ndumyaji, Tep, Warowar, and Hainan. Fon Bang himself was on the list of those to be dethroned; three Fulani men were waiting at his home to arrest him should he return from his sanctuary in Southern Kamerun.<sup>14</sup>

This cleaning up affair, however, occurred while the Mission had left the region. But it was the Mission which carried the information (as shown in document A/C.4/400, February 26, 1959, pp. 102) to the Northern Kamerun and Northern Nigerian authorities. One of those the Mission consulted was the Lamido of Adamawa, Alhaji Mustafa. Mustafa felt that the Northern Kamerunians were perfectly happy with the status quo because they were with "their brothers living in that part of Adamawa which [was] non-trust," (that is Nigeria Adamawa). His people of Northern Kamerun would never "support any proposal of separation from Nigeria," although they would welcome the idea of their "brothers in the French Cameroons" reuniting

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presentation of the petitions in Southern rather than in Northern Kamerun. Furthermore, in these petitions, Fon Bang named the villages whose Crowned Princes had been dethroned. Moreover, Bang followed up these petitions with another one while still in Southern Kamerun complaining that he was still in exile and that the first Northern Kamerun plebiscite might be conducted while he was away from home. See documents U.N., T.C., T/PET.4/L.15, February 20, 1959; T/PET.4/L.18, September 1, 1959.

with them in Nigeria.<sup>15</sup>

The five Northern Kamerun 'representatives' to the Nigerian legislatures would also say the same thing. They wished to be allowed to decide to live with their brothers of Northern Nigeria "whether by referendum, plebiscite or any other means." They were opposed to any move "to break away Northern Cameroons from Northern Region and from Adamawa Province." They wished to have nothing to do with Eastern Kamerun which was "merciless" and which had "coup-ets-ats" [sic],<sup>16</sup> that is, coups d'état, a reference to the terrorism in Eastern Kamerun.\*

It was, however, the local branch of the ruling political party of Northern Nigeria, the Northern People's Congress (NPC), which pushed home the point more forcefully. It was their "earnest desire, or wish or hope," and that of any "responsible" people in Northern Kamerun "to always stay with Adamawa within the Northern Region" as they were before the European occupation. It was the Europeans who divided them. Before this division, they were "one and the same thing." No responsible Northern Kamerunian would "ever support a contrary idea or view instigated by outside political parties† brought in by outsiders attracted by the Mubi big market." No doubt, there were contrary views, but these were "the views of a few disgruntled people of the descendants of autocratic tyrant German-time chiefs

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\*When the French outlawed the Union des Populations du Cameroun, a political party of Eastern Kamerun, in 1955, as will be seen later in this chapter, many of its leaders and supporters crossed over to Southern Kamerun and established the party there while others went underground and became involved in terrorists activities.

†These "outside political parties" were the local branches of other Nigerian parties such as the NCNC and the AG, which were considered outside the framework of Northern Nigeria.

who were stopped from unjust and cruel treatment of the people of this area, and never of the views of the Trust Territory people."<sup>17</sup> This statement suggests one of the sources of the Northern Kamerun Fulani opposition to the British policy. Those of them the British found firmly entrenched in power under the Germans did not like their subordination to the Nigerian Fulani such as the Lamido of Adamawa.

Nevertheless, it was precisely again one of these Northern Nigerian Fulani, the highest authority, other than the British, in Northern Nigeria, the Sardauna of Sokoto, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, to whom the Mission went to hear about opinion in Northern Kamerun. Ahmadu Bello saw it quite moderately but the idea and the inclination were substantially the same.

. . . it is difficult for anyone who knows the Territory to conceive of any political future--taking into account the factors of history, geography and economics--which could bring greater benefits to its inhabitants than that they should throw in their lot with an independent Nigeria and within the Northern Region. However, that is for them--and for them alone--freely to decide for themselves.<sup>19</sup>

The Premier of Northern Nigeria could not, therefore, conceive of any beneficial future for Northern Kamerun other than within Northern Nigeria.

However, since he felt that the Northern Kamerunians should make the choice themselves, he proceeded to suggest how they could make that choice. It was advisable to have a plebiscite in Northern Kamerun. But the questions of the plebiscite should be as simple as possible because the Northern Kamerunians were "simple minded farmers, often living in the remote hills and not closely in touch with affairs." The question should be: "Do you want union with the Northern Region of an independent Nigeria?" In the event of a negative answer, trusteeship should be continued and "alternative choices" such as unification and/or reunification would "be the subject of a second

plebiscite." However, these choices should not yet be sought "until the people have expressed their views on the first question."<sup>19</sup> The alternatives for the second plebiscite which Ahmadu Bello suggested are indicative of the confidence the Northern Nigerians had in the popularity of the status quo in Northern Kamerun.

Despite this apparently popular view about the future of Northern Kamerun, there were groups, other than the Mambilla ethnic group, which saw things quite differently. These were the local branches\* of the AG and the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC)-- a Nigerian political party based in the Munchi area, an area of Northern Nigeria typically inhabited by the non-Fulani. As these two parties saw it, Northern Kamerun had become a colony of Northern Nigeria. All the rulers in the region were either Northern Nigerians or Northern Kamerunians who, traditionally, had no right to rule. Their traditional ruling institutions had been reduced into a "nonentity," and although these institutions could still be traced, they no longer stood any chance of "ruling their own subjects," [sic]. All the influential administrative posts in the region were monopolized by Northern Nigerians. The Northern Kamerunians had no opportunity for training in order that they could "man their own affairs by themselves." It was time for Northern Kamerun to be separated from Nigeria and Northern Nigeria and the Nigerian usurpers forced to abandon their colonization of the region. In this way, Northern Kamerunians would be able to handle their own affairs

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\*Unlike in Southern Kamerun where there were no local branches of the political parties of Nigeria proper, there were local branches of Nigerian parties in Northern Kamerun. Indeed, it was only in 1959 that the first indigenous political party was formed there and the second and last was formed in 1960, both for the purpose of the plebiscites.

themselves.<sup>20</sup>

These groups further indicated how they would like to see Northern Kamerun reorganized. But, because their own segment of the region had nothing to do with the other segments, they limited their recommendations to their own area, Adamawa Emirate. They felt that the five Districts of the Emirate should be combined into a Federation under one Native Authority. The name of the Federation would be "Waila Federal Native Authority Division." The Federation would be "absolutely quite independent from Adamawa Native Authority," (that is, quite independent of the authority of the Lamido of Adamawa). Failing this, the area should form "an independent state under the absolute control of the Federal Government of Nigeria." However, its a-Fon would be members of the Northern House of Chiefs under special provisions. In either case, the British should rule the area directly until the indigenes had been trained to run their own affairs. The self-government promised to Northern Nigeria for March 15, 1959, should have nothing to do with Northern Kamerun or at least with Waila Federation. Since there was a conflict of opinion in Northern Kamerun, a plebiscite was required to determine the wishes of the people.<sup>21</sup>

But a free and meaningful plebiscite would have to fulfil certain conditions. It would have to "be administered absolutely by an independent body, that is by the United Nations personnel." All district heads, influential and other workers of the Native Authorities would have to go home to Nigeria in order that they may not use "their influence to intimidate the people." Any use of influence, bribery, and all other illegal means of influence must be considered "a severe offence." Political parties must be guaranteed freedom of speech and of campaigning "without victimization."

The British must be ruling the region directly and political cases tried by magistrates courts during the plebiscite. All the Native Authority police must be removed during the plebiscite. Finally, there should be a secret ballot.<sup>23</sup>

These conditions provide some interesting and important points to note. Although opposed to the British policy, these groups showed confidence in the United Nations, in the British, and in courts presided over by Britishers. On the other hand, they distrusted the local authorities particularly the Nigerians, Fulani or non-Fulani. Furthermore, there was some confusion as to what they really wanted: possibly, what they meant by a state controlled from Lagos actually meant an autonomous Region equal in all respects to the other regions of Nigeria and represented at Lagos in its own right. But one thing was very clear; they demanded separation from Northern Nigeria. Finally, with first hand knowledge of Northern Kamerun, they advised the United Nations on what had to be done to make the plebiscites meaningful.

These important and interesting points notwithstanding, it is now possible to summarize the situation which obtained in the region when the Mission was conducting its investigation. There was a clear conflict of ideas over the disposition of Northern Kamerun. Some supported the status quo while others were opposed to it. Those who supported it belonged to two interchangeable groups: the five who sat in the Nigerian legislatures and the Lamido of Adamawa were the most important members of the Consultative Committee; the Consultative Committee and the Sardauna of Sokoto were members of the NPC; to be a member of the NPC was a prerequisite for being in authority in Northern Kamerun. It was thus either the members of the NPC or the

local authorities who opted for the status quo. On the other hand, three different groups--the Mambilla, the local branches of the UMBC and the AG opposed the existing situation. Whether this important point was lost to the Mission or not, one thing is certain: the evidence it had before it showed that there was a clear conflict of ideas regarding the disposition of Northern Kamerun, a conflict which an impartial researcher or investigator could not afford to ignore.

Nevertheless, the Mission presented the United Nations with a conclusion which contradicted evidence in its own report.

There is certainly no evident feeling that the Northern Cameroons has a distinct identity [from that of the Northern Region of Nigeria] . . . The Mission has come to the conclusion . . . that there is no difference of opinion on the principal question of the future of the Northern Cameroons which would require or justify the holding of a formal consultation on the subject. It believes it to be manifestly the opinion of the northern population as a whole, as far as it can be expressed at present and in the foreseeable future, that they should become permanently a part of the Northern Region of the Federation of Nigeria when the latter attains independence. The Mission accordingly recommends that if the General Assembly accepts such a union as the basis for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement, no further consultation need be held.<sup>23</sup>

Essentially, the Mission denied the existence of a conflict of ideas over the future of Northern Kamerun. Either the a-Fon of Mambilla and the local branches of the UMBC/AG did not exist or they did not matter. Only those in authority were forces to reckon with, that is to say, the Missions' recommendation reflected the views of those in authority. As the Mission put it, the Mission "had seen hundreds of persons, had met the most important officials and had been greeted along the roads by crowds," and nearly all persons questioned in Northern Kamerun "considered that their future was linked to that of the Northern Region of Nigeria."<sup>24</sup>

In paragraph 149 of the report, the Mission declared that "the views of



the opposition parties related to matters of internal policy and administrative method and . . . they did not call into question the continued association of the Northern Cameroons with the Northern Region of Nigeria."<sup>25</sup> As seen earlier, the local branches of the UMBC/AG demanded the creation of the Waila Federal Native Authority which should be separated completely from Northern Nigeria or from the Authority of the Lamido of Adamawa. Alternatively, this Waila Federation should be constituted into a "state" controlled from Lagos, that is the Federal Government. More importantly, however, the local branches of the opposition parties did not want the self-government promised for Northern Nigeria for March 15, 1959, to have anything doing with the Waila Federation. How best could these parties show that they had rejected their association with Northern Nigeria? The Mission alone has the answer.

In paragraph 178, the Mission stated that the Consultative Committee informed it that "they would accept a plebiscite if it should be considered necessary--but that they did not so consider it."<sup>26</sup> A search for a written document by this Consultative Committee has not been fruitful. But, the following points should be placed besides the statement of the Mission. The Lamido of Adamawa, the most important member of this Committee was silent over the issue of the plebiscite. The five Northern Kamerunians who were members of the Nigerian legislatures and of the Consultative Committee, as seen earlier, demanded a referendum, plebiscite, or other means to decide to remain in Northern Nigeria and in Adamawa. The NPC which included all the non-British members of the Consultative Committee demanded a plebiscite, as seen earlier. All in all, although the list is by no means complete, the few examples cited here suggest that the Mission's report and recommendations

contradicted some of the important evidence included in the same report. It is not easy to understand why this was the case. But, the available sources show that the Mission did not consider views from those not in authority important.<sup>27</sup>

Andrew Cohen, the British Representative at the United Nations, was quick to accept the recommendations the Mission had made. He selected precisely those parts of the report shown above to have contradicted important evidence and used them to support the Mission's recommendations. He then praised the experience and thorough investigation of the Mission which helped it to arrive at accurate conclusions. This representative "found the arguments presented by the Mission very convincing and endorsed its conclusions." The United Kingdom, although completely impartial, was "perfectly ready to agree to a plebiscite being held on the Northern Cameroons had that been shown to be necessary." Considering the Mission's thorough investigation, "he did not think that the Trusteeship Council would wish gratuitously to burden the people of the Northern Cameroons with the paraphernalia of a more formal consultation." It was, therefore, necessary for the Trusteeship Council to give full weight to the recommendations of the Mission.<sup>28</sup>

But, the representative of the Soviet Union, Lobanov, saw it quite differently. He wondered whether the Mission had considered "the wish for separation which had been expressed by the people of the Northern Cameroons in 1953"\* before stating that "nobody in the Northern Cameroons had raised

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\*This appears to be an allusion to the 'damping down on the Kamerun Socialist Convention' in 1953.

the question of separation of that region from Nigeria." The Mission had not considered it: "The Mission had not, in the northern part of the Cameroons . . . observed any important opposition to an association with the Northern Region of Nigeria."<sup>29</sup> The word "important" in this citation must be recognized for it seems, for the moment, to explain the contradiction between the Mission's recommendations and the evidence in the report.

Except for this one relevant question, no other thing about Kamerun was discussed on this day, February 10, 1959. Cohen frustrated all other attempts made by Lobanov to question Gerig on the report and recommendations and the whole day was spent on arguments involving procedural issues and technical questions therein. By the time the debate had come to an end, the Trusteeship Council was clearly divided into three groups, the supporters of Cohen, the supporters of Lobanov, and the uncommitted, regarding the procedural questions. But, even on the major issue, whether there should be a plebiscite in Northern Kamerun or not, the Council emerged in three groups. The British, supported by the rest of the Administering Authorities in the Council, except France,\* felt that a plebiscite was unnecessary. The Soviet Union stood almost alone in asserting that there must be a plebiscite. France was ambivalent\* but showed a strong inclination in voting with the Soviet Union. The others had not yet made up their mind by the time the meeting rose.<sup>30</sup> Later on, in 1961, after all the plebiscites had been concluded, France explained her inclination in 1959 in terms of principle.<sup>31</sup>

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\*The United Nations documents used in this study, whether issued by the Trusteeship Council or the General Assembly, and dealing specifically with the question of Kamerun Reunification, depict French attitude as follows. Between 1949 and 1958, they sympathized with the British position, namely, that Western Kamerun could not be effectively administered without reference to Nigeria, that Northern and Southern Kamerun were ethnologically and

After this disagreement, the Council adjourned for a week. Whatever happened during this one week interlude might, if not will, never be known. But on February 18, 1959, when the sitting resumed, a draft resolution, manufactured during the one week interval, was introduced to the floor. This draft resolution was co-sponsored by Burma, Haiti, Italy, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

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culturally distinct regions from each other, and that Northern Kamerun tended to prefer its integration in Northern Nigeria to separation from it. In 1959, the French became ambivalent: sometimes, they would make statements in favour of the British position; in other cases, they would take the middle course and remain uncommitted; and yet in other instances, they would make cynical statements regarding the British position; but generally, they were gradually losing sympathy for the British position over the issue of Kamerun reunification. Between 1960 and 1961, the French spoke out in favour of Kamerun reunification; indeed, they were hostile to both the United Nations and British (while disclaiming any quarrel with Nigeria) in 1961 during the discussions as to whether the results of the Northern Kamerun plebiscite, which they charged had many irregularities in its conduct should be adopted or not. See, as examples, the following documents for the following periods: 1949-1958--U.N., T.C., T/1042, March 16, 1953, passim; U.N., GA. A/3170 and Supplement No. 4, 1956; A/3595 and Supplement No. 4, 1957; 1959--U.N., G.A., A/4313, 4348, December, 1959; U.N., T.C., T/1426, January 1959; T/1491, November, 1959; T/SR. 943, 953-962, April-May, 1959; A/C.4/SR. 775-776, 779-780, 792, 794, 807, 846-849, 885-892, 901-903, January-December 1959; 1960-1961--A/4726, April 1961; A/4354 and Supplement No. 16, 1960; T/1526, May 1960; A/C.4/SR. 1148-1153, August 1961.

French attitude is understandable. Between 1949 and 1958, the Administering Authorities in the Council sympathized with each other's policy against criticisms from non-Administrators therein. Moreover, during this period, as pointed out in chapter four, while the rest of the major political parties in Eastern Kamerun were indifferent to reunification, the UPC (the bogey of the day in French eyes) advocated reunification very forcefully; it was therefore difficult for the French to support reunification which would bolster the prestige of the party which wanted France out of Kamerun immediately when the parties which sympathized with the French presence were indifferent to it. But between 1959 and 1960, these other parties showed a great interest in effecting reunification. After the results of the 1961 Northern Kamerun plebiscite, the Cameroun Government was unhappy and even challenged the conduct of the plebiscite both at the United Nations and at the International Court of Justice. French attitude thus appears to have been opportunist in character which explains their hostility to the United Nations and Britain in 1961.

Paraguay, and the United States of America. Essentially, the draft resolution recommended to the United Nations that there should be a plebiscite in Northern Kamerun to decide on the disposition of that region when trusteeship came to an end.\*

The available sources suggest very strongly that this decision was a function of disagreement, and compromise among various members of the Trusteeship Council. One element of disagreement was indicated by Davin, the representative of New Zealand. As he saw it, although "his delegation thought that the careful findings of the Visiting Mission warranted the Council's endorsement, it was aware that some members did not share that view."<sup>32</sup> Those that were partial to the British position, Vitelli, the representative of Italy for example, were led by the representative of New Zealand, Davin. These accepted every part of the Mission's report and recommendations but wanted to use a plebiscite in Northern Kamerun as a means of influencing opinion in Southern Kamerun in favour of integration with Nigeria. As Davin saw it, in "view of the virtual unanimity of opinion in the North the only result of a consultation of the Territory as a whole would be to strengthen the proportion of those throughout the Territory who wished to accede to Nigeria."<sup>33</sup> The other element in the disagreement was stressed by Lobanov, the Soviet representative, who was firm in his opposition to the idea that there need not be any plebiscite in Northern Kamerun. He abstained from voting on the draft resolution because it

did not reflect the conclusions of the Visiting Mission or deal with the substance of the question. Had it done so, he would

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\*The resolution will be seen presently at a more appropriate place.

have been obliged to vote against it, in view of the fact that his delegation did not agree either with the approach of the Council to the question of the future of the Cameroons as a whole or with the Mission's conclusion.<sup>34</sup>

The Council members seeking a compromise were led by the representative of Burma, U. Thant. These accepted the draft resolution, as U Thant saw it, because it was "the most realistic step that the Council could take in the circumstances."<sup>35</sup>

Even before the British attempts in the Trusteeship Council to prevent the holding of a plebiscite in Northern Kamerun had failed, the British had arranged, during the one week interval, to send a Northern Kamerunian who supported the status quo to the General Assembly to argue the case.

On February 16, 1959, Cohen informed the Trusteeship Council that

The Minister for Northern Cameroons Affairs in the Northern Regional Government of Nigeria, who was coming to the United Nations, would no doubt make a statement to the Fourth Committee\* on the question and would inform the General Assembly of the extent to which the objectives of the Trusteeship System would be achieved by the Northern Cameroons by its obtaining independence as part of the Northern Region of the Federation of Nigeria.<sup>36</sup>

Unfortunately, the Minister, Mallam Abdullahi Dan† Buram Jada arrived at the United Nations to find himself facing a plebiscite the British had wished away.

Although he himself--as one of the five 'representatives' in the Nigerian legislatures--had asked for a plebiscite, referendum or any other means of consultation, Dan Buram Jada opted out of it before the Fourth

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\*The Fourth Committee was a sub-committee of the General Assembly in charge of all affairs connected with Trust Territories and Non-Self-Governing Territories. Its decisions, except for the formality of another vote by the General Assembly, were decisions of the General Assembly.

†'Dan' is the equivalent of Mac or Mc; Dan Buram Jada = Son of Buram Jada. Jada is a name of a place.

Committee. He stated that the Government of Northern Nigeria and the Consultative Committee were "most gratified" to see that, after ascertaining the views of "all the elements of the population, including the views of the opposition parties,"\* the Visiting Mission recommended that "there was no need for further consultation on the question of the integration of the Northern Cameroons with the Northern Region of Nigeria when Nigeria became independent on 1 October, 1960." It was, therefore, commensurate for the United Nations to approve the recommendations of the Mission.<sup>37</sup>

Dan Buram next turned his attention to reunification. To be sure, the "short-lived" German Kamerun Empire had existed. But there was "no geographical, economical or racial unity" within the Empire. The talk of unification and reunification, therefore, had no foundations. The previous Nigeria-Kamerun boundary "divided into two parts the old Adamawa Emirate" which included a large part of what was now Eastern Kamerun. "It was accordingly a matter of vital importance to the people of the Northern Cameroons that they should remain with the Northern Region of Nigeria." While the Northern Kamerunians had always had everything in common with Northern Nigeria, they had nothing in common with either Southern Kamerun or Eastern Kamerun. To separate the Northern Kamerunians from Northern Nigeria "would be a direct negation of all the principles for which the United Nations stood."<sup>38</sup>

When members of the Fourth Committee asked Dan Buram questions, Cohen answered them for Dan Buram,† and the latter brought back the answers two

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\*The Mission heard the views of the opposition but did not make any use of them.

†The language, the style, the approach, and the passages selected from the

days later. The representative of Iraq asked how Northern Kamerun could have everything in common with Northern Nigeria and some Northern Kamerunians would address petitions to the United Nations requesting that the region be separated from Northern Nigeria and made part of Southern Kamerun. Dan Buram felt that these were a few Fondoms on the Southern Kamerun-Northern Kamerun border, but before

the arrival of the Visiting Mission in the Northern part of the Trust Territory, the Regional Government knew very little about this matter since we have never received any communication thereon from the Southern Cameroons; nor have any persons from our side of the border expressed to us a wish to transfer to that area. The two communications were made to the Mission when it was in the Southern Cameroons.<sup>39</sup>

The question and the answer are significant in several respects. Some of the members, if not all, of the Fourth Committee were aware of the Mambilla petitions. This awareness might have been behind the reasons why the Fourth Committee upheld the recommendations of the Trusteeship Council. Finally, it was clearly the Mission which informed the authorities about the petitions and then failed to make use of them.

Like the Mission, Dan Buram did not even consider the petitions important. As he saw it, the "communication from Mambilla was from three village Heads living close to the Southern Cameroons' border" and they could not "be held to speak for the Mambilla people as a whole."<sup>40</sup> It might be true that only three a-Fon did the writing, but in his petition complaining about the attempt on his life and the deposition of the numerous Mambilla

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Gerig Report to answer the questions in written form, were so identical to Cohen's statements on February 16, 1959, T/SR. 959, May 1959 and other previous statements as to leave no doubt about the author of the answers.



a-Fon, as seen earlier, Fon V.H. Bang indicated that seventeen other Mam-billa a-Fon supported and encouraged him to carry on the fight. The number of the a-Fon alleged dethroned also raises doubts about Dan Buram's assertion that only three a-Fon were really involved in the request.

The representative of the United Arab Republic tried to find out whether Northern Kamerun "possessed its own representative institutions" and what measures the British had taken towards "the development of political institutions" in that region. As Dan Buram saw it, the region was administered as an integral part of Northern Nigeria, the only practical way of administering it.\* Ten Northern Kamerunians sat in the Nigerian legislatures. He was a Minister and one of them. He was assisted by the Consultative Committee which acted as a liaison body between the Government and the region. This Consultative Committee was constituted in 1957 "a formal committee of the Executive Council of the Northern Region" of Nigeria. It consisted of twenty-three members: sixteen were the elected members to the Nigerian legislatures; there were two a-Fon; and, "five special members drawn from the remoter areas of the Trust Territory."<sup>41</sup> Essentially, Dan Buram's answer was that Northern Kamerun had no representative institutions and that the British were doing nothing to provide the region with its own political institutions.

The representative of Indonesia did not leave the question of unification to pass unnoticed. He wondered whether Northern Kamerun would like to unite with Southern Kamerun under trusteeship provided that Southern

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\*All the United Nations documents dealing with this issue show that more often than not the British defended their political reorganization of Western Kamerun in terms of the practicality of the effective administration of the Trust Territory.

Kamerun remained part of an independent Federation of Nigeria. Dan Buram thought the suggestion an impossibility.

For the reasons given in my statements to this Committee on Monday, the people of the Northern Cameroons would not be willing to unite with the South, whether it remained inside or outside the Federation, since for very weighty reasons of history and geography, and of close ethnic and cultural ties with the people of the Northern Region of Nigeria, they feel that their true destiny lies in joining this region when the Federation becomes independent.<sup>42</sup>

Unification was, therefore, out of the question under any circumstances.

The question of the plebiscite, the main reason for Dan Duram's journey to the United Nations, was pursued by the Indonesian representative. This representative wished to know whether the Consultative Committee would accept a plebiscite if the United Nations decided in favour of one. Considering the author of these answers, the reply could be expected.

[The] Visiting Mission has recorded in paragraph 178 of its report that it was informed by the Consultative Committee for the Northern Cameroons that they would accept a plebiscite if it should be considered necessary--but that they did not so consider it. This was before the Mission made its recommendation to the effect that no plebiscite was in fact necessary, for reasons which the Regional Government finds entirely convincing.<sup>43</sup>

In this way, Dan Buram quoted from a huge document which he probably had not read,\* or read only partially, to deny that the Consultative Committee in 1958 demanded a referendum, plebiscite, or any other means to confirm that the Northern Kamerunians wished to remain Northern Nigerians.

Dan Buram's efforts, however, could not be expected to be fruitful.

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\*Either Gerig began writing the report on January 20, 1959, or he finished it on that day. Whatever the case, Gerig introduced it on February 10, 1959. By February 16, Dan Buram had not arrived at New York. He probably came between February 20 and 22 when the Southern Kamerunians came, made his statements on February 23 and answered these questions on February 25, 1959.

The source of the decision to have a plebiscite was too powerful for the United Nations to act otherwise simply because a Dan Buram, Minister for Northern Cameroons Affairs in the Government of the Northern Region of Nigeria, wished it that way. On March 13, 1959, the General Assembly went ahead and endorsed the Trusteeship Council Resolution 126 (XXIII) adopted on February 18, 1959. It then became General Assembly Resolution 1350 (XIII).

This resolution asked the British "to organize, under the supervision of the United Nations, separate plebiscites in the Northern and Southern parts of the Cameroons," in order "to ascertain the wishes of the inhabitants of the Territory concerning their future." The Northern Kamerun plebiscite should take place in the middle of November 1959. The questions to be put at the plebiscite should be: "(a) Do you wish the Northern Cameroons to be part of the Northern Region of Nigeria when the Federation of Nigeria becomes independent? Or (b) Are you in favour of deciding the future of the Northern Cameroons at a later date?" It was permissible to use the electoral register for the Nigerian elections to the House of Representative at Lagos.<sup>44</sup> Northern Kamerun was thus keyed for a plebiscite in 1959 while the imbroglio in Southern Kamerun remained unresolved.

#### The Road to the Southern Kamerun Plebiscites 1954-1959

If 1953 was a turning point, the events of 1954 gave that turn in history a distinctive stamp in two respects. The first respect involved the concrete award of an identity to Southern Kamerun. Following the results of the late 1953 elections, the London August Constitutional Conference was continued in Lagos in January, 1954. It was this conference at Lagos which

made Southern Kamerun a quasi-region, a region unequal in all respects to the other Nigerian Regions.

The inferiority of this quasi-region to the other Nigerian Regions was glaringly clear. While its Nigerian counterparts were Regions, it was officially named 'Quasi-Region.' While its Nigerian counterparts had at their head 'Premiers,' Dr. Endeley, its leader, was officially 'Leader of Government Business.' Furthermore, it could only raise revenues from "specified sources." While the other Nigerian Regions had Lieutenant-Governors, it had the Commissioner. While these Lieutenant-Governors could approve laws passed by the Parliaments of their own Region, its own laws had to be approved by the Governor-General. Moreover, the other Nigerian Regions had responsible indigenous Executive members. But, its Assembly consisted of the Commissioner as President, three ex-officio members--the Deputy Commissioner, Legal Secretary, Finance--, thirteen elected members, six representatives of the Native Authorities, and not more than two Special Members appointed by the Governor-General to represent special interests not otherwise represented.<sup>45</sup> None of the Southern Kamerunians in the Assembly, including the Leader of Government Business, was an official member of the Executive Council. Some of them, not more than five were unofficial members of this Council.<sup>46</sup>

The provisions and inferiority of this Quasi-Region to those of the other Nigerian Regions have produced two effects. First, they have invited a great deal of criticisms, not unjustified, from many authors. Perhaps, the best known criticism was provided in a topical sentence before the analysis by Eyongetah and Brain: "Regional status was lacking even in nomenclature."<sup>47</sup> Secondly, they have made it difficult for some authors, Eyongetah and Brain for example, to see the significance of the Quasi-Region to Southern

Kamerun and to the nationalist movement. To be sure, the limitations demonstrated the British reluctance at making the award, but its significant aspects are too important to be buried under a storm of criticisms. First, this offer made a hole in the policy the British had clung to for 35 years, the policy of administering Southern Kamerun as a part of Eastern Nigeria. Secondly, and this too is very important, the Southern Kamerunians received the identity they had sought for 15 years in concrete form. The quasi region was a landmark in the history of Southern Kamerun. From then on, Southern Kamerun became a political unit within Nigeria.

The second respect in which the turn in history was manifested in 1954 involved two different elections, one to the House of Representatives at Lagos and the other to select the six representatives of the Native Authorities to the new Southern Kamerun House of Assembly. The results of the elections could be expected. The Ibo-dominated or influenced party, as the KPP was stigmatized, lost every seat it contested. On the other hand, the KNC, the party supported by the a-Fon won all the eight seats to Lagos and all the six Native Authority seats.<sup>48</sup> The a-Fon had, in no uncertain terms, firmly established their influence in the nationalist movement.

The KNC had become the 'people's' party, but it had one serious defect; it lacked an effective leader capable of retaining the support of its membership. This was an unfortunate liability for a leader who was dealing with Western-educated colleagues, some of whom had strong feelings and beliefs, and many of whom were opportunists. The break in the Southern Kamerun neutral bloc of 1953 should have warned him at least of opportunism within the ranks. Had Endeley been a calculating politician, he would have realized, following the outcry against the Ibo and the results of all the

elections since 1953, that secession from at least the Eastern Region gave the KNC its popularity. What would happen after secession from Nigeria, was not the problem of 1953-1954. The problem was secession.

Unfortunately for the KNC, Endeley began to pay less and less attention to secession following his three great victories of 1953-1954. He began to perceive Southern Kamerun developing into "a self-governing region within an independent Federation of Nigeria" and to accept the integration of Northern Kamerun with Northern Nigeria as inevitable. He began to relegate unification and reunification increasingly to the background. These tendencies became stronger with time and circumstances.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, possibly in order to counter the KPP-NCNC alliance, Endeley broke the neutrality of the KNC in Nigerian politics and carried the KNC into an alliance with the AG.<sup>50</sup> Endeley's autonomism was transforming into integrationism--the idea that Southern Kamerun should remain an integral part of Nigeria.

This was a transformation which the calculating politicians, members of the KNC, except it suited the desires of their a-Fon, could hardly tolerate. Indeed, these tendencies and transformation of Endeley were instrumental in forcing Foncha out of the KNC in 1954. Once out of the KNC, Foncha proceeded to form another political party, the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP). Augustin Ngom Jua, one of the thirteen elected members of the KNC also got out of the party immediately after Foncha and joined the KNDP. Four years after, 1958, Muna also severed his links with the KNC to join the KNDP.

Some scholars, Rubin for instance, have attempted to explain the emergence of the KNDP in some respects accurately and in others inaccurately. According to Rubin, Foncha's break-away from the KNC

occurred ostensibly because Endeley failed to maintain an attitude

of 'benevolent neutrality' in Nigerian politics; . . . But there is little doubt that ethnic allegiance also played a part in the decision of Foncha, A.N. Jua and other supporters in the grasslands to break away from the KNC and form the Kamerun National Democratic Party.<sup>51</sup>

Rubin's only evidence is that Foncha, Jua, and Muna were grasslanders.

Rubin's explanation is an inaccurate reading of the situation. First, while Foncha and Jua came from the same ethnic group, Tikari, and two different Fondoms that were not even close to each other socially and politically, and even in distance, Muna came from an entirely different ethnic group. Secondly, Vincent T. Lainjo who represented the largest Fondom in Southern Kamerun, Nso, Rev. J.C. Kangsen who represented a large area of Wum Division, and J.T. Ndze who represented Nkambe Division were all grasslanders. All these stayed with the KNC, Kangsen and Ndze up till their premature death, and Lainjo until the dissolution of the KNC. Moreover, Ndze and Lainjo were from the same ethnic group, Tikari, with Jua and Foncha. More importantly, Jua and Lainjo came from two Fondoms, Kom and Nso respectively, which considered (and still consider) each other brothers. This analysis of their ethnicity and political identifications would appear to invalidate Rubin's assertion. Southern Kamerun nationalism did not consider ethnicity until during the plebiscite period particularly in the year 1960. This was a function, as will be seen later, of the United Nations decision and the activities of the political leaders in 1959. Even when this occurred, people thought more in terms of the interests of the Fondoms rather than in terms of ethnic groups.

The decisions of the majority of the political leaders, as will be seen later, reflected the ideas of their a-Fon. At this time, Nso, Wum and Nkambe were largely autonomists which also implied integration with Nigeria.

So also were the Bakweri of Victoria Division. On the other hand, Bamenda central from where Foncha came and Kom from where Jua came talked secession and reunification. The emergence of the KNDP was a function of the talk of secession and reunification in Bamenda central and Kom. That is why Muna joined the KNDP after up to four years from the time that it was formed; Muna's area was autonomist during these four years and when it changed its ideas, Muna followed it. Foncha's two personal reasons for quitting the KNC were accurate. He left the KNC because Endeley refused to be neutral in Nigerian politics; involvement in Nigerian politics was incompatible with secession and reunification. Kale who was involved in the affairs of the time and recorded some of them adds that the founders of the KNDP "accused the leaders of the KNC of deviating from the policy of Unification of all the sections of the Cameroons."<sup>52</sup> The behaviour of the leaders of the KNDP was grounded in political calculations. Reunification, defined in their own special terms, was very popular in Bamenda and even among the autonomists at this time.

The popularity of reunification too played a not insignificant part in the demands the various political parties made to the third United Nations Mission to Kamerun in 1955. The KNDP demanded unification and reunification from the Mission. So also did the KNC and KPP. The Mission, right from its entry into Southern Kamerun, was "confronted with the demand for . . . [re]unification both as a slogan on the banners of and in the communications addressed to it by the three principal political parties and some other groups." But none of these parties and groups provided any sound argument in favour of reunification. Nor did they provide any concrete proposals for bringing about reunification. The only argument was that, before 1914, "the



two territories had been administered as one by the Germans." Nevertheless, the Mamfe Native Authority suggested that the United Nations should consult with the British and French authorities and "set up machinery for the working out of the method of [re]unification."\* The KNC and KNDP felt that road links between Northern and Southern Kamerun would lead both to unification and to the spread of ideas from the latter to the former. The KNC even went further and demanded the immediate establishment of a joint council of Northern and Southern Kamerun.<sup>53</sup>

The demand for reunification, however, was based on calculations which differed from group to group according to the Mission. The political leaders used the idea of reunification and unification as an instrument to obtain more constitutional advancement for Southern Kamerun. Moreover, the idea had been spread by the Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC), an Eastern Kamerun political party forced into Southern Kamerun when the French outlawed it in that region. There was a sentimental feeling of racial and linguistic identity with Eastern Kamerunians especially among "small tradesmen and exporters of controlled agricultural produce" who felt that "frontier regulations were too stringent."<sup>54</sup> These calculations definitely played an important part in the calculations of these groups, but the most important factor lay elsewhere.

Although it did not emphasize it, the Mission did put its finger on the reason for which even the KNC and KPP demanded unification and reunification.

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\*The popularity of reunification in Mamfe Division this time must be understood also within the background of its representative, S.A. George. George's father was a Southern Kamerunian from Mamfe. But, his mother was an Eastern Kamerunian from Douala. As will be seen in later chapters, as soon as he died, Mamfe turned its back to reunification.

Put very simply, many of the a-Fon were behind the actions of these political parties. By 1955, this group was either indifferent to unification and reunification or accepted the ideas with its own special definition. As the Mission discovered during the investigation

with regard to the questions of the complete integration of the Northern Cameroons in the Northern Region of Nigeria, of the united administration for the North and Southern Cameroons and of the Unification of the Trust Territories, [that is reunification] the . . . Mission . . . found that the mass of the people, unaware of the political implications of these questions, was somewhat indifferent to them and interpreted them merely as an attempt to draw together the members of tribes separated by incomprehensible barriers.<sup>55</sup>

Although the KNC and the KPP leaders did not believe in reunification, they could not sit back and watch the KNDP snatch popularity away from them by advocating an idea to which the electorate was indifferent, an idea which involved secession from Nigeria. Like the KNDP which was founded on secession and reunification, the KNC and the KPP showed that they did not understand what the electorate meant by unification and reunification. They would know the truth in 1957. But not until the events of 1956 had taken place.

In 1955, while the Mission was in the region, Endeley advocated secession, reunification, and immediate unification. But as soon as the Mission departed from Kamerun, Endeley, in 1956, followed it to New York where he denounced all these ideas at the United Nations. There, he demanded only rapid constitutional advancements to bring Southern Kamerun to the status of a fully self-governing region within the Nigerian context. Foncha was quick to counter this move. On March 1, 1956, he dissociated himself and the KNDP from Endeley's "private" and "personal" views. Foncha argued that Endeley's visit was ostensibly that of a representative of Southern Kamerun but, in fact, it was private and personal because Endeley had no mandate from the

"people." He had gone to the United Nations "without consulting the opinions of the people through the political leaders and the Native Authorities."<sup>56</sup>

While later events would prove Foncha wrong--the views were not Endeley's personal and private views--he, Foncha, did indicate the basis, as early as 1956, upon which his political philosophy was grounded. He must listen to the voices of the 'people' and be their sounding board, not the other way round.

The KNDP was not the only political party committed to reunification by this time in Southern Kamerun. By 1956, the UPC was getting well-established and well-organized as a political party to reckon with in Southern Kamerun. So also were its Youths' and Women's organizations. In Southern Kamerun, its political programme remained the same as that which was responsible for its dissolution by the French in Eastern Kamerun. There were three aspects to its programme: immediate reunification, immediate independence, and the freedom of the reunified Kamerun nation from foreign influences.<sup>57</sup> These three aspects were one and indivisible and there could be no distinguishing between them. Indeed, it was the fusion of these three elements that gave reunification an anti-imperialist character in Southern Kamerun among those who supported the UPC and its later successor.

With the establishment of the UPC, four political parties, with overlapping programmes, operated in Southern Kamerun by the end of 1956. The KNC and the KPP still paid tribute to unification and reunification but it was becoming obvious that they believed only in integration and autonomy within Nigeria. Indeed, they had transformed into integrationists although they did not like being branded that way. Secession, unification, and reunification, all having equal emphasis, provided the core of the KNDP programme. In other

words, the KNDP was basically reunificationist at this point in time. So also was the UPC, but with a difference; everything must be immediate. Until these positions had been tested at a general election, it was difficult to know which of them was, in reality, the most popular.

The test came in 1957 during that year's March 15 elections to the Southern Kamerun House of Assembly. During the campaigns, the UPC vigorously offered immediate reunification; it "was the only significant party that demanded the recreation of Kamerun as quickly as possible."<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately for the UPC and the cause of reunification, the other parties, the KNC and the KPP in particular, had combined forces in 1956 to warn the a-Fon against reunification, identifying it with the UPC, violence, and communism. For example, after the plebiscite, the women of Essimbij complained that reunification might lead to the death of their husbands and to Communism.<sup>59</sup>

The fact that the a-Fon would not deal with Communism and violence also influenced the actions of the other political parties during the campaigns for the 1957 general elections; the rest of the parties played down reunification. The KNC and the KPP campaigned vigorously for a full and autonomous self-governing region for Southern Kamerun within the framework of Nigeria. The KNC in particular avoided the question of reunification totally but by maintaining "useful contacts" with Eastern Kamerun authorities, it gave the lie that it had not abandoned reunification. The KNDP called for "benevolent neutrality" towards Nigeria, for the separation of Southern Kamerun from Nigeria, for "direct administration" of Southern Kamerun by "Great Britain," for peaceful co-existence among the ethnic groups of Southern Kamerun and "natives of tribal groups extraneous to the Cameroons," and for ultimate reunification "on the basis of mutual consent."<sup>60</sup> The shifting opinion among

the a-Fon against reunification had forced Foncha to introduce the first condition to reunification.

Considering the shifting opinion of the a-Fon against reunification and previous experiences with other parties, the results of the elections, based on these various offers, could be expected. The KPP, the 'Ibo dominated party' was discredited as early as 1953. It was fighting a losing battle. It won two out of the thirteen contested seats. The UPC, by offering reunification, lost all its deposits. The KNC, by avoiding reunification totally, won six out of the thirteen contested seats. The KNDP, by talking reunification with less emphasis than the UPC, and with a condition, and by stressing secession was able to win the rest of the seats, that is the five remaining seats.<sup>61</sup> It appears that if the KNDP had avoided reunification altogether, the electorate would have chased the KNC away from power for trying to take them to Nigeria.

Whatever the case, after the elections, the UPC met the fate, which it had experienced in Eastern Kamerun, in Southern Kamerun. Ten weeks after the elections, on May 30, 1957 the British banned the UPC and outlawed it with its members. The official explanation was simple. There existed "a grave possibility that in order to achieve its political objectives the Party may have to resort to violence in the Southern Cameroons."<sup>62</sup> This explanation, however, is questionable. Western Kamerun was the last place where the UPC would adopt violence; the UPC could not be working for reunification and at the same time frighten Western Kamerunians away from it through violence. The British explanation was tantamount to saying that the UPC would work against the goal it had set for itself.

Not surprisingly, however, the dissolution of the UPC was greeted with

joy by many Southern Kamerunians. As early as 1956, almost all the "political factions" in Southern Kamerun "had come to consider the exiled UPC leadership an unwanted, troublesome influence" in the region.<sup>63</sup> When the UPC rejuvenated under the disguised name One Kamerun (OK), almost all the rest of the political parties wished to see it banned.<sup>64</sup> So unpopular was the UPC that Foncha, on February 11, 1958, felt compelled to deny any connections with the UPC in the Southern Kamerun House of Assembly,<sup>65</sup> although his own programme was the closest to that of the UPC. Indeed, the British were very accurate when, at the United Nations, they refuted the charge made by the UPC to the effect that the British had caused the crushing defeat of the party at the elections. As the British saw it, "the fact that the party failed to secure a seat was a reflection of the will of the people."<sup>66</sup>

This popular wish notwithstanding, there were people in Southern Kamerun who not only sympathized with but also supported the UPC and its programme. The majority of them were Eastern Kamerunians resident in Southern Kamerun, many of whom were opposed to the French in Eastern Kamerun and had sought sanctuary where the Pax Britannica was apparently king. Furthermore, nearly all Southern Kamerun graduates and students in higher institutes of learning, no matter where these institutes were located in the world, were with the UPC. There were also a handful of other Southern Kamerunians, who had either been politicized or who merely loved adventure, that supported the UPC. As soon as the UPC was outlawed, these groups rallied behind Ndeh Ntumazah of Mankon, Bamenda, as President and Joseph Innocent Kamsi, an Eastern Kamerunian living in Southern Kamerun, as Vice-President, to form the OK.

As a rejuvenation of the UPC, the objectives and style of the OK remained the same. Immediate reunification, immediate independence, and the creation

of a Kamerun nation free from foreign influences were the objectives of the OK. These elements were one and indivisible and there could be no distinguishing between them. Like the UPC, the style was propagandistic and pacific. It devoted less of its arguments to its objectives and more to "recriminations about the past and to demands for complete amnesty for everybody connected with the UPC and its affiliates." It attracted attention through "standardized banners, demonstrations by men and women dressed in uniforms, songs and chants, and packages of 'petitions,' the great majority of which consisted of similar texts and slogans written or mimeographed in French."<sup>67</sup>

While the OK was getting off the ground in 1957, events to which Southern Kamerun could not be indifferent were taking place in Nigeria. By this time, it had become obvious that independence for Nigeria was a matter of time. The Lyttleton Constitution which came into effect in 1954 after the collapse of the MacPherson Constitution, and which made Southern Kamerun a Quasi-Region was ill-equipped as an instrument for Nigerian independence. The necessary review of the constitution took place between May and June, 1957, at London. Endeley, Ndze, and the Fon of Bali Nyonga, Galega II, represented the KNC. Kale represented the KPP, his party. Foncha went for the KNDP. The UPC was busy disappearing. The OK had not yet organized or rather reorganized itself properly. It is even doubtful whether the OK could bring itself to sit at a conference table with Nigerians to discuss Kamerun affairs. As seen earlier, Habib 'represented' Northern Kamerun.

The positions taken by these Western Kamerunians at the conference remained substantially the same. The KNC and the KPP which were now in alliance, KNC-KPP Alliance (KNC-KPP hereafter), demanded a separate and

fully autonomous region for Southern Kamerun within the Nigerian Federation. The KNC-KPP no longer mentioned unification or reunification. The KNDP admitted that Western Kamerun would have to exist within the Nigerian framework for a short time. But after this interim period, unification would take place as a preparatory step to reunification. As seen earlier, Habib could perceive no other future for Northern Kamerun than that it remain permanently an integral part of Northern Nigeria.<sup>68</sup>

The offer the British made this time was more in favour of the integrationists than it was for any other group. Southern Kamerun would become a fully autonomous, not self-governing, region within Nigeria. The Leader of Government Business would now become Premier. The Assembly would have a Speaker appointed by the Commissioner in consultation with the Premier. Ministers would be appointed by the Commissioner in consultation with the Premier. Southern Kamerun would be represented at Lagos by twelve elected representatives. But, this was not to take effect immediately. It still had to be confirmed by the Resumed Conference to be held fifteen months later. Habib got what he wanted.<sup>69</sup>

When making the offer to Southern Kamerun, the Colonial Secretary indicated where his own sentiments lay. As he saw it, the British Government fully recognized "their obligation to the Cameroons under the Trusteeship Agreement." One of these was "to administer the Territory as an integral part of Nigeria." The Agreement would have to be modified when Nigeria became independent. One of two choices would then be open to Southern Kamerun. The region might remain part of Nigeria but it would have to do so freely. It might continue under trusteeship, but in that instance, the Secretary "must in fairness add the warning that you [Southern Kamerunians] would not thereby



be given the golden key to the Bank of England." While the decision rested wholly in the hands of Southern Kamerunians, "many of the best friends of the Cameroons do not foresee a destiny more likely to promote her happiness and prosperity than continued association with Nigeria."<sup>70</sup> The Secretary had no word for both unification and reunification; these were not among the alternatives he had for Southern Kamerun. Indeed, the warning against continued trusteeship and the statement about the "best friends of the Cameroons" meant that the Secretary had only one alternative for Southern Kamerun. That was integration with Nigeria.

Although the grant of a full Region to Southern Kamerun did not involve the immediate introduction of a ministerial system of government, and indeed, as will be seen presently, the Governor-General was opposed to it, the KNC\_KPP called an emergency session on February 11, 1958, to introduce a motion to that effect. Had Southern Kamerun been a Self-Governing Region, this attempt would have been understandable. But, at this point in time, it was not. Nevertheless, the opportunists within the KPP pushed Endeley into an action that would cost him his already uncertain Government. This action was the successful attempt to introduce a ministerial system of government in Southern Kamerun in 1958, despite strong opposition to it from several quarters.

The 1958 Diary of J.T. Ndze has a lot to say about the introduction of this ministerial system of government. As the second top-ranking member of the KPP in the KNC-KPP, and as an opportunist who saw the opportunity for becoming a minister, it was Mbile who, on February 11, 1958, introduced the motion in the House of Assembly that a ministerial system of government be introduced. Mbile's motion was "Seconded by Array who beat about the bush."<sup>71</sup>

The reaction of the Opposition, the KNDP, was bitter. The first in this group to react was the Deputy Leader of the KNDP, Jua. He first complained that he did not understand the wording of the motion and then rejected the idea of saying prayers to Her Majesty's Government. After this, he proceeded to argue against the motion. Southern Kamerun was already a Region. Fresh elections were necessary before the introduction of the ministerial system of government. What the Region needed were "amenities," not a ministerial system of government; and, a ministerial system of government was not a prerequisite for "amenities." The introduction of this system of government involved a change in the constitution, and, a change in the constitution must be referred back to the electorate. He ended by calling upon the British to interfere and stem the move.<sup>72</sup>

Jua was followed immediately in his opposition to the motion, respectively, by Mua and Muna\* who had just crossed the carpet. Mua described the motion as "Thoughtless [and] untimely." He felt that a "Cabinet" could only be introduced after "fresh elections." He wondered how a government with only eight elected members would want to have five ministers and five Parliamentary Secretaries. He accused the non-elected (Special Members) Parliamentarians of being weak by refusing to oppose the motion and, indeed supporting it because they wished to sit on the governing side of the House. Muna was "Happy to sit with [the] KNDP," and his KNDP colleagues had "made all [the] points on the motion." He did not understand why Mbile failed to

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\*Before Muna crossed the carpet in 1958, he was Deputy Leader of the KNC. The Alliance between the KNC and KPP thus reduced him to third place instead of his second place. While the secessionist mood in his Fandom played a major part in forcing him out of the KNC, his reduction in rank might have had something to do with it.

introduce this motion during the London Conference as Mbile himself was present there. He saw no "need for the emergency meeting of the House for Cabinet Government." Anyway, the fast coming elections would prove which was the government of the "people." Moreover, the Governor-General had rejected the idea of a ministerial system of government for Southern Kamerun. It was obvious that the KNC Government had lost the confidence of the people. The KPP was being deceived by the KNC. Finally, the Southern Kamerunians did not want ministers at this time.<sup>73</sup>

The next opposition to the motion came from the Leader of the KNDP and, after he had spoken, something unusual in Southern Kamerun politics occurred. Foncha supported all that his KNDP colleagues had said and asked the Government Party to reconsider the motion. When he attempted to show how the motion was incompatible with the London agreement, he was "Ruled out of order." Nevertheless, he demanded that the motion be withdrawn "or else we stage a walk out."<sup>74</sup> When the motion was passed, with two non-elected members, Ambrose and Manga-Williams, voting for it, Nsakwa, a non-KNDP member, "walked out with the KNDP."<sup>75</sup> The passage of the motion and the walk-out by the KNDP were responsible for Foncha's February 20, 1958, telegram to the United Nations.

On February 20, 1958, that is nine days after the walk-out, Foncha dispatched a telegram to the United Nations arguing that Self-Government for Southern Kamerun was not possible in 1958. It was not wise for the ministerial system of government to be introduced until 1959.<sup>76</sup> Central to this opposition, however, was the fear, later justified, that the KNC-KPP would take advantage of the new system of government to manipulate the January 24, 1959, general elections in favour of integration with Nigeria.

The student wing of the reunificationists was even more outspoken in the protest to the introduction of this system of government than Foncha was. On March 19, 1958, the Southern Kamerun students in the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, stated that the situation in Southern Kamerun was "grave" because the British were "endeavouring to use certain personalities in the undemocratically installed Southern Cameroons House of Assembly to swindle the territory into integration with an independent Federation of Nigeria." It was not democratic "to implement decisions of a conference" which were "so dependent on other decisions taken by the same conference, where such 'other decisions' have not yet been fulfilled." Nor was it in the interest of Southern Kamerun to strive to have ministers before the elections. Since the 1959 elections would be "decisive on the integration-secession issue," the United Nations itself should supervise them "in order to prevent irregularities and ensure fair play."<sup>77</sup>

Perhaps more importantly was the position the a-Fon, who were now working in concert, the Concert of the a-Fon, took in the controversy. Although by this time many of them supported Endeley while the majority were tending towards Foncha, in a conference held in Mankon Town, a conference in which both Foncha and Endeley were present, these Crowned Princes decided that the ministerial system of government should not be introduced before the crucial elections of January 1959.<sup>78</sup> Instead of heeding this timely warning, Endeley decided to reply to the a-Fon on the day he was to introduce the ministerial system of government.

This reply came in May, 1958. On the day Endeley was installed as Premier, he issued a policy statement, at a banquet marking the occasion, which was a direct confrontation of the a-Fon. His Government would preserve

the Fondoms with the role of the a-Fon "as a valuable traditional institution." The a-Fon had "a useful stabilizing influence among the people, and the Government would seek to co-operate with them in everything it did."

But we shall also expect that in their own interest, Chiefs and traditional rulers must keep clear of party politics . . . as this will only expose them to the disdain of a section of their subjects. Any Chief who persists, despite this timely advice, to participate in party politics does so at his own risk.<sup>79</sup>

Endeley had lost the 1959 elections in May, 1958. The introduction of the ministerial system of government against the desires of the a-Fon was to serve notice to these Crowned Princes that he was the authority, besides the British, in Southern Kamerun. The a-Fon took note of it. By warning the a-Fon, he was virtually putting a wound in the hand that feed him. Indeed, his whole policy was asking, if not commanding, the a-Fon to surrender their crucial role in the nationalist movement established since 1953. The a-Fon had no wish to surrender a role that was naturally theirs. They must continue to significantly influence the nationalist movement.

But before they showed this in practice, they had a reply for Endeley. They recognized that their role was traditional, and that the Fondom was "a traditional institution." But they reserved "the right to interfere with and correct the affairs of the country when it is realized that things are going radically wrong." The time had come for such "interference" because "they and their people wanted not to be 'integrated' with Nigeria but to 'secede' from it." They were demanding "secession" from Nigeria. The purpose of secession was "to concentrate on much harder work towards self-government and independence outside the Federation of Nigeria as a direct member of the British [sic] Commonwealth of Nations." They said nothing about unification or reunification.<sup>80</sup> Endeley had had his reply, a parcel he least expected

or wished to receive. He had apparently pushed the a-Fon, reluctantly to Foncha. "Southern Cameroons Chiefs' Conference convening from time to time issued pronouncements that, at least during 1958, were hostile to the KNC/KPP Alliance and gave support to the 'secessionist'\* policy of the KNDP," although in "the past these chiefs gave their support on the whole to Dr. Endeley,"<sup>81</sup> Endeley first abandoned the a-Fon, as the UPC did, before the a-Fon abandoned him, as they did to the UPC.

The a-Fon-Endeley confrontation had two important elements to it and both parties knew it. The first element, which initiated the confrontation, involved Endeley's policy of integration to which the a-Fon were, at this time, opposed. The second element, equally important, if not more so at this time, was authority. Put very simply, it was, who ruled Southern Kamerun, Endeley or the Concert of the a-Fon? Or, to put it more accurately, who ruled Southern Kamerun, the Western-educated elite or the traditional rulers? These two elements came out very clearly in both Endeley's policy statement vis-à-vis the a-Fon and in the reply of the a-Fon to that statement.

However, Endeley gave more weight to the authority issue than to the conflict over his policy regarding Southern Kamerun and Nigeria. Later on in the year (1958), he continued to confront the a-Fon on this issue. Before the London May-June, 1957 Constitutional Conference rose, it was agreed that the conference would resume on September 29, 1958. In readiness for the 1957 conference, Endeley selected (possibly in consultation with the a-Fon) the Fon of Bali Nyonga as one member of the KNC delegation. During the confrontation, the Fon of Bali Nyonga was on the side of his colleagues;

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\*Foncha's policy at this time was too cumbersome to be called secessionist. Secessionism was the policy of the a-Fon, not of Foncha.

Endeley was, as the a-Fon call every person other than a Fon, a "small boy," or, in pidgin English, a 'small pikin.' Although the Fon of Bali Nyonga subsequently came with Endeley to London, Endeley saw an opportunity to assert his authority over Southern Kamerun.

This opportunity came when he was about to select the next Fon for the Resumed Conference. Endeley refused to consult with the a-Fon, by-passed the Fon of Bali.\* one of the four more powerful a-Fon of Southern Kamerun, and selected the Fon of Bum, one of the least powerful a-Fon of Southern Kamerun, to come with him to London as a member of the KNC delegation. The Concert of the a-Fon took note of Endeley's challenge and replied to it in words.

Later in the year, however, after the KNC had appointed a grass-lands chief, the newly promoted Fon of Bum, as its adviser at the resumed London Conference, and left the Fon of Bali (who had participated in the 1957 conference) out of its delegation, the 'Chiefs Conference' protested that this had been done without consultation with them and that they had no confidence in the KNC/KPP Government.<sup>82</sup>

This confrontation had thus cleared away the doubts which some of the a-Fon might have had regarding Endeley's attempts to assert his authority over them.

During the Resumed Constitutional Conference, the various political parties clearly outlined their objectives. The KNC-KPP, represented by Endeley and Kale, stood for the attainment by Southern Kamerun of "the status of a region equal in all respects with the other regions in the independent Nigeria." To that effect, they requested "rapid constitutional progress" in order that the region might "take its rightful place 'pari passu' with the

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\*The Diary of J.T. Ndze for 1958 indicates that the leadership of the KNC discussed the Fon of Bali Nyonga before Endeley took this action.

other regions when Nigeria attained independence." (these parties had now fully transformed from merely autonomists to integrationists.) The KNDP, represented by Foncha, was silent over unification and reunification. But it demanded the secession of Southern Kamerun from Nigeria. It made it clear that if it won the January, 1959, general elections, it would take steps to pull Southern Kamerun out of Nigeria. It was opposed to any constitutional advancement for Southern Kamerun "which led to, or had as its objective, closer association with Nigeria."<sup>83</sup> At London, in late 1958, therefore, the KNDP, in line with the position of the a-Fon, had transformed from reunificationist to secessionist. As suggested earlier, Ntumazah, or rather the OK, could not bring himself to sit at a conference table to discuss Kamerun affairs with the Anglo-Nigerian imperialists. It is not surprising, therefore, that the OK was not represented at this Resumed Conference.

The decisions of this Resumed Conference weighed very heavily in favour of the integrationists. The Secretary of State for the Colonies agreed "in principle" to self-government for Southern Kamerun. As he saw it, the "undertaking" of 1953 "to accord self-government to any Region that request it," did not apply to Southern Kamerun and "there was therefore no commitment on the United Kingdom Government to agree to further constitutional advancement" for Southern Kamerun. Nevertheless, he was "prepared to accept in principle [that] at the appropriate time," Southern Kamerun should become "a region fully equal in status to the other regions of Nigeria." He then enumerated all the elements of the new Southern Kamerun Region of Nigeria,\*

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\*For the outline of the constitution of this new Region, see U.N., T.C., T/1426, Annex III, January 20, 1959, pp. 1-4



elements which made Southern Kamerun a Region equal to the other Regions of Nigeria. (But he made one concession to the secessionists.) It was left for the new Government to bring the changes into effect.<sup>84</sup> In other words, the changes would not be effected until after the January 24, 1959, general elections. It appears, therefore, that the British were willing to go along with those Southern Kamerun nationalists who expressed a position closest to their own.

This Resumed Conference was followed almost immediately by the fourth, final, and most important United Nations Mission to Kamerun. The Mission arrived in Western Kamerun (North and South) on October 29, 1958, and left for Eastern Kamerun on November 14, 1958.<sup>85</sup> The Mission was, thus, in Western Kamerun, for such an important mission, for only two weeks. In spite of this time limit, the various leaders of Southern Kamerun did meet with the Mission, outlined their programmes, and suggested what ought to be done and how.

The first to do so was Endeley and the KNC-KPP. Endeley began by stating accurately--where this means in all his contacts with the Mission, 1949, 1952, 1955--that he had "consistently championed the cause" of unification to recreate the pre-1914 Kamerun. While he still upheld the idea, "new events and circumstances" had overtaken him and had "removed the question of [re]unification out of the realm of urgency and priority" in which he "had earlier placed it." Reunification was not provided for in the Trusteeship Agreement. Western and Eastern Kamerun had developed separately with different political and cultural systems and prejudices. Northern Kamerun had been "absorbed" into Northern Nigeria. Eastern Kamerun had been "assimilated into the French Union." All this considered, it was "unlikely that the

Cameroons would ever return to the status it was before 1914."<sup>86</sup>

Other factors too still had to be considered. Reunification would be unpractical and retrogressive for Southern Kamerun; "the organic incompatibilities in the cultural and political systems of the two sectors [of Kamerun would] evoke such violent eruptions that the act of union [was] most likely to be rendered sterile, and progress . . . brought to a standstill." Had reunification been based on a gradual and evolutionary principle, from time past, through a "sustained and unfettered contact" between the two sectors, reunification would have been possible; the approach would have led to "a gradual process of mutual assimilation over the years." Moreover, freedom of expression, of political activity, and of movement which characterized Southern Kamerun were lacking in Eastern Kamerun. It was clear, therefore, that the "Colonial oneness" of Kamerun had been weakened by the enforced partition "and the passage of time" had but forced the partition "to assume a regrettable degree of permanence." Southern Kamerun could not forego the advantages it had derived from the British Government. Rather than leap into "an uncertain French Cameroons Federation," Southern Kamerun would continue "its already and assured progress as a self-governing State in the Federation of Nigeria."<sup>87</sup>

Endeley was now thinking more in terms of a State of Southern Kamerun. He anticipated the various Regions of Nigeria evolving into states to form the United States of Nigeria. But, before this should happen, Nigeria would be a Federation which would include the State of Southern Kamerun. Thus, Southern Kamerun particularism would be maintained in the Federal universalism of Nigeria. This was the first indication that Endeley was once more beginning to transform from an integrationist to an associationist.

On the other hand, the reunificationists, or rather the anti-imperialists, had nothing into which to metamorphose. Kamsi, (Ntumazah was at the United Nations) using authentic, but deceptive evidence, argued that the "Kamerunians of both zones and of all classes of society," had decided "in favour of the unity and independence of the country." The UPC and its affiliates were outlawed and dissolved because they favoured "the unity and independence of the Kamerun." The Southern Kamerun Parliament on February 19, 1958 had called for "the independence of the country in 1959." On March 13-14, the OK demanded "the reunification of Kamerun and the immediate proclamation of its independence." On April 6, 1958, the a-Fon of Southern Kamerun "unanimously" called for "immediate secession" of the region from Nigeria and for "the immediate independence of the country." On May 19, 1958, the Assembly of Kamerunian Women, (a rejuvenation of the affiliate Women's Organization of the UPC which the British dissolved on May 30, 1957) demanded "the immediate unity and independence of Kamerun." Finally, on October 20, 1958, the Eastern Kamerun Parliament demanded "the termination of the Trusteeship in a reunified Kamerun on 1 January 1960." In light of all this, the United Nations should respect the wishes and desires of the Kamerunians. Reunification and immediate independence should be effected for Kamerun.<sup>88</sup>

Unfortunately, Kamsi, or rather the OK, did not apparently see through the evidence he himself had amassed. As far as Southern Kamerun was concerned, the evidence showed that only the OK and its affiliate Women's Organization demanded reunification. The Parliament called for independence. The Concert of the a-Fon called for secession and independence. Were the United Nations to respect the views and desires of Southern Kamerunians, as

Kamsi advised, secession and independence would have carried the day.

However, Kamsi was not thinking in terms of Southern Kamerun. He thought in terms of Kamerun and in this, his advice, if accepted, would have given the OK reunification and independence, but not immediately.

While the OK thought in terms of Kamerun, the Concert of the a-Fon thought in terms of Southern Kamerun. In its policy statement the Concert made this and its programme absolutely certain. The United Nations would recall and appreciate that "the repeated appeals" of the region had always been "for economic, educational, social and political development." But this time, the "paramount concern--'OUR FUTURE RELATIONSHIP WITH AN INDEPENDENT NIGERIA'--[had] been made complicated, upsetting and ruinous." It was neither the fault of the British nor of the United Nations. It was not even the fault of the Nigerians. It was the fault of "a few Cameroons beneficiaries." The Southern Kamerunians "honestly and relentlessly demand secession from the Federation of Nigeria," as a first step to "Self-Government and Independence outside the Federation of Nigeria." This new state, (Smaller Kamerun) would have direct membership in the Commonwealth. Endeley's programme did not "reflect the wishes of the masses of this Territory." The Southern Kamerunians no longer had any confidence in the KNC Government. Endeley could no longer speak for the people. They had voted into office the KNC Government "because of its secession doctrine in the event of Nigeria becoming independent." But, now, Endeley had changed from "secession" to "integration" and again to "association." They were not prepared to tolerate this inconsistency and dictatorial government of Endeley. Nor were they prepared to "achieve independence within the Federation of Nigeria." Endeley's request that trusteeship be terminated, was "not in

keeping with the desire of the people of this Territory."<sup>89</sup> The a-Fon had no time, no place, and no word either for unification or reunification. This would weigh very heavily in Foncha's calculations.

Foncha's policy, or rather that of the KNDP, was anchored mainly on the position of the a-Fon and slightly on Foncha's sentiment and the position of the University students and graduates. The KNDP saw three problems of the day: the relationship between Western Kamerun and Nigeria, the relationship between Northern and Southern Kamerun, and the relationship between Western and Eastern Kamerun. The last two problems were a "consequence of the first." The Mission was "free to take its own decision," but it should be that which would "set the Cameroons free from its entanglement in the Federation of Nigeria." There was no question that the region wanted "secession" from Nigeria. Northern Kamerun might be silent on the issue, but that was due to the fact that it "had no true representatives." Moreover, the "degree" of illiteracy in that region was too high and its inhabitants were unaware of what was "happening to them." Those people should be educated by the United Nations "to understand the grave situation of having themselves implicated in an independent Federation of Nigeria." The desire for secession in Southern Kamerun came "from the masses" and had "influenced the stand now firmly taken by the KNDP." It was not "the other way round as the few advocates of integration asserted that it was the KNDP which was influencing opinion in favour of it." Secession was sought to maintain a "national identity" and there could be no "appeasement" about it. Since the Southern Kamerunians desired secession in order to build "a Cameroons nation," the KNDP had no choice but "to respect their wishes." There was no alternative.<sup>90</sup>

Foncha next turned his attention to reunification. Reunification was

predicated on secession. It was, therefore, "proper to make secession the beginning of reunification." It could not be "imposed." The desire for it was obvious on both sides of the Mungo\* but, it would still have to be confirmed by the Southern Kamerun Parliament. When the Eastern and Southern Kamerun Governments both would begin to speak "in favour of the move," the British and the French should lend them "their co-operation." Reunification was an easy thing if desired by "two self-governing States." The KNDP preferred reunification to be on a federal basis, but the issue would still have to be discussed. No matter what form it took, the Southern Kamerun Government would first have to pass a motion in the House "to confirm the consent of the people" on this side of the Mungo.<sup>91</sup>

Like Endeley, Foncha had transformed two times. Between 1954 and 1956, he was a reunificationist. Between 1957 and September 1958, he was a secessionist. Now between October and November, 1958, Foncha was something without a name. He was fully committed to secession. He also appeared fully committed to reunification but he guarded it with so many conditions as to make one wonder where he actually stood on the issue. The best that can be said for Foncha's policy at this time is that it was a fusion of secession and reunification, strongly inclined to secession without ruling out reunification. Foncha was attempting to be a sounding board of both the a-Fon and the university type Southern Kamerunians. For want of an adequate name to describe this position and attitude, this study refers to

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\*The Mungo is one of the rivers in Kamerun which previously acted at some points as the Inter-Kamerunian boundary line. The former Southern Kamerunians today, more often than not, use the expression, "on the other side of the Mungo" to refer to former Eastern Kamerun in an effort, humourously, to mitigate the fact that Kamerun had once been partitioned.

it as Fonchaism and to its supporters as the Foncharians.

These leaders were aware that, in view of the conflicting programmes they advocated and the involvement of the a-Fon in the conflict, some form of consultation with the electorate would have to take place. Consequently, they did not fail to show the form of consultation which they individually or in groups preferred. Endeley felt that the January 1959 general elections should decide the issue and if his party won, "it would be taken for granted that our Party policy has the full support of the majority of our people." However, failing this, he would accept a plebiscite which the British had recommended, provided that the "referendum be as simple as possible and be conducted with the minimum of expense and inconvenience to the illiterate masses of our people." Furthermore, there should be "safeguards to prevent the infiltration of saboteurs from the French sector into our own sector in order to influence the referendum in favour of the [re]unificationists."<sup>92</sup> Although Endeley used the words plebiscite and referendum interchangeably, in the Kamerun context, he really meant a plebiscite which would have no question about excluding Eastern Kamerun from participation.

On the other hand, the a-Fon and the reunificationists in particular used the two words quite differently. The a-Fon stated simply that "A plebiscite will be the only medium through which the free wishes of the people on their future can definitely be ascertained."<sup>93</sup> As will be seen later, the a-Fon used the word to mean that only Southern Kamerunians would be involved in the plebiscite whereas Endeley would like any person resident in Southern Kamerun, after attaining certain qualifications, to participate. The OK preferred unilateral action by the United Nations, that is that the

United Nations should reunite Kamerun without any consultation. Failing this, there should be a referendum in which the votes from all of Kamerun would be treated as one. But, if the United Nations should insist on separate plebiscites, then the votes in Northern Kamerun should be treated separately from those of Southern Kamerun. Whatever the case, "The future of our country should in no event be decided by an election."<sup>94</sup> The OK did not thus use the words in the same way as Endeley did.

Like the OK, the KNDP considered several alternatives. These included a plebiscite, opinion, and elections. A plebiscite was only necessary when the Mission felt that there was "no sufficient proof from the people in favour of secession or integration." Where the people were fully aware of the implications of the issues raised during a general election, "the result could be taken to reflect the wishes of the people" provided that the conduct of the elections was "fair and just and free from fraud," and the winning issue did so with a "big majority." Should the Mission be convinced that there was "an overwhelming public opinion in favour of one of the issues," and this was supported by "the results of a general election," the Mission was free to make "its conclusions accordingly."<sup>95</sup> Like Fonchaism, it is difficult to say with absolute certainty where the KNDP stood on this issue. But, it appears that it preferred opinion for the test.

Whatever the case, the programmes which the Mission found in Southern Kamerun in 1958 can now be summarized. The KNC-KPP stood for integration or rather association with Nigeria in a Southern Kamerun State. They also wanted, to use only the preferred alternative, to see the issues resolved by a general election. The OK stood for reunification and immediate independence. It felt that the United Nations should unilaterally reunite Kamerun. The



a-Fon stood for secession, continued trusteeship, independence, and membership in the Commonwealth successively. They demanded a plebiscite to settle the issues. The KNDP stood for a fusion of secession and reunification with more emphasis on secession. It preferred that public opinion be used as a means of consulting with the Southern Kamerunians.

It appears that the Mission was aware that the view of the a-Fon was the most popular. As the Mission saw it itself, "loyalty to the tribe, rivalry between tribes, and the influence of powerful chiefs," were factors to be reckoned with in Southern Kamerun politics.<sup>96</sup> Loyalty to the Fondom, except where there was rivalry within an empire, meant that in case of a conflict between a Fon and a political leader over policy, even if both came from the same Fondom, the Fon would more probably be voicing the opinion of the majority of his subjects who would stand behind him. Decisions involving the interests of the whole Fondom are grounded on a consensus within the Fondom and the Fon himself is there to maintain tradition. At the time the Mission was in Southern Kamerun, the a-Fon acted in concert and agreed on a programme. But despite evidence that the a-Fon were both influential and representative of large numbers of people, the Mission ignored the Concert's programme.

Unfortunately, the Mission's report was not in line with the situation as described above and based mainly on the evidence the Mission itself gathered.

On the one hand there was the view that the future of the Southern Cameroons lay in continuing the course which had brought it to the threshold of regional self-government, and in becoming one of the self-governing regions of the independent Federation of Nigeria in 1960. On the other side there was the view that the time had arrived for the Southern Cameroons to be separated from Nigeria--for the purpose not yet clearly resolved, but depending heavily

on a belief in unification with the Cameroons under French administration.<sup>97</sup>

In this way, the Mission left out the two most clearly defined position, that of the a-Fon and that of the reunificationist. It attempted to identify the view of the integrationists but did so incorrectly. The integrationists talked of a self-governing "State" of Southern Kamerun in "association" with Nigeria, not a self-governing region. The Mission attempted to identify Fonchaism but, again, did so incorrectly. Fonchaism depended more on the state of Southern Kamerun than it did on reunification; that was why reunification was guarded with so many conditions.

At the time the Mission was in Southern Kamerun, campaigns for the January 24, 1959, general elections were under way. The OK did not contest any of the seats. When questioned at the United Nations why the OK did not take part in the elections, Ntumazah replied that it was "because the pro-Nigerian party seemed to be gaining ground so the OK decided to support the KNDP which opted for reunification."<sup>98</sup> There appeared to have been no hard content to this excuse. The integrationists were not gaining ground. The a-Fon had talked, but they had not yet acted against Endeley over the authority and policy confrontation. Ntumazah had nothing to offer the a-Fon except reunification, the bogey of the day. Ntumazah had not forgotten the fate of the UPC in 1957; the reunificationists would lose their morale if they suffered another crushing defeat just when they needed more encouragement. Moreover, the OK, as will be seen later, was undergoing some frustration in Southern Kamerun. Furthermore, realizing their inability to influence opinion at home, the leaders of the OK, the UPC, and the students concentrated their efforts at influencing opinion at the United Nations.

Indeed, while the Mission was in Southern Kamerun when campaigns were under way, the leaders of these groups were at the United Nations. It was Ntumazah who informed the Trusteeship Council that the Mission was in Western Kamerun for only two weeks, and when the Council checked, the information was confirmed.

During the campaigns, however, no party offered the electorate the exact content of its programme. The integrationists campaigned on "association" with Nigeria. They had now transformed from integrationists into associationists. The analysis made by Welch seems to suggest that the Foncharians offered different things to different sections of the society depending upon whom they were addressing. To some, they offered secession and self-government outside Nigeria. To others, the offer was secession, a period of trusteeship, and independence. Yet to others, they made integration versus secession the issues at the elections. Still to others, reunification was offered. For example, to the students, reunification was "a simple matter for a round-table discussion by the two governments," and any person who predicated secession on reunification was "an enemy working in favour of integration in the Federation of Nigeria."<sup>99</sup> On the whole, however, the KNDP kept reunification in the background and concentrated on secession. But the OK campaigned for the KNDP.

The KNDP approach to the campaigns was both an asset and a liability. But it was more a liability than an asset. To be sure, the Foncharians told their listeners what their listeners wanted to hear. But Foncha did not need to do this in January 1959. Endeley had already lost the election in May, 1958, as a result of his confrontation with the a-Fon on the policy-authority issue. Between 1959 and 1960, Southern Kamerun was boiling and information

spread like wild fire. By the time the information had travelled over ten miles, only the substance of the information was still accurate. Information about the differing offers the Foncharians were making at different places spread as soon as the offers were made.\* The net effect was to confuse the electorate and discredit Foncha and the KNDP. Indeed, two expressions emerged at this time meaning the same thing. These were "KNDP Talk" and "Foncha's Language"; they stood for either of unreliability, uncertainty, deception, and trickery.† Aided by the decision of the OK to campaign for Foncha, and the introduction of the ministerial system of government, some of the a-Fon identified Foncha with reunification. Others were uncertain but still believed that Foncha was only a secessionist. Yet others became so completely uncertain and confused about Foncha's position on reunification that they did not know where to place him.

The KNDP approach, indeed, gave Endeley more votes than he was to receive in the January, 1959, election. Out of the twenty-six contested seats, Endeley won twelve and Foncha claimed the remaining fourteen. But, if Foncha had come out and talked only secession, it is possible that only the KNC-KPP candidate at Mamfe Oversight would have gone back to the parliament. By even mentioning reunification and not dissociating themselves from the OK publicly during the campaigns, the Foncharians weakened the Concert of the a-Fon and their decision to overwhelmingly chase Endeley away from

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\*In a later chapter dealing with the Foncha-Endeley Compromise, the reader will see both the speed with which information was travelling in Southern Kamerun at that time and how the information was being distorted.

†There is no written evidence to this except the writers experience. In Nso, Foncha was being referred to as "Wanlentoh," literally meaning "Place Steward". Idiomatically, it means one who asks for more on errands than his master had demanded in order to pocket the difference.

the Premier's Lodge. The results of the elections were a function of several things which only indirectly reflected the programmes of Endeley and Foncha. The vote for Endeley was more a vote against reunification with which the KNDP had been identified and the uncertainty Foncha left in the minds of many of the a-Fon than a vote for Endeley's programme. The vote for Foncha was more a vote against Endeley's integration programme and his attempt to substitute his authority over Southern Kamerun for that of the a-Fon than a vote for Foncha's programme which included a possible reunification. In either event, it was a vote for the policy of the a-Fon: those who voted against Foncha were protecting themselves from reunification; those who voted against Endeley were protecting themselves from integration with Nigeria. But, except perhaps in Mamfe Overside, few of them, if any, voted for either integration or reunification.

Whatever the case, the integrationists were involved in some irregularities intended to procure a pro-integration vote during the campaigns. The introduction of the ministerial system of government had a lot to do with the votes. Indeed, it was precisely the a-Fon whose subjects were ministers that were first convinced that Foncha was a reunificationist and they voted against reunification. The desire to have their subjects as ministers cannot be dismissed although it was the fear of reunification which convinced them to vote otherwise. During the campaigns, government vehicles, and the Government Information Service for that matter were used extensively for the associationist cause.\*<sup>100</sup> On the other hand, Foncha and his group,

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\*J.T. Ndze was an integrationist and in his diary he mentions how the person in charge of the Information Service was complaining to him during the campaigns that the Land Rover the latter was using had broken down and that he needed money as soon as possible to put it on the move.

who had no opportunity to use government vehicles (the KNC-KPP were in power) travelled mainly on foot and bicycles, and only occasionally on chartered vehicles; as a party of teachers, the KNDP was the poorest party at the time. Furthermore, the police, as government employees, were used extensively to harass any person opposed to integration with Nigeria; even the treasurer of the OK and many others, as will be seen later in the chapter on the conduct of the plebiscites, were arrested during the campaign period.<sup>101</sup>

More important, however, was the manipulation of the electoral districts. These districts were arranged in such a way as to favour the KNC-KPP. Before the elections, the districts were thirteen in number. But after the elections, twenty-six rather than thirteen elected persons would be in the Parliament. The electoral districts thus had to be rearranged to suit the enlarged Parliament. In the rearrangement of these districts, areas with apparently known integrationist tendencies received a disproportionate share of seats to the detriment of areas with known secessionist tendencies. It was easy to know which area might have which sentiment. Those areas where the traditional systems, at this time, Mamfe and the grasslands, were still strong, secession was the general tendency. Those areas where the a-Fon existed but with little authority such as Kumba and Victoria Divisions, apparently had associationist tendencies. With this knowledge, Victoria Division, from where Endeley and Kale, the integrationist leaders, came, had four seats with a population of 70,000. On the other hand, the South Eastern Federation or rather the South Eastern Native Authority of Bamenda, with a population of 130,000 had only three

seats.\*<sup>102</sup>

There is little wonder then that there was a great disparity between the number of seats on the one hand and the popular vote on the other. The difference in the number of seats was two (12 to 14). That in the popular vote was very great. A total of 137,174 votes were cast at the elections. Foncha received 75,326 (55%) of them. Endeley received 51,425 (37%) of them. The rest, 10,423 (8%) went to independent candidates.<sup>103</sup> The difference between the KNC-KPP and KNDP was thus 23,901 votes (18%) while their popularity ratio was 2:3 in favour of the KNDP. In terms of popular vote, therefore, the results of the elections were a crushing defeat for Endeley.

The 1959 general election was significant in several respects. It resolved the authority issue; the a-Fon, although not all of them did the job, chased Endeley away from the Premier's Lodge and, in so doing, re-established their authority in Southern Kamerun. There was no longer any squabble between Endeley and the a-Fon over authority in the region. But the election failed to resolve the policy issue. The policy of the a-Fon remained unchanged. So did those of the political leaders. The basic and fundamental conflict between the a-Fon and the political leaders thus remained intact. The a-Fon were open for the taking but whoever wished to take them must be ready to pay the price. That price was their policy. Circumstances arising from the manipulation of the election by both Endeley

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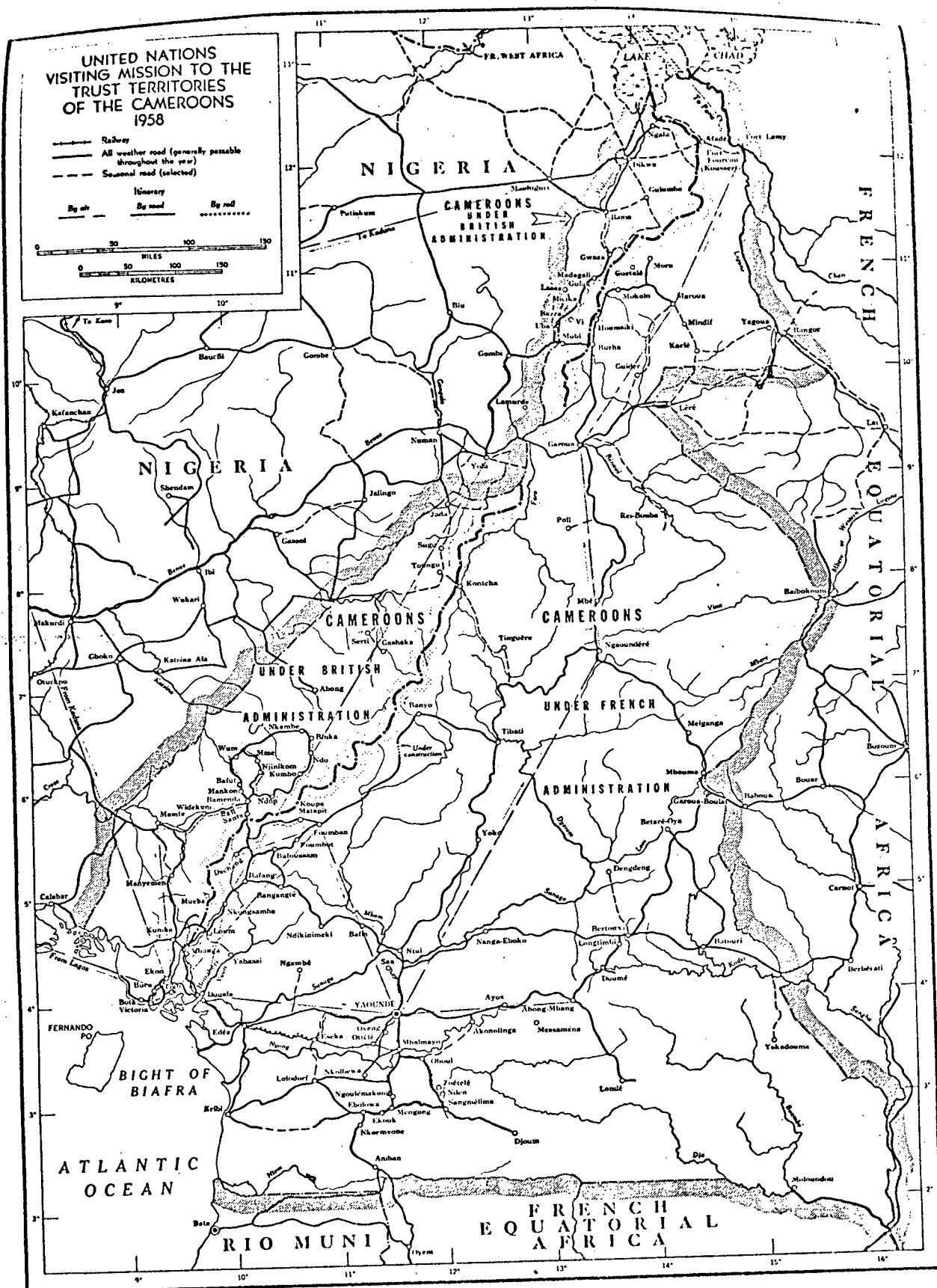
\*The 1961 plebiscite voting figures which shows twice as many people voting in the South-Eastern Native Authority (Bamenda North, East, and Central West plebiscite districts) as in the Victoria Division confirms Ntumazah's assertion. See Table on the voting pattern in chapter seven.

and Foncha, and the decision of the OK to support Foncha weakened the Concert of the a-Fon. But the Concert was not destroyed.

After the election, the Concert was now made up of three groups. Those who now believed firmly that Foncha was a reunificationist--these were to be found in Kumba and Victoria Division, and a few of them in Bamenda Division. Those who had doubts, but still believed largely that Foncha was a secessionist, pure and simple--these were to be found in Mamfe Division and the larger part of Bamenda Division. Those who were so confused as to be unable to know where to place Foncha--these were in Wum and Nkambe Division. Nevertheless, although not as solid as it was before the election, whenever the Concert would take a unanimous decision, the political leaders would have to heed it. But, as long as the Concert remained divided, the political leaders would find no reason to discard or modify their policies; they might argue and manipulate, but they would reach no compromise. A time of no-compromise was at hand.



THE TRUST TERRITORIES OF KAMERUN AND THE  
UNITED NATIONS VISITING MISSION OF 1958.\*



\*Map No. 1141, January 1959, in the United Nations Document T/1426, January 20, 1959.

Footnotes - Chapter Three

- <sup>1</sup>Eyongetah and Brain, op. cit., p. 129.
- <sup>2</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1042, March 16, 1953, pp. 27-28.
- <sup>3</sup>Kale, op. cit., pp. 39-43.
- <sup>4</sup>U.N., T.C., Petition from the Fédération des étudiants d'Afrique noire en France Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration and the Cameroons under French Administration, Paris, 21 February, 1959, T/PET.4 and 5/L.42, March 4, 1959, pp. 8-9 and *passim*.
- <sup>5</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup>Rubin, op. cit., p. 103.
- <sup>7</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1426, Annex IV, January 20, 1959, p. 6.
- <sup>8</sup>U.N., T.C., Report of the Trusteeship Council Covering the Period from 23 July 1955 to 14 August 1956, T/3170, Supplement No. 4, 1956, pp. 120-124.
- <sup>9</sup>U.N., G.A., Report of the Trusteeship Council Covering the Period from 15 August 1956 to 12 July 1957, A/3595, Supplement No. 4, 1957, pp. 102-104.
- <sup>10</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup>Kale, op. cit., pp. 44-48.
- <sup>12</sup>U.N., T.C., Decisions of the Resumed Nigeria Constitutional Conference, 1958, Concerning the Southern and Northern Cameroons, T/1426, Annex III, January 20, 1959, p. 5.
- <sup>13</sup>U.N., T.C., Petition from Chief V.H. Bang Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Kaka, Nkambe, 8 January, 1959, T/PET.4/L.15, February 20, 1959, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>14</sup>Ibid.; See also T/PET.4/L.18, September 1, 1959, *passim*.
- <sup>15</sup>U.N., T.C., Extracts from Address of the Lamido of Adamawa, T/1426, Annex IV, January 20, 1959, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>16</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1426, Annex IV, January 20, 1959, pp. 2, 6.
- <sup>17</sup>U.N., T.C., Extracts from Memorandum of the Northern People's Congress (NPC), T/1426, Annex IV, January 20, 1959, pp. 7-8.
- <sup>18</sup>U.N., T.C., Extracts from Address of the Premier of the Northern Region, T/1426, Annex IV, January 20, 1959, p. 11.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 11-12.

<sup>20</sup>U.N., T.C., Extracts from Memorandum Dated 5 November 1958 from the United Middle Belt Congress/Action Group Alliance (UMBC/AG), T/1426, Annex IV, January 20, 1959, pp. 8-9.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-10.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>23</sup>U.N., T.C., United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa 1958: Report on the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under British Administration, T/1426, January 20, 1959, pp. 67, 82-83.

<sup>24</sup>U.N., T.C., Discussions of the Visiting Mission's Report on Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, T/SR. 953, April, 1959, p. 77.

<sup>25</sup>U.N., T.C., Discussions of the Visiting Mission's Report on Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, T/SR. 959, May, 1959, pp. 106-107; see also paragraph 149, T/1426, January 20, 1959.

<sup>26</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1426, January 20, 1959, paragraph 178.

<sup>27</sup>U.N., T.C., T/SR. 953, April, 1959, passim; T/SR. 959, May, 1959, pp. 105-107.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>U.N., T.C., T/953, April, 1959, p. 80.

<sup>30</sup>U.N., T.C., T/SR. 953, April, 1959, p. 80.

<sup>31</sup>U.N., G.A., A/C.4/SR. 1150, August, 1961, pp. 357-360.

<sup>32</sup>U.N., T.C., General Debate on the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, T/SR. 962, May, 1959, p. 116.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>36</sup>U.N., T.C., T/SR. 959, May, 1959, p. 197.

<sup>37</sup>U.N., T.C., Hearings from Cameroons Petitioners, A/C.4/SR. 847, May, 1959, p. 557.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>U.N., G.A., Statement Made by Mallam Dan Buram Jada, Minister for Northern

Cameroons Affairs in the Government of the Northern Region of Nigeria, at the 850th Meeting of the Fourth Committee, 25 February, 1959, A/C. 4/400, February 26, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4; if this number and composition are accurate, then the changes were made after November, 1958.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>44</sup> U.N., T.C., Trusteeship Council Resolution 1926 (XXIII) Adopted on February 18, 1959, Year Book of the United Nations, Columbia University Press, 1959, p. 368.

<sup>45</sup> U.N., T.C., United Nations Review, Vol. 2, May, 1956, pp. 28-29; this reference is for the constitutional set-up, not for the comparison. For another critical look at the constitutional set-up, see Eyongetah and Brain, op. cit., pp. 135-137.

<sup>46</sup> Kale, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>47</sup> Eyongetah and Brain, op. cit., p. 137.

<sup>48</sup> Kale, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>49</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1426, January 20, 1959, p. 43.

<sup>50</sup> Rubin, op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>52</sup> Kale, op. cit., p. 58.

<sup>53</sup> U.N., G.A., A/3170, Supplement No. 4, 1956, pp. 119-120.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Kamerun National Democratic Party Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Mankon, 1 March, 1956, T/PET. 4/L.4, March 15, 1956, p. 1.

<sup>57</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1426, January 20, 1959, p. 45.

<sup>58</sup> Welch, op. cit., pp. 195-196.

<sup>59</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L.138, April 13, 1961, p.1.

- <sup>60</sup>Welch, op. cit., pp. 195-196.
- <sup>61</sup>Ibid.; only for the results and not for the interpretation of the vote.
- <sup>62</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1425, January 20, 1959, p. 45.
- <sup>63</sup>Johnson, op. cit., p. 131.
- <sup>64</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1426, January 20, 1959, p. 45.
- <sup>65</sup>The Diary of Late J.T. Ndze for the Year 1958.
- <sup>66</sup>U.N., T.C., British Observations on Petitions, T/OBS. 4 and 5/13, August 15, 1957, p. 1.
- <sup>67</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1426, January 20, 1959, p. 45.
- <sup>68</sup>Kale, op. cit., pp. 43-46; Rubin, op. cit., pp. 87-88.
- <sup>69</sup>Kale, op. cit., pp. 44-46.
- <sup>70</sup>Ibid., pp. 46-47.
- <sup>71</sup>The Diary of Late J.T. Ndze for the Year 1958, February 2, 1958.
- <sup>72</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>73</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>74</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>75</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>76</sup>U.N., T.C., Petition from the President of the KNDP Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Kumba, 20 February, 1958, T/PET. 4/L. 7, March 18, 1958, p. 1.
- <sup>77</sup>U.N., T.C., Petition from the Ibadan Kamerun Students' Association Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, 19 March, 1958, T/PET. 4/L. 9, May 2, 1958, pp. 1-5.
- <sup>78</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1426, January 20, 1959, p. 54.
- <sup>79</sup>Ibid., pp. 54-55.
- <sup>80</sup>Ibid., p. 55.
- <sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 54.
- <sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>83</sup>Kale, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., pp. 48-49.

<sup>85</sup>U.N., G.A., Hearings from Cameroons Petitioners, A/C. 4/SR. 807, February, 1959, pp. 341-342.

<sup>86</sup>U.N., T.C., Extracts from Main Policy Statement of the KNC/KPP in a Memorandum Dated 31 October, 1958, T/1426, Annex II, January 20, 1959, pp. 3-5.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., underlining added.

<sup>88</sup>U.N., T.C., Extracts from Memorandum Dated 29 October 1958 from J.I. Kamsi on Behalf of the One Kamerun Party, T/1426, Annex II, January 20, 1959, pp. 11-14.

<sup>89</sup>U.N., T.C., Extracts from Memorandum by the President of the Southern Cameroons Chiefs' Conference Dated 10 October 1958, T/1426, Annex II, January 20, 1959, pp. 10-11.

<sup>90</sup>U.N., T.C., Extracts from a Memorandum by the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) Dated 2 November 1958, T/1426, Annex II, January 20, 1959, pp. 6-7.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., pp. 7-8.

<sup>92</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1426, Annex II, p. 5.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-14.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., pp. 8-9.

<sup>96</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1426, January 20, 1959, pp. 41-42.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>98</sup>U.N., G.A., Hearings from Cameroons Petitioners, A/C. 4/SR. 889, November, 1959, p. 35.

<sup>99</sup>Welch, op. cit., pp. 200-206.

<sup>100</sup>The Diary of Late J.T. Ndze for the Year 1958.

<sup>101</sup>U.N., G.A., Hearings from Cameroons Petitioners, A/C. 4/SR. 775, January, 1959, p. 156.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

<sup>103</sup>U.N., T.C., Petition from the Fédération des étudiants d'Afrique noire en France Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration and the Cameroons under French Administration, Paris, 21 February, 1959, T/PET. 4 and 5/L. 42, March 4, 1959, p. 8.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

##### A TIME OF NO COMPROMISE 1958-SEPTEMBER 1959

The idea of some consultation with the Western Kamerunians regarding the issues of unification and reunification emerged in 1950 and was kept alive intermittently through 1958. For example, in answer to a question by the Italian member of the Trusteeship Council, involving continued "segmentation and scrambling" of Western Kamerun in 1950, Cohen, the British representative in the Trusteeship Council, stated that the possibility for unification depended on the wishes and desires of the people concerned. But Cohen did not say how the wishes and desires of the people concerned would be ascertained.

However, in 1952, the British indicated what kind of consultation they had in mind. That year, the British brought the Northern and Southern Kamerun political leaders together in a conference to discuss two issues, one of which was unification. The indication was that the political leaders alone might be enough to settle the issue of unification. But the break within the ranks of the CNF and the formation of KUNC suggested that the issue was no longer unification alone; reunification had been added to unification. Both ideas carried with them separatist undertones. The demonstration in Northern Kamerun and the involvement of the Southern Kamerun a-Fon with the nationalist movement in Southern Kamerun, both in 1953, suggested that the British idea to have the political leaders settle the issue, now issues, was no longer tenable. Another approach might be sought.

One of the earliest approaches was suggested in 1954 by Um Nyobé, an



Eastern Kamerun political leader and Secretary-General of the UPC. In 1954, Um Nyobé argued at the United Nations that a "referendum" should be held in Kamerun regarding the issues of "reunification" and "independence." Um Nyobé felt that the consultation could not be limited to the Western Kamerunians alone because it affected all the Kamerunians; Eastern Kamerunians should take part in the consultation.<sup>1</sup>

Between 1955 and 1956, the Southern Kamerun political leaders offered two different approaches which had one thing in common. In 1955, all the Southern Kamerun political leaders requested the United Nations to go ahead and effect reunification without any consultation. But in 1956, the KNC and the KPP opted out of reunification while the KNDP suggested that the Southern Kamerunians should be consulted through their elected representatives. Uniting these two approaches was the attempt to exclude direct consultation with the Southern Kamerun electorate.

Although the political parties kept on grumbling over the issues after 1956, the form of consultation once more became a lively issue only in 1958. The impetus for this discussion on the form of consultation was the British suggestion to the United Nations that a plebiscite be held in Southern Kamerun and the United Nations Visiting Mission to Kamerun in that year. When the Mission came, the KNC-KPP felt that a general election would serve as a medium of consultation. The a-Fon, like the British, asked for a plebiscite. The OK preferred unilateral action by the United Nations to effect reunification; a general election was out of the question. The KNDP felt that the Mission should conduct direct interviews with the people and make its decision on the basis of its findings.

However, if circumstances altered, those groups most affected would

change their tactics. The first to do so was the KNC-KPP Alliance. As soon as the Alliance lost the general elections of January 24, 1959, it opted out of a general election as a medium of settling the issues. On February 3, 1959, Endeley and Mbile (Mbile was now the real leader of the KPP) dispatched a telegram to the United Nations to the effect that the elections were not decisive enough to be regarded as having settled the issues of secession and reunification. They felt that the policy of the KNDP which won the elections should be defined clearly, discussed, and tested in the Parliament before Endeley, as Leader of the Opposition, and Foncha, as the new Premier, should proceed to the United Nations. The question of secession from Nigeria had too far reaching consequences to be carried by the United Nations without prior sanction by the Southern Kamerun Parliament.<sup>2</sup> But it was at the United Nations that all the leaders argued their cases more forcefully.

#### The Nationalist Leaders at the United Nations October 1958-March 1959

While the integrationists and those who were at the cross-roads of secession and reunification were busy scheming towards the general elections of January 24, 1959, between mid-1958 and January 1959, the OK, which had no chance of capturing power was busy at the United Nations with the other reunificationists. In a sense, it was the reunificationists who began the first wave of argumentation and manipulation at the United Nations. Between October and November 1958, the OK, the UPC, and the students attempted to influence opinion at the United Nations in favour of their objective.

Abel Dookingué, who represented the Kamerun Students' Union, identi-

fied the objectives of the reunificationists. These included immediate reunification and immediate independence. The demand for these objectives was unanimous in Kamerun and the students were merely acting as a sounding board for the Kamerun populace. A general amnesty should be declared for all Kamerunians to be followed by a referendum on the issue of reunification.<sup>3</sup> The issue, therefore, was only reunification and the medium of consultation would have to be a referendum.

Ntumazah's argument in favour of the objectives of the reunificationists was anti-imperialist in character. He reviewed the history of Kamerun from the period immediately preceding the colonization of the territory in 1884 to 1958. Essentially, he pointed out how the inhabitants of the territory had been carried away into slavery, how the territory had become a nation during the German period,\* how the wicked Anglo-French knife had torn the nation apart in 1919, and how, since 1919, the British great "design" had been to have Nigeria swallow Western Kamerun while the French "design" was to annex Eastern Kamerun and make it part of the French community. During the Second World War, the Kamerunians fought to free the British and the French from the Germans and for the cause of freedom. But now that the Kamerunians were peacefully asking for their own freedom, the French and the British were persecuting the leaders of that cause and denying the people their own freedom. The British, contrary to expectation, were arresting nationalists and handing them over to the French for execution. It should be remembered that the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Britain were thinking of Kamerun† when they signed an

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\* There was in reality no Kamerun nation during the German imperium.

agreement on June 29, 1954, declaring that "in the case of nations divided against their will the United Kingdom and United States Governments would continue to seek to achieve unity through free elections supervised by the United Nations." Pan-Africanism was an internal affair to be dealt with after African states "had attained independence." The Franco-British attempts to influence Kamerunians "in favour of integration with other countries before independence . . . represented a new form of imperialism." The British attempt to coerce Western Kamerunians into union with Nigeria was imperialism which was unacceptable.<sup>4</sup>

After this argument, Ntumazah turned his attention to the issues at stake and to the form of consultation, if any, to be pursued. He was surprised that integration with Nigeria could be considered as a means of terminating the Trusteeship in Western Kamerun when there was nothing in the Charter to suggest such a procedure. The issues at stake were reunification and independence, and the United Nations should at once reunify Kamerun and then give independence to that nation. Failing unilateral action by the United Nations, a referendum should be conducted in all of Kamerun to decide the issues of reunification and independence. The fact that the United Nations "was considering a consultation" in Western Kamerun alone, and on the "issue of integration with Nigeria was disturbing." A plebiscite was not a fair means of consultation because the integrationists would manipulate it as they were already busy manipulating the general elections. However, a plebiscite was acceptable provided that: the British remained

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†If Britain and the United States had any nation in mind, it was Germany, not Kamerun.

aloof from the contest; government vehicles now under the control of the integrationists (the integrationists were in power) were withdrawn six months before the voting day; there was an international police force six months before the voting day in Western Kamerun to supervise the conduct of the plebiscites; non-Kamerunians did not participate in the plebiscite; Western Kamerun was separated from Nigeria completely; and, the ban on "certain political parties" lifted and their exiled leaders were allowed unconditionally to return home and participate in the plebiscites.<sup>5</sup>

When Ntumazah finished with this his argument, several members of the Fourth Committee asked him many questions. One of these was crucial to the issues involved in the argument. The Iraqi representative asked whether, given that the United Nations decided on a plebiscite, three issues, namely, integration with Nigeria, separation from Nigeria with separate independence for Southern or Western Kamerun, and reunification of Kamerun, could not be involved. Ntumazah felt that, and he was supported in this by Dookingué, only reunification should be involved in the plebiscite.<sup>6</sup> The idea then was to make sure that integration, and separate independence for Western Kamerun were excluded from the contest.

While Dr. Felix-Roland Moumié, leader of the UPC, added little that was not yet known, he helped to confuse the situation further. He recited all the instances in which various groups in Kamerun had requested either independence, reunification, or both--a repeat of the instances Kamsi had cited to the Mission in Kamerun--and then declared that it was the "invincible will" of the Kamerunians to be reunited and to have independence. The issues at stake were independence and reunification and only a referendum could be used to settle them.<sup>7</sup> When speaking for the Women's Organization, an affiliate

of the UPC, Moumié asserted that President Wilson was thinking of Kamerun\* in 1919 when he said at the Paris Peace Conference that "nothing was more dangerous or more fraught with consequences for the future than the arbitrary division of nations."<sup>8</sup>

When a member of the Committee asked why Moumié was insisting that the United Nations should conduct a general election in Kamerun before terminating trusteeship, Moumié linked the issues with a democratic overthrow of the Government of Alhaji Ahmadu Ahidjo, Prime Minister of Eastern Kamerun. He felt that trusteeship could not be terminated until independence had been achieved, reunification effected, harmony in the territory restored, citizens assured of their freedoms, and independence "established by a democratic transfer of powers." The Government in Eastern Kamerun was not democratically elected. It was the place of the United Nations to conduct a referendum on the issues of reunification and independence, and to "organize elections to a constituent assembly which would appoint a Government competent to negotiate" the termination of trusteeship.<sup>9</sup>

The programme of the reunificationists was now complete and can be summarized here. These reunificationists wanted immediate reunification, immediate independence, and the establishment of a democratic government in Kamerun. This last aspect implied the ousting of Ahidjo's Government through a freely conducted general election. In an attempt to realize these objectives, they tried to influence the United Nations into acting unilaterally. Failing this unilateral action on the part of the United Nations, they asked

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\*It is more probable than not that Kamerun never crossed Wilson's mind when he made the reported declaration.

for a referendum which would involve all the Kamerunians. But they were not totally averse to a plebiscite limited to Western Kamerunians alone provided certain conditions conducive to a pro-reunification vote were fulfilled. They were very unwilling to see integration with Nigeria and separate independence for Western Kamerun involved in the Consultation.

On the other hand, the integrationists felt quite differently. At the United Nations, Endeley began by claiming the full authority to speak for the KNC-KPP Alliance and by asking the United Nations to weigh his views against the background of his struggles in and achievements for Southern Kamerun between 1939 and 1959. The struggles he referred to was his role in the nationalist movement during the period, and his achievements were the constitutional advancements Southern Kamerun gained during his leadership. He went on to say, with some justification, that he had never suggested "complete" secession from Nigeria by Southern Kamerun. He felt that Southern Kamerun depended on Nigeria for developmental finance and there was no alternative "process whereby the Southern Cameroons could be rendered financially viable and still maintain the pace of its development." The parties he represented wished to see Southern Kamerun achieve independence as a Region equal in all respects with the "other Regions of the Federation of Nigeria" within the Nigerian framework, that is, as an integral part of Nigeria.<sup>10</sup> It was no longer a State of Southern Kamerun in association with Nigeria.

Endeley then turned his attention to reunification. The issue of reunification was pushed "into the background" during the January 24, 1959, general elections. He had once advocated reunification but he did so in the name of development and development was now irrelevant. While reunifi-

cation was not provided for in the Trusteeship Agreement, it was not even supported by "responsible opinion" in Eastern Kamerun. Only the irresponsible people were still pursuing the "barren" idea. No programme for reunification had ever been worked out. The intentions of the reunificationists were to "separate the Southern Cameroons from a friendly Nigeria in order to use the Territory as a base from which subversive doctrines could be launched against Nigeria and the rest of West Africa." Reunification, aside from its futility and impracticability, would re-establish an artificial boundary twice as long as the Inter-Kamerunian boundary line. Moreover, reunification was based on hollow sentimental ideas. It could be advantageous only in a West African Union in which Southern Kamerun was an integral part of Nigeria.<sup>11</sup> Thus, while the integrationists objected to the reunification of Kamerun, they were ready to accept a West African Union.

Endeley next turned his attention to the form of consultation. He agreed with the Mission that the results of the general elections could not be regarded as decisive over the issues at stake. A plebiscite, conducted under certain conditions, was required to settle the issues. These conditions included: the absence of local prejudices and propaganda; the provision of impartial information to the voters regarding the issues at stake; the revision of the register for the plebiscite to include all those qualified to vote; the selection of "men of integrity" free from "tribal bias" as registration officers; the use of "simple and easy to understand" questions at the plebiscite; the plebiscite questions to be "association with Nigeria" versus reunification; the exclusion of secession and separate independence for Southern Kamerun from the contest; the assessment of the results of the plebiscite on ethnic group lines or on the basis of the votes in each Fondom;



a change in the "existing status" to be effected only by a "substantial majority" in each Fandom or ethnic group; and, the exclusion of continued trusteeship from the plebiscite.<sup>12</sup>

After this statement, Endeley answered several questions from members of the Fourth Committee. The representative of New Zealand asked Endeley who should vote at the plebiscite. Endeley felt that the precedent of Togoland ought to be followed. Any person who could prove, by producing tax slips, that he had lived in Western Kamerun for at least two years was qualified. He agreed that the same proof could not be used in the case of women, but he had no ready solution for the problem. When asked to explain why the results of the plebiscites should be assessed as he suggested, he felt that it was because the Administrative Divisions "roughly correspond[ed] to ethnic groups," (a largely unfounded assertion); "an analysis of the ethnic grouping would give a better view of the feelings and wishes of the people." The Iraqi representative then asked Endeley whether all the political parties in Eastern Kamerun wished to make Southern Kamerun a base of "subversive doctrines" in West Africa. Endeley's statement "was specifically directed to the UPC." The Iraqi representative further asked what Endeley meant by "substantial majority" and Endeley felt that "only a two-thirds majority would be decisive." Failing this, a second plebiscite would be necessary. The Iraqi representative also questioned Endeley on why more than two questions could not be asked at the plebiscite. It was because, Endeley argued, the electorate would not decide "rightly if three choices [were] put before them." Moreover, it was not necessary to have three choices because a negative vote for "association" with Nigeria would be "indicative of a desire to secede," and a negative vote for reunification

would be "indicative of a desire for continued association," (not secession).  
A third question would only go to confuse the voters.<sup>13</sup>

This final statement indicated Endeley's strategy, the desire to exclude secession with separate independence for Southern Kamerun from the plebiscite but to accept it if integration with Nigeria was rejected by the electorate. Reunification was out of the question. That was why a negative vote for reunification could be taken as a vote for integration with Nigeria whereas a negative vote for integration with Nigeria could be regarded as a vote for secession, not reunification. If the members of the Fourth Committee were attentive enough, they would have recognized two important facts. Endeley saw secession and continued trusteeship leading to separate independence for Southern Kamerun as the greatest threat to his objective of integration with Nigeria; that was why he sought to exclude it from the contest. Secondly, he sought to include reunification in the contest, not because he believed in it or because he thought it could win, but because he wanted it to influence the electorate into voting for integration with Nigeria; the inclusion of reunification in the contest was thus an attempt to procure a pro-integrationist vote. Endeley was thus attempting to get the United Nations to decide in favour of integration with Nigeria.

Whatever the case, the position of the integrationists can now be summarized. They wanted Southern or Western Kamerun to be integrated with Nigeria. They wanted to see only integration with Nigeria and secession with reunification take part in the contest. They now wanted the plebiscite used as a means of settling the issues. A general election and a referendum were out of the question. Finally, they wished to give the vote to as many non-Kamerunians, who were mature and have lived in Southern Kamerun for at

least two years, as possible. This was a position which the Foncharians could hardly accept.

Foncha came to the United Nations more powerful than he was when he met the Mission between October and November 1958 in Southern Kamerun. He was now the Premier representing the party that had won the January 24, 1959, general elections. His party had fought and won the elections, he said, on a specific programme. This programme included: the separation of Southern Kamerun from Nigeria before Nigeria became independent on October 1, 1960; the constitution of Southern Kamerun as a separate political entity administered, for a short period, under a modified form of trusteeship by the British outside the framework of Nigeria; after the short period of trusteeship, Southern Kamerun would gain "complete independence"; and, during the period of continued trusteeship the "possibility of unification" of Kamerun on a federal basis would be explored. "Reunion" with Northern Kamerun would be welcomed provided that that region had already "worked out its own separation from the Federation of Nigeria." As the popular vote of the elections showed, his programme was widely supported. He, therefore, called on the United Nations to endorse the wishes of the majority of the Southern Kamerunians.<sup>14</sup>

Foncha's programme and position regarding the issues at stake and the form of consultation, as he argued, reflected the conduct and results of the 1959 general elections. A plebiscite should be the medium of consultation and the issues of the plebiscite should be "separation from the Federation of Nigeria or of remaining with it." Reunification was predicated on secession and on discussions to be held with the government of Eastern Kamerun and, therefore, "should not be a question in the plebiscite." There

was no reason to believe that Southern Kamerun would depend on Nigeria for economic viability because the region "was potentially richer than any comparable area in Nigeria." His programme, which had been endorsed by the majority of Southern Kamerunians whom he was representing, consisted of separation of Southern Kamerun from Nigeria, continued trusteeship outside the framework of Nigeria for a short time, the exploration of the possibility for reunification during the short period of trusteeship, independence, and, if discussions were successful, reunification. His Government had already passed a motion calling for the separation of Southern Kamerun from Nigeria and the continuation of trusteeship until the "possibility of unification had been explored." It had also taken all "constitutional, legal and peaceful measures to ensure respect for the wishes of the people." Since the British and the integrationists had facilitated the registration of Nigerians in the last general elections, the register would have to be revised and the vote given only to Southern Kamerunians at home and abroad.<sup>15</sup>

Foncha's programme was sufficiently involved as to invite many questions from the members of the Fourth Committee. The Iraqi representative asked whether Foncha envisaged a second plebiscite on the question of reunification after the first involving secession from Nigeria had taken place. Foncha answered negatively adding that reunification was "consequential upon secession," and, "in our mind, secession [could] only end in unification." When this representative asked whether Foncha felt that a plebiscite was necessary in Northern Kamerun, Foncha answered affirmatively. The Iraqi representative further wished to know how Foncha would define a Southern Kamerunian. Foncha felt that a Southern Kamerunian was any person born in

Southern Kamerun.<sup>16</sup>

The representative of Iraq was followed by the representatives of the United Arab Republic and New Zealand in questioning Foncha. When the representative of the United Arab Republic asked whether the modification of the Trusteeship Agreement should be made immediately, Foncha felt that priority ought to be given to the medium of deciding the future of Southern Kamerun, that is, to the plebiscite. The representative of New Zealand, asked several questions: how long was Foncha's short transitional period of trusteeship? did Foncha envisage three solutions to the Southern Kamerun problem, namely, separate and full independence for Southern Kamerun, reunification, and unification after Northern Kamerun had seceded from Nigeria? and, did the statement of the a-Fon demanding secession, continued trusteeship, separate and full independence for Southern Kamerun, and membership in the Commonwealth reflect the views of the voters who supported the KNDP candidates in the last elections? The short period was "the period after separation from Nigeria and before independence and [re]unification," the length of time being determined "after the plebiscite and the negotiation for [re]unification." Any of the named solutions was acceptable. The statement of the a-Fon reflected the true wishes and desires of those who had voted in the KNDP candidates.<sup>17</sup>

The Indonesian representative, was the next to question Foncha. This representative wished to know how Foncha envisaged the unification of Northern and Southern Kamerun and whether it was possible only after separation from Nigeria. Foncha felt that unification could take place whether before or after Southern Kamerun had separated from Nigeria. When the Indonesian representative asked whether Foncha wanted reunification before or after

unification, Foncha replied that reunification did not depend on unification; it was "a process" which would "go on despite other sections of the Cameroons." This representative further wished to know how the electorate would express their views on reunification if it was not made part of the plebiscite, or whether Foncha wanted reunification to form the subject of the second plebiscite, and if so, would the second plebiscite deal with the "prospective issue between the Northern and Southern Cameroons." Moreover, was reunification to take place before or after Eastern Kamerun independence, and would "the wish of the Southern Cameroons people be known?" Foncha did not suggest that the Southern Kamerun plebiscite be "mixed up with the affairs of Northern Cameroons." Reunification would, hopefully, be achieved after independence. It was not necessary to know the wishes of the Southern Kamerunians before Eastern Kamerun independence although that was a possibility.<sup>18</sup>

The representative of Ireland, concentrated his questions on the terms for reunification. He wished to know the terms on which Southern Kamerun would seek reunification and whether federalism was the basis 'sine qua non' of reunification. If not, would "Foncha agree to a unitary form of government?" Did Foncha think that the plebiscite questions "should more precisely reflect all the possibilities open to the inhabitants, which were: integration with Nigeria, unification with the new State of the Cameroons, continuation of the Trusteeship, or an independent State of the Southern Cameroons?" Did Foncha agree that negotiations for reunification were a "Necessary preliminary to the questions to be put before the electorate," and if so, when would such negotiations begin?<sup>19</sup> In essence, this representative questioned Foncha on two issues: the terms under which Foncha would seek

reunification; and the alternatives which should be put to the electorate at the plebiscite.

In response to the terms of reunification issue, Foncha had this to say. The terms for reunification would "be discussed" by the two Governments; and until then, it was "difficult for any party to fix the form it should take." However, the KNDP Government preferred a Federation.<sup>20</sup>

Essentially, Foncha was ambivalent over the issue, an ambivalence which did much to confuse members of the Fourth Committee and to weaken his bargaining position thereafter. To be sure, he indicated that his Government would prefer a Federation but, this too, was still to "be discussed". What would happen if, after discussion, Ahidjo rejected a Federation and insisted on a unitary state to which, as will be seen shortly, Foncha was against?

Foncha would have been more helpful to himself and to the United Nations if he had made Federalism a condition 'sine qua non' of reunification. Three courses then would have been open to the United Nations: it would make that condition part of the question on reunification; it would then approach Ahidjo to see whether he could accept the condition; and, if Ahidjo rejected the condition, the United Nations might have considered Foncha's second alternative for the plebiscite.

Even on the issue of the alternatives to be put at the plebiscite, Foncha was not helpful to himself or to the United Nations. In response to the Irish representative's question, Foncha felt that, while the plebiscite questions should express "what the people want," they should also be "understood by the people." Because more than two questions would confuse the people, there should only be two alternatives at the plebiscite.<sup>21</sup>

This answer was not in Foncha's interest. Of all the four alternatives before

the United Nations, Fonchaism was the most cumbersome. The associationists asked simply for the integration of Southern Kamerun with Nigeria in a Region of its own. The anti-imperialists demanded only the reunification of Kamerun without conditions. The Crowned Princes advocated secession, a period of trusteeship in order to build Smaller Kamerun which would be part of the Commonwealth. Fonchaism requested secession, a period of trusteeship during which negotiations for reunification would be carried out, and reunification effected preferably on a federal basis. But, Foncha did not state definitively what would happen if negotiations for reunification foundered. What all this amounts to is that, if 'easy to understand' was to be the criterion for selecting the plebiscite questions, Fonchaism would have been the last to be chosen.

Indeed, in this answer, Foncha failed to avoid the trap the integrationists and the reunificationists were setting for him and his programme. Both groups of adversaries had sought to exclude his programme from the competition because they thought it was, aside from that of the a-Fon, the most popular and, therefore, a threat to their differing objectives. Had Foncha agreed to have more than two alternatives at the plebiscite, the integrationists and the reunificationists would have modified their positions; the integrationists would have sought to limit the contest to integration versus secession in the hope of avoiding reunification altogether; the reunificationists would have sought to limit the contest to secession versus reunification in the hope of avoiding integration altogether. The substitution of the attempt to exclude the most undesirable alternative for that of the greatest threat would have occurred; and Foncha would have had what he was advocating for as the second alternative. But, Foncha failed



to see through all this.

Nor was Foncha helpful in answering other questions. When the Mexican representative asked whether in the "unitary central State" produced by reunification Foncha would allow each of the present six Administrative Divisions of Southern Kamerun to be administrative units of the new state, Foncha replied negatively. The representative of India wished to know whether, should the electorate reject reunification, Foncha would like to have an independent state of Southern Kamerun or "a further indefinite period of trusteeship," and, if the former, whether such a state would be economically viable. Under such circumstances, Foncha would prefer a sovereign independent state of Southern Kamerun and he believed that such a state would be politically and economically viable. Finally, the representative of Malaya, asked Foncha two straightforward questions: did Foncha mean to give "the impression that what was envisaged was perhaps the emergence of an independent Southern Cameroons?" Could Foncha clear up the "confusion" with regards to his programme by saying "precisely" at what stage that reunification negotiations would take place? Foncha was silent over the first question and refused to be precise over the second; negotiations for reunification would take place "as soon as possible," but it was "difficult to say precisely the time."<sup>22</sup>

Some members of the Fourth Committee, the representative of Malaya for instance, found Foncha's programme confusing. This was not so. Foncha's programme 'per se' was not confusing. It was clearly committed to the secession of Southern Kamerun from Nigeria and to the emergence of the region as a state in its own right. Foncha sought a period of continued trusteeship for two reasons: to work out the emergence of a Southern Kamerun State;

and, to use that period in negotiating favourable conditions for the state of Southern Kamerun in a reunified federal state of Kamerun. Should negotiations succeed, reunification would be effected. But, should negotiations founder, Southern Kamerun would, Foncha's attitude seems to suggest, emerge as a sovereign fully independent state. Foncha was committed to reunification but to reunification which would not alienate the majority of his electorate and, at this stage, he was ready to forego reunification should it threaten to lose him his supporters. All this comes out very clearly in the outline of Foncha's programme, in his position statements vis-à-vis the issues of the plebiscite, and in his answers, or lack of them, to the questions. The worst that might be said of Foncha's programme is that it was cumbersome enough to be able to confuse those who had to make the decision.

Nevertheless, there were certain short-comings in Foncha's behaviour at the United Nations. Foncha was not the man to read people's minds and to handle difficult questions on the spot. Some of his answers appeared contradictory and others were not very helpful. Worse still, he was silent in some cases and vague in others over questions which he should have used to tell the members of the Fourth Committee in no uncertain terms what his programme was actually aiming at. Furthermore, he was most unhelpful to himself and to the Fourth Committee when he unwisely also stated that there need only be two questions at the plebiscite. If Foncha is to be accused of confusion, it was on this issue not on his programme.

Whatever the case, the situation had become more intricate at the United Nations than it was in Southern Kamerun. Four alternatives were

before the United Nations: integration with Nigeria; secession from Nigeria, a period of continued trusteeship, full independence, and membership in the Commonwealth; secession from Nigeria, a period of continued trusteeship, full independence, and either reunification in a Federation or sovereignty for Southern Kamerun in its independent state; and, reunification pure and simple. At the United Nations, while no one argued clearly in favour of the second objective, Foncha informed the Fourth Committee in no uncertain words that it was the most popular objective. On the other hand, the political leaders argued forcefully and schemed in favour of the other alternatives. The integrationists and the Foncharians asked for a plebiscite while the reunificationists demanded unilateral action by the United Nations or a referendum and accepted a plebiscite, like the integrationists, with specific conditions. The integrationists sought to exclude the second and third alternatives from the plebiscite and to limit the contest between integration with Nigeria and reunification. The foncharians sought to exclude reunification from the contest and to limit the contest to integration with Nigeria versus secession with continued trusteeship without a clearly defined end. The reunificationists sought to exclude every other alternative from the consultation but reunification. The integrationists wished to give the vote to any person born or who had lived in Southern or Western Kamerun for at least two years. The Foncharians wished to give the vote only to Southern or Western Kamerunians at home or abroad. The reunificationists felt that the vote should be given only to the Kamerunians, Western and Eastern Kamerunians.

If there was any confusion at the United Nations, it was not on the programmes and positions of the Southern Kamerun political leaders. Their

programmes and positions on the various issues at stake were well-defined. Their arguments in favour of their programmes at the United Nations were intricate and intriguing although Foncha proved not to be the equal of the others. The confusion lay with the Fourth Committee: how, given that all its members were impartial, to square these conflicting positions with the unanimity of the two leading Southern Kamerunian political leaders on having only two alternatives at the plebiscite and how to leave out reunification when one of the two insisted on it and the other indicated it was a future possibility. Nevertheless, there was actually nothing too difficult in the situation. The United Nations Charter was there to solve the problem. It states clearly that in anything concerning a trust territory, the wishes, desires, and interests of the inhabitants must be decisive. Since the inhabitants themselves best know what their interests are, particularly when even the imperialists consider them already fit to govern themselves, the Charter actually hinges on their wishes and desires. To be sure, the Southern Kamerun political leaders were split in their wishes and desires but they were not the majority of the Southern Kamerunians. In spite of himself, Foncha, the Premier of Southern Kamerun, indicated at least two times at the United Nations what the wishes and desires of the majority of the Southern Kamerunians were. When he agreed, although this was only indirectly accurate, that he came to power because of the policy of the a-Fon, no other leader contested it at the time. This meant, therefore, that the majority of the Southern Kamerunians had, given that their votes spoke the language of the alternatives, determined their interests and aspired for Smaller Kamerun. Furthermore, Foncha argued his case on the basis of the popular votes at the elections, figures of which he produced. This meant,

even if the majority of the votes were not for Smaller Kamerun, then they were for Fonchaism. Whether the meanings of the votes at the plebiscite would coincide with the meanings of the plebiscite questions or not, to deny the electorate the choice of Smaller Kamerun and/or Fonchaism, would be tantamount to saying that although they ere fit to rule themselves, they did not know what their interests were--an internal contradiction. In short, it would be to deny them the right to self-determination, an important aspect of the trusteeship system. No matter how one looks at it, considering the Charter, the objective of Smaller Kamerun would have been the first alternative chosen for the plebiscite. But, the Fourth Committee and the Trusteeship Council had their own internal problems and perceptions.

Even before Foncha and Endeley made their statements at the United Nations, many of the Trusteeship Council members had made up their minds based mainly on the report of the 1958 Mission. The British representative, Cohen, was the first to do so. On February 16, 1959, he asserted that the report was thorough and accurate. It had advised that the January elections should not be taken as decisive and that a plebiscite was required at a future date to settle the issue. The report had shown that "the average poll had been 70 per cent of the registered voters; 40.4 per cent of the votes had been cast in favour of candidates pledged to support association with the Federation of Nigeria and 55.3 per cent in favour of the candidates supporting 'secession' by the Southern Cameroons from Nigeria. The remaining votes had gone to independent candidates." He, Cohen, was now, therefore, asking the Council to endorse the Missions report and to recommend a future plebiscite for Southern Kamerun.<sup>23</sup> Cohen had, thus, made up his mind against a referendum or unilateral reuniting of Kamerun by the United

Nations long before Foncha and Endeley made their statements between February 23 and February 25, 1959.

Two days after Cohen's speech, on February 18, 1959, other members of the Council also indicated where they stood and what had influenced their decisions. After considering Cohen's statements and the Circumstances, U Thant, the representative of Burma, felt that the decision should be left to the General Assembly. The representative of New Zealand, "was in general agreement with the views of the Visiting Mission," which were a product of "careful findings." The Mission's recommendations of a future plebiscite for Southern Kamerun "warranted the Council's endorsement," although he "was aware that some members did not share that view." It was, therefore, necessary to leave the decision to the General Assembly. While he accepted without "hesitation" the Mission's view that there should be no plebiscite in Northern Kamerun, he nevertheless felt that a plebiscite should take place in that region in order to "strengthen the proportion of those throughout the Territory [that is, Northern and Southern Kamerun] who wished to accede to Nigeria."<sup>24</sup> The New Zealand representative had already taken sides with the integrationists and was already disposed to favour integration long before Endeley came to the United Nations.

The situation was not very different among the other members of the Trusteeship Council. The representative of Haiti, agreed with U Thant's statement and "saw no alternative but to leave the discussion of the substance of the issue to the General Assembly." Sears, the representative of the United States, felt that until Foncha and Endeley came, "the Council could not draft a resolution with the kind of recommendations it would normally have made to the General Assembly." Montero de Vargas, the

representative of Paraguay, agreed with Sears and co-sponsored the draft resolution because "it did not touch upon the substance of the question." The Italian representative, co-sponsored the draft resolution because of the British neutral attitude on the affair and because of the Mission's "thorough investigation" in the Territory. He was in agreement with the representative of New Zealand, that is, that the Northern Kamerun plebiscite be used to influence opinion in Southern Kamerun in favour of integration with Nigeria. The Australian representative accepted the draft resolution because of British neutral attitude. Finally, Lobanov, the Soviet representative, did not vote against the draft resolution because it reflected neither the views of the Mission nor dealt with the "substance of the questions;" had it done so, he would have voted against it.<sup>25</sup>

It appears, then, that the Mission report, the disagreement over the validity of its conclusions and recommendations vis-à-vis the substance of the issue within the Trusteeship Council, and the partiality and impartiality, as the case may be, of the members of the Trusteeship Council over the future of Western Kamerun, were responsible for Resolution 1926 (XXIII) of the Trusteeship Council adopted on February 18, 1959. This resolution recommended a plebiscite for Northern Kamerun at the end of 1959. About Southern Kamerun, it shifted the decision to the General Assembly pending the arrival of Endeley and Foncha.

But the arrival of Endeley and Foncha and their statements at the General Assembly did not alter much. The General Assembly included the same countries whose representatives had disagreed and taken different positions in the Trusteeship Council. It is no surprise, therefore, that the General Assembly on its own part evaded the problem and passed a resolution which was

a confession, not so much that the imbroglio could not be resolved, as it was that its members were too interested and too divided to resolve the conflict themselves. The General Assembly Resolution 1350 (XIII) adopted on March 13, 1959, essentially shifted back the decision to the Southern Kamerun political leaders who had come to the United Nations, in the first place, because they could not resolve the conflict themselves. It stated that a plebiscite would take place in Southern Kamerun between December 1959 and April 1960. The alternatives to be put to the voters and the qualifications for voters would be considered by the General Assembly during its fourteenth session. But the General Assembly hoped that "all concerned in the Territory [would] endeavour to reach agreement . . . on the alternatives to be put in the plebiscite in Southern Cameroons and the qualification for voting in it."<sup>26</sup> After the long journey to and scheming at the United Nations, the Southern Kamerun political leaders had only one issue resolved for them, namely, that the form of consultation would have to be a plebiscite. The most important issues, the voters' qualification and, in particular, the plebiscite questions had been left unresolved. They were asked to come home and resolve the problems themselves. But they were coming back into a confused society, a society in which some of the a-Fon were already decided, wrongly, that Foncha was a reunificationist, while others, though uncertain, believed this same Foncha to be a secessionist pure and simple, and others were so confused as to be unable to place Foncha. Generally, the coastal belt was going in one direction and the grasslands were moving in another direction.



The Nationalist Leaders at Home April-September 1959

Three groups which together embraced the Bakweri, the indigenous inhabitants of Victoria Division, the home of Dr. Endeley, showed very clearly, in 1959, that they endorsed the integrationists' programme and positions completely. The Bakweri Women's Union, on September 21, 1959, argued that Southern Kamerun had "been tied into the apron strings of Nigeria for Administrative convenience," and it had developed "together socially, educationally, economically and otherwise" with Nigeria. Their kith and kin were in Nigeria. The idea of continued trusteeship was out of the question. The vote at the plebiscite should be given to every tax-payer in Southern Kamerun. The plebiscite questions should involve "association" with Nigeria versus secession from Nigeria with reunification as a condition for secession.<sup>27</sup> The a-Fon, Councillors, and Members of Tiko constituency declared a vote of confidence for Endeley and denounced Foncha. They were in agreement with whatever Endeley had said and the positions he had taken at the United Nations.<sup>28</sup> At a meeting held some time before May 20, 1959, the Bakweri, who were present at the meeting, endorsed everything Endeley stood for, and declared Fon G.M. Endeley, Dr. Endeley's uncle who had signed the policy statement of the a-Fon in 1958, "taboo" and dethroned.<sup>29</sup> These petitions clearly indicated that the majority of the indigenous inhabitants of Victoria Division were integrationists.\* Endeley was aware of his support in Victoria Division.

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\*A good search has not produced any petition from any Bakweri person or group of persons holding contrary views. The petitions that held contrary views and came from this Division were those of the OK and Youths Associations, both of whose members need not be Bakweri.

The indigenous inhabitants of Kumba Division, the home of Mbile, also endorsed the integrationists' programme. The Ngolo-Batanga Union (Southern Bakundu--the Bakundu command about two-thirds of Kumba Division area wise) argued that they shared the same boundaries, market places, fishing waters, to name only these, with the people of Calabar, Nigeria. Their only means of communication, the Ndian and Meme rivers, emptied their waters in the Calabar Sea and served all their needs. While Calabar and Nigeria were their only means of contact with the outside world, they had "never seen a mile of road" in their area. Secession from Nigeria would destroy them. The Efik and the Ibibio of Eastern Nigeria were their kith and kin. Reunification was a sentimental issue which would "lead to chaos and confusion since the two sectors had lost contact for the last 40 or more years."<sup>30</sup> The Northern Bakundu blamed the mess in which Southern Kamerun had found itself on British lack of policy and definite direction in the region and then asserted that the British and British democracy had failed in Southern Kamerun. However, they felt that the issues at the plebiscite should be "association" with Nigeria versus secession with reunification. Every person who voted in the 1959 elections should be allowed to vote at the plebiscite. Furthermore, the results of the plebiscite should be treated on Divisional basis and only a two-thirds majority in each Division should alter the "status quo."<sup>31</sup>

The Bakossi of Kumba, possibly the only group in that Division that does not belong to the Bakundu ethnic group, were also integrationists. On March 6, 1959, they suggested that the plebiscite be conducted with adequate safeguards to prevent one ethnic group from making a decision for another ethnic group.<sup>32</sup> In a telegram on September 29, 1959, the same Bakossi

argued that Southern Kamerun was too small to be "sandwiched between two large territories," and strongly recommended that the questions of the plebiscite should be union with Nigeria versus reunification.<sup>33</sup> On August 15, 1959, the Balondo, another Bakundu group, condemned the idea of continued trusteeship, identified the issues of the plebiscite to be reunification against association with Nigeria, and suggested that every person who voted in the January, 1959, general elections should have a vote at the plebiscite.<sup>34</sup> The integrationists were, thus, sure of support from the indigenous inhabitants of another Division.

Unlike Victoria and Kumba Divisions, Mamfe Division was generally in favour of secession and separate independence and sovereignty for Southern Kamerun. Perhaps the situation in Mamfe Division is best illustrated by its spokesmen. Either on or before September 14, 1959, all the a-Fon of Mamfe Division came together in a conference and decided against the integrationists' ideas. They asked the United Nations to make integration with Nigeria and secession from Nigeria the issues at the plebiscite. They felt that only indigenous Southern Kamerunians should have the vote at the plebiscite.<sup>35</sup> Foncha could, thus, count on support from Mamfe Division provided, and this is very important, he either abandoned reunification completely or left it always in the background as he did during the January 24, 1959, general elections.

Although Bamenda Division was one of the most divided areas, sentiment there was largely against integration with Nigeria, generally in favour of secession pure and simple, and to some extent in favour of reunification. Being the home of Premier Foncha and Ntumazah, and the home of the most powerful a-Fon, and commanding about half the population of Southern Kamerun,

interest was centered there particularly in the Fondoms of Nso, Bafut, Kom,\* and Bali Nyonga. Unfortunately, the four more powerful a-Fon of Bamenda did not bother themselves arguing or writing petitions at this time. It was, however, known at the time that the a-Fon of Bali Nyonga and Bafut were for secession pure and simple. The a-Fon of Kom and Nso (brothers as their subjects like to call them and as they refer to each other) supported integration with Nigeria but local politics, in the case of Nso, and the fact that the second in command of the KNDP hierarchy was a Kom, in the case of Kom, made that support not as important as it should have been.

Nevertheless, some of the less powerful a-Fon of Bamenda did indicate where their support lay. As early as 1958, S.M.C. Mbipefa, Fon of Bangola, identified only two views in Southern Kamerun which he thought the consultation might involve. These were association with Nigeria and secession from it.<sup>36</sup> On September 10, 1959, the a-Fon of Widikum West, who claimed to have 39,209 subjects, suggested that the plebiscite questions should be permanent integration with Nigeria against secession with a future determination of fate. They felt that only indigenous inhabitants of Southern Kamerun should have a vote at the plebiscite.<sup>37</sup> One thing Foncha knew, and everyone in Southern Kamerun knew it too, was that Foncha could count on Bamenda, if only he played down reunification. This was not easy for him to do either what with the most vocal reunificationists on this side of the Mungo based in Mankon Town,† the largest city in Bamenda Division.

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\*The Fondom of Kom was actually in Wum Division but ethnically it belongs to the Tikari of Bamenda and has more contacts with Bamenda than with the rest of Wum.

†This point will become obvious to the reader in the next chapter in the section dealing with initial reaction to the Foncha-Endeley Compromise.

Perhaps Wum Division was the most confused at the time. The majority of the inhabitants of Wum were certain about three things: they were against integration with Nigeria; they were equally against reunification; and they wanted secession from Nigeria and separate and full independence for Southern Kamerun in a Southern Kamerun State. But, none of the political parties in the region gave them precisely what they wanted; they stood well-dressed but with nowhere to go. The outcome was confusion.

Some time in August, 1959, the a-Fon of Wum Division--Fungom, Aghem, Beba-Befang, and Essimbi--, writing individually or in small groups, seemed to be on the side of the integrationists. They argued that Southern Kamerun in the foreseeable future could not form a viable economic and political entity by itself. The problem of the day was between joining "our brothers" of Eastern Kamerun and joining Nigeria, with which Southern Kamerun had developed in the same direction together socially, politically, educationally, culturally and otherwise. Continued trusteeship was not acceptable because it was a new form of imperialism. Every person born in Southern Kamerun was qualified to vote. The questions of the plebiscite should involve association with Nigeria versus reunification.<sup>38</sup> But, less than one month later, September, 1959, these same a-Fon came together in a conference and their decision appeared to be in favour of Fonchaism or at least in line with the normal position of the a-Fon. They requested that the plebiscite questions be integration with Nigeria versus secession, continued trusteeship system, and a decision in the future. They felt that only indigenous Southern Kamerunians should have the vote at the plebiscite.<sup>39</sup> The rather contradictory evidence from the a-Fon of Wum suggests the Division's inhabitants were either confused or undecided about their political fate.

The situation in Nkambe Division is not easy to handle. It appears that Nkambe Division was either as divided as Bamenda--except that its own division was between integration and simple secession, not between simple secession and reunification as was the case with Bamenda--or the people were indecisive as was the case with Wum Division. The thirteen a-Fon of Tang and Wiya, on August 29, 1959, were convinced of the "grave implications" of secession from Nigeria. Direct administration by Britain under continued trusteeship was a retrograde step while secession and reunification were fraught with dangers for Southern Kamerun. A plebiscite was welcomed provided the register was revised. They wished to secede from Southern Kamerun and to continue in their association with Nigeria. In case of a plebiscite, the alternatives should be association with Nigeria versus secession from it with reunification as a condition for secession. All foreigners in Southern Kamerun, young and old, including even those just coming into the region as well as the indigenous inhabitants should have the vote at the plebiscite.<sup>40</sup> Two days later, August 31, 1959, twenty-three a-Fon of Nkambe Division spoke differently. They suggested that the alternatives at the plebiscite should be integration with Nigeria versus secession pure and simple and they felt that only the names of the indigenous Southern Kamerunians should be in the revised register of the plebiscite.<sup>41</sup> If the second group of the Nkambe a-Fon included the former thirteen a-Fon, then the thirteen changed their minds two days after in a larger group and, if not, then Nkambe was divided between integrationists and secessionists. In either event, neither Foncha nor Endeley could be sure of definite support from Nkambe.

Aside from this Dividional distribution of support, the integrationists

and Foncharians could tap some support from some of the Associations in Southern Kamerun. These Associations were located in the urban areas in Southern Kamerun. They were, in the main, Youths' Associations. The available sources so far suggest that only one of these Associations, surprisingly from Mamfe, was with the integrationists at this time. On September 22, 1959, the Etemetek Youth Association of Mamfe suggested that the alternatives of the plebiscite should be secession with reunification against remaining "as you are now in the Federation of Nigeria after her independence." The vote should be given to all those who voted in the last general elections.<sup>42</sup> The behaviour of this Youth Association should not be overlooked. It suggests the extent to which the young and urban dwellers and the literate were attempting to free themselves from the influence of the a-Fon.

The majority of the Youths' Associations, however, were against integration with Nigeria. On September 17, 1959, the Bota Youth Association identified the "main objective" of the KNDP, their party, as "secession from Nigeria without bitterness." They felt that only citizens of Southern Kamerun "SHALL vote during the forthcoming plebiscite." Reunification was "purely" an internal affair and ought not be part of the plebiscite. It was not even right for the United Nations to be discussing reunification.<sup>43</sup> The Youths and Elders of Nkambe resident in Mutengene, Victoria Division, argued for immediate secession, continued trusteeship, and a future decision. Reunification was an internal issue and should not, therefore, be part of the plebiscite. The issues of the plebiscite were to be secession alone versus integration with Nigeria and only the indigenous inhabitants should have the vote.<sup>44</sup> The Njindom Youth League went further and asserted that the vote

should be given only to "100 per cent blood free born Southern Cameroonians."<sup>45</sup>

To sum it up, the Youth League, that is the totality of all the Youths' Associations, rehashed the arguments and positions of Foncha.<sup>46</sup> It is important to note that, while the indigenous inhabitants of Victoria Division were integrationists, all these Youths' Associations were based mainly in Victoria Division and were anti-integrationists.

Although the university students and graduates were reunificationists, an insignificant number of them supported Fonchaism in its entirety. M.N. Sabum, a holder of an L.L.B. Hons., London, was one of the few who did so. In a long, logical, well-written memorandum he argued essentially that reunification was predicated on secession, its antecedent, and, therefore, could not become part of the plebiscite until after secession had been achieved. While the intervening variable, secession, could be skipped in a largely literate society, it could not be skipped in a society like Southern Kamerun without throwing the illiterate masses into confusion. The issues of the plebiscite should, therefore, be integration with Nigeria versus secession from it.<sup>47</sup>

On the other hand, not all those who supported Foncha bought every part of Fonchaism. Again some of these were to be found in Mamfe Division. On September 25, 1959, the Mbang Development Association stated that Southern Kamerunians resented "any political bondage from any quarter in the territory." They elected Foncha to office on the platform of secession and not that of reunification. Had the electorate known that "the territory would be drafted to join the French Cameroon," which differed from Southern Kamerun culturally and otherwise, "they would have voted against the KNDP during the last general election." Reunification would "expose" the Southern Kamerunians "to the



people who believe in mass atrocities without the slightest provocation."

If the choice must be made between integration and reunification, the Association would "appreciate the policy of living with the devil you know [Nigeria] than [with] the devil you did not know [Eastern Kamerun]."

Southern Kamerunians had suffered a setback in education after the First World War and would not see that repeated "after they have been brought up in the British way of life." Continued trusteeship was out of the question because it was a means of nursing and perpetuating "colonialism and imperialism in the territory." After forty years of its operation, the Trusteeship Agreement brought no benefits to Southern Kamerun and ought to be terminated immediately."<sup>48</sup> This once more demonstrates the tenuous relationship between the a-Fon and the literate: they both wanted secession pure and simple but, while the a-Fon wanted a short period of trusteeship, the literate were opposed to that short period.

It must have become obvious by now that a-Fon of the six Administrative Divisions did not support reunification. But this does not mean that the reunificationists had no support at all. Indeed, the supporters of reunification were the most vocal in the region, if only to make up for their inferior numbers. Before the dissolution of the UPC, this group was to be found mainly in the urban centers of Kumba, Victoria, and Bamenda Divisions. But, after the outlawing of the UPC, they were concentrated in Bamenda Division under the banner of the OK and in many cities and universities abroad including Nigeria. A few of their numerous petitions should help to demonstrate the ideas of the supporters of reunification and where they were to be located.

Using as evidence the 45,000 petitions which were addressed to the United

Nations (mainly by the UPC) within three months in 1955 demanding reunification and independence, the Kamerun students in Khartoum in 1958 challenged the British, the French, and the Missions' statements that reunification was not popular. After this challenge, these students requested the United Nations to reunify Kamerun unconditionally and without any consultation.<sup>49</sup> On November 24, 1958, on behalf of the Kamerun students in the University of Ibadan, A.W. Mukong argued that there should be simultaneous referenda in Northern, Southern, and Eastern Kamerun over the issue of reunification. The referenda may involve only integration with Nigeria and reunification but any vote cast against integration "means automatic acceptance of reunification." Only persons of Kamerun origin "by birth or nationality" may take part in the referenda. The age limit of voters should be eighteen and over. However, all the Kamerun "students who have reached the fourth form [grade 12] in college should be given the right to vote irrespective of their age." The votes in each of the three sections of Kamerun should be interpreted separately with special consideration for the backwardness of Northern Kamerun. The over-all results, however, would be interpreted after the simultaneous referenda had been conducted.<sup>50</sup> The way these students wanted the votes treated must be understood against the precedent of Togoland. They were not sure of the situation in Northern Kamerun and were afraid that that region could carry Southern Kamerun with it into integration.

The next group of the supporters of reunification were non-students abroad. On December 29, 1958, the Kamerun Union in Calabar, a group of Kamerunians resident in that part of Nigeria, asserted that it was a good exercise of power for the United Nations "to award Kamerun [re]unification without the so-called plebiscite." But, if the United Nations was unwilling

to pursue the unilateral action, they would "unanimously" seek the "approval of the Secretary-General for Voting By Post In the Said Plebiscite Or In Alternative Voting By Proxy [sic]."<sup>51</sup> On July 17, 1959, The Kamerun National Union, Lagos, Nigeria, suggested that, in Northern Kamerun, "consideration should be given to their relative backwardness," which was a consequence of "earlier want of educational facilities." The people ought to be well-educated on the two issues involved in the 1959 plebiscite. The register ought to be revised because it contained "only a few names of the population." While women should be given the vote there, colours should not be used to identify the alternatives\* because of their "psychological stigma."<sup>52</sup>

The other supporters of reunification were within Southern Kamerun and were almost always invariably connected with the OK. In late 1958, the supporters of reunification in 121 petitions argued that the consultation "should be in the form of a referendum or plebiscite under the sole responsibility of the United Nations." The Ibo should be precluded from participation.<sup>53</sup> Others argued that there should neither be a referendum nor a plebiscite until a general amnesty had been granted to all those against whom proceedings had been instituted since 1955.<sup>54</sup> Beginning on February 20, 1959, the World Federation of Democratic Youth addressed hundreds of petitions to the United Nations, coming mainly from East Germany and Czechoslovakia, with the same message: "We support the youth and the people of Kamerun in their fight for immediate reunification and national independence for Kamerun . . ."<sup>55</sup>

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\*Even in Southern Kamerun, detractors interpreted the White Box--reunification--as a coffin and the Green Box--integration--as a green snake considered cunning and dangerous.

On April 1, 1958, the Tiko Branch of the OK complained about the discrimination in voters' qualifications which made it easier for Nigerians to vote and too difficult for Eastern Kamerunians to vote.<sup>56</sup> On March 25, 1959, the Ntchou-Santa Branch of the OK argued that Kamerun was a single country during the German period, and since it was divided without consultation with its peoples, it should be reunited in the same way. Kamerunians had "no further use for the fake and reactionary government" under trusteeship. If the nation could not be reunited unilaterally by the United Nations, they would accept a referendum in Western Kamerun to "open the way to the [re]unification of the two Kameruns."<sup>57</sup>

The question then was not whether, as Endeley, Foncha, and Ntumazah (Dookingué and Moumié were in exile) returned home from the United Nations, there was support for each leader's programme. The relevant question was how much support did each of them command and from whom. Endeley (and Mbile) commanded the support of the a-Fon and indigenous people of Victoria and Kumba Divisions. Foncha commanded the support of the a-Fon and indigenous inhabitants of Mamfe Division and of the majority of the a-Fon of Bamenda Division including their subjects. Ntumazah had no Fon behind him but he had support from the university students and graduates wherever they were and he commanded the support of nearly every Eastern Kamerunian resident in Southern Kamerun. Endeley and Ntumazah had some significant support in Bamenda Division. Wum was unpredictable; while Ntumazah was out of the race there, Endeley and Foncha could gain or lose Wum depending on who was the better politician. Nkambe too could not be definitely ascribed. Either Endeley and Foncha had control over specific areas of the Division or the better politician might claim the whole Division. The Youths' Associations

were generally for Foncha. Secondary school students shared their support between Foncha and Ntumazah. Students from Teacher Training Colleges and teachers shared their support between Endeley and Foncha, with a large part of it going to Foncha.

With so much support coming to each leader and with so many people widely distributed and urging the leaders to be firm in their positions and programmes, it was very likely that the agreement the United Nations hoped they would reach would be unobtainable. Indeed, Endeley and Foncha made several attempts between April and July, 1959, in the presence always of a British official, to reach agreement on the questions of the plebiscite and the qualifications for voting in it, but all these attempts foundered. When it became obvious that these private attempts would never succeed, the High Commissioner decided to extend the scope of the attempts and to involve a wider section of the society and make the attempts public.<sup>58</sup> The outcome of this decision was the Mamfe Plebiscite Conference of August 10-11, 1959.

Although its nature was agreed upon by both Endeley and Foncha, the organization of the Plebiscite Conference was largely unfavourable to the integrationists' cause. Eight seats were allotted to the KNDP, six to the KNC-KPP Alliance, one each to the OK, the Kamerun Society--an organization of some Western -educated Kamerunians living mainly in Victoria Division, the National Union of Kamerun Students, and the Kamerun United Party (KUP)--a political party formed by Kale in mid-1959 after he abandoned the KPP to Mbile, seventeen to the Native Authorities, and ten to the a-Fon.\* The total

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\*The number of seats allotted to the a-Fon, a number even more than that given to the Governing Party, should not be overlooked. It seems to demonstrate the recognition by all the organizers in the region that the a-Fon were a powerful force to reckon with.

was forty-five but, because two of the a-Fon failed to come, the number was reduced to forty-three. The four more powerful a-Fon had automatic seats and were known as ex-officio members. The administrative officers of the six Administrative Divisions used population size and selected one Fon each from each of the Divisions.<sup>58</sup> (This meant Bamenda sent in four a-Fon and Wum two while the others had one each.) Unfortunately for the associationists, one of the a-Fon who did not show up was the Fon of Nso who was very ill at the time.

The Conference was presided over by a British official who identified three alternatives opened to the Southern Kamerunians after the plebiscite. These included: "(a) the status of a self-governing Region within an independent Federation of Nigeria; (b) separation from Nigeria, with a period of trusteeship; (c) separation from Nigeria, to be followed by early negotiations with the future Republic of the Cameroons with a view of [re]unification on accepted terms."<sup>69</sup> After performing this role, the Chairman invited the representatives to state their cases.

As the Premier, it was Foncha who began the deliberations. This time, his position regarding the alternatives of the plebiscite was closer to Fonchaism. "Our objective for the immediate future as far as the plebiscite is concerned should be, either remaining an integral part of an independent Nigeria or separating from it and working out our independence after undergoing a short period of the United Kingdom Trusteeship." Reunification was still a future possibility (but this time it had more conditions): it was "only . . . possible by negotiation between those who agree to it"; it could only be "achieved by common agreement among those sectors of Kamerun which want it"; it could not be "imposed by any of the sectors"; it could not be

initiated from without; and, it "must come from the people." As a result of all this, it could not be "one of the alternatives to be put at the plebiscite." As for voters' qualification, only the "indigenes [sic] people of the Southern Cameroons should register and vote" because it was their future that was at stake.<sup>61</sup> It is important to note that at Mamfe Foncha appeared to have even excluded using the period of trusteeship for negotiating unification. Instead, the period would be used to work out the independence of Southern Kamerun. This major deviation from what he said at the United Nations must be understood against the background of the presence of the a-Fon.

The presence of the a-Fon also affected Endeley. He admitted that there were people who believed in Secession. He understood that his "people would like to cut away from Nigeria, no [re]unification," but, it was for him "to advise them on which course [was] good for this country." The integrationists had "been bold." The KNC-KPP Alliance differed "fundamentally with the KNDP" over the issue of the French Community; the former did not want Southern Kamerun to "be in the French Community." If Eastern Kamerunians had to reunify with the Southern Kamerunians, "we should all remain in the British [sic] Commonwealth." Nevertheless, the vote should be given to any person in Southern Kamerun who had a stake at the plebiscite and the alternatives should be association with Nigeria versus reunification.<sup>62</sup> While Endeley did not alter the programme and positions of the integrationists, he attempted, not unsuccessfully as will be seen presently, to set the a-Fon against Foncha. He directly told the a-Fon that Foncha was for the French Community and offered them the Commonwealth. He knew what they wanted but it was his place to advise them on the right course for the country, an advice which needed a bold person to give. He might consider any other alternative to integration

provided it would leave them in the Commonwealth and out of the French Community.

Even the reunificationists, who had never had any Fon with them, still felt the presence of these Crowned Princes at Mamfe. The OK or rather Ntumazah, "would have liked to reach an agreement with the party proposing 'secession' only" but an examination of the issue had revealed that it fell "far short of the objectives" for which the OK stood. He did not understand why the KNDP dropped "the word 'Reunification' one month after it came into power." The OK stood for the "Reunification of Kamerun." However, he was in agreement with the KNDP over the voters' qualifications but he felt that the alternatives of the plebiscite should be integration with Nigeria versus secession with reunification.<sup>63</sup> Ntumazah's statement that he would have liked to reach agreement with the KNDP on the issue of "Secession" alone should not be overlooked. Considering what had been said so far about Ntumazah and the OK on the issue of reunification, this was too much a statement for the leader of the reunificationists to make at a Conference where agreement was not actually the real issue. It further demonstrates how the presence of the a-Fon was conditioning the atmosphere of the Conference.

Even the students, another wing of the reunificationists, deviated significantly from their previous stance. They stated that Southern Kamerun "wisely desire[d] reunification." They were aware that "secession without reunification may be used for political ends which otherwise may not be national." They felt that secession alone might end in making a Southern Kamerun State that would become either a British dependency or "a small unstable state which will serve as a fertile spot for Communist infiltration



into Africa." As was the case with Newfoundland in relation to Canada, secession alone might end "in the integration of the territory into the Federation of Nigeria long after the latter had attained independence." All this considered, the alternatives of the plebiscite should be integration with Nigeria versus "secession and ultimate reunification" and the vote should be given only to Kamerunians, Eastern or Western, resident in Western Kamerun.<sup>64</sup>

The deviations of these students seem to suggest that they were more concerned with the Crowned Princes than with agreement. The example of Newfoundland was used to scare the a-Fon away from Endeley and integration. The fear of Communism was used to scare the a-Fon away from secession alone and to assure them that reunification (ultimate) was the best way of avoiding Communism. Suspicion of Foncha was used to explain why they did not support secession alone. Nevertheless, and this is very important, they modified their position; it was no longer immediate reunification but ultimate reunification. The a-Fon were thus given a breathing space between secession and reunification.

The only other political party, the KUP, came close to the position of the a-Fon but still differed with them in several important respects. Kale argued that time had come for "the Cameroonians to manage their own ship of state . . . without ties or apron strings either way." If the "marriage" between Nigeria and Southern Kamerun was "to be dissolved, the only one question to be asked [was] simply association with or secession from Nigeria." Reunification was out of the question "entirely" because it had "no bearing on the issue involved." What was at stake was "continued association with Nigeria or secession." Continued trusteeship was "out of the

question" because it was "not a qualification for self-government." The KUP stood for separate and full independence for Southern Kamerun in its own state. It felt also that the vote at the plebiscite be given to "the people of the territory who [had] a stake in the matter."<sup>65</sup> Kale's statement seems to offer the a-Fon the state of Southern Kamerun they were looking for, and to deny them a period of trusteeship while being quiet over the issue of the Commonwealth. But he agreed with them on the voters' qualifications and on the alternatives of the plebiscite. The difference between Foncha and Kale or rather between the KNDP and the KUP was that the former left the door to reunification open albeit with important conditions whereas the KUP completely closed that door.

The other participants were divided in their support of the various programmes and positions. The Kamerun Society supported either Kale or Foncha. Using the results of all the general elections in Southern Kamerun from 1953 to January 1959, it argued that the majority of Southern Kamerunians had indicated that they desired either integration with Nigeria or secession alone from it. Moreover, it was not fair to ask the Southern Kamerunians to vote on reunification about which they knew nothing. It was, therefore, necessary to make integration with Nigeria and secession alone from it the issues at the plebiscite. It felt that only "indigenous persons" should be allowed to vote as the plebiscite [was] a purely Southern Cameroons affair."<sup>66</sup>

Eleven of the seventeen Native Authorities supported Foncha on the issue of the alternatives of the plebiscite, namely, that they should be integration with Nigeria versus secession with a period of trusteeship in which Southern Kamerun independence would be worked out. The other six supported Endeley, Ntumazah, and the students; they wished to have secession

with reunification as the second alternative of the plebiscite. Likewise, eleven of the seventeen Native Authorities wished to give the vote only to indigenous Southern Kamerunians whereas the other six felt that people in Southern Kamerun who had a stake at the plebiscite should be given the vote.<sup>67</sup>

The a-Fon who attended the Conference made their position abundantly clear. It was summed up by their spokesman, the Fon of Banfut.

We believe on two points during a conference in Bamenda in which Dr. Endeley and Foncha were present. I was chairman of that conference. We rejected Dr. Endeley because he wanted to take us to Nigeria. If Mr. Foncha tries to take us to French Cameroons we shall also run away from him. To me the French Cameroons is 'fire' and Nigeria is 'water'. Sir,\* I support secession without unification.<sup>68</sup>

The a-Fon had both stated their preference and complicated the situation. They were out for secession without reunification, possible, ultimate, or immediate. Kale or any other political leader that could advocate the position could get their support. But, if the Southern Kamerunians were forced to choose between integration with Nigeria and reunification, the a-Fon would, other things remaining equal, choose the former (water) and reject the latter (fire).

The Mamfe Plebiscite Conference had changed a lot but changed nothing. Indeed the situation had become more confused. The British official acting as chairman had introduced extraneous issues. Kale had introduced something new, namely, separate independence for Southern Kamerun with neither a period of trusteeship nor a possibility for reunification. Foncha substituted the working out of independence for that of negotiating reunification during the

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\*The 'Sir' referred to here was probably the Chairman, the Britisher.

period of trusteeship. The students substituted ultimate reunification for immediate reunification. Only Endeley and Ntumazah, after some confusion stood firm on the alternatives of the plebiscite they had previously advocated. But the fundamental problems remained unsolved. The representatives were agreed that only two alternatives should be involved in the plebiscites but they disagreed as to what should be the second alternative and who should vote at the plebiscite. It was their turn to confess to the United Nations that they too were too interested, too divided, too self-serving, and too confused to reach agreement and, therefore, to shift the decision back to the United Nations.

Footnotes - Chapter Four

<sup>1</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Bureau of the Union des Population du Cameroun Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration and the Cameroons under French Administration, Douala, 30 April, 1954, T/PET. 4 and 5/1. 6, May 13, 1954, pp. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Messrs. Endeley and Mbile Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, 3 February, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 14, February 4, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> U.N., G.A., Hearings from Cameroons Petitioners, A/C. 4/SR. 775, January, 1959, p. 156.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 155.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 155-156.

<sup>6</sup> U.N., G.A., Hearings from Cameroons Petitioners, A/C. 4/SR. 780, January, 1959, p. 183.

<sup>7</sup> U.N., G.A., A/C. 4/SR. 775, January, 1959, p. 153.

<sup>8</sup> U.N., G.A., A/C. 4/SR. 780, January, 1959, p. 183.

<sup>9</sup> U.N., G.A., A/C. 4/SR. 775, January, 1959, pp. 153, 155.

<sup>10</sup> U.N., G.A., Hearing from Cameroons Petitioners, A/C. 4/SR. 846, May, 1959, pp. 554-556.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> U.N., G.A., Statement Made by Dr. E.M.L. Endeley, Leader of Opposition in the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly at the 850th Meeting of the Fourth Committee on 25 February, 1959, A/C. 4/399, February 26, 1959, pp. 1-3.

<sup>14</sup> U.N., G.A., Hearings from Cameroons Petitioners, A/C. 4/SR. 846, May, 1959, pp. 553-554.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> U.N., G.A., Hearings from Cameroons Petitioners, A/C. 4/SR. 848, May, 1959, pp. 561-564 for questions, and A/C. 4/398, February 26, 1959, pp. 1-8 for answers.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> U.N., T.C., Discussions on the Future of Cameroons under British Administration, T/SR. 959, May, 1959, pp. 105-106.

<sup>24</sup> U.N., T.C., Discussions on the Future of Cameroons under British Administration, T/SR. 962, May, 1959, pp. 116-117.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> U.N., G.A., Resolution 1350 (XIII) of the General Assembly, March 13, 1959, Year Book of the United Nations, Columbia University Press, 1959, p. 368.

<sup>27</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Bakweri Women's Union Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Victoria, 21 September, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 43, September 30, 1959, pp 1-2.

<sup>28</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Chiefs, Councillors and Members of the Tiko Constituency Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Tiko, 24 September, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 53, October 2, 1959, pp, 1-2.

<sup>29</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. G.E. Wose, Hon. Secretary of the Bakweri Clan Meeting Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, May 20, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 19, September 1, 1959, pp. 1-4.

<sup>30</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Ngolo-Batanga Improvement Union Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, T/PET. 4/L. 77, January 18, 1960, pp, 1-2.

<sup>31</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Northern Bakundu Native Authority Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Kumba, 16 September, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 41, September 30, 1959, pp. 1-3; U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 16, April 16, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> U.N., T.C., Two Petitions Concerning the Plebiscites to be held in the Cameroons under British Administration, T/PET. 4/L. 16, April 16, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the All-Bakossi Union Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Kumba, 29 September, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 54, October 2, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Balondo People's Convention Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Dikome Balue, 15 August, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 22, September 17, 1959, passim.

<sup>35</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Mamfe Divisional Chiefs' Conference Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Mamfe, 25 September, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 69, November 7, 1959, pp. 1-2.

<sup>36</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Chief S.M.C. Mbipefa (Fon of Bangola) Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, 9 November, 1958, T/PET. 4/L. 12, December 29, 1958, pp. 1-3.

<sup>37</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Natural Rulers and People of Bamenda Widikum West Constituency Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Widikum, 10 September, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 51, October 2, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 37, September 28, 1959, p. 2;  
 U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 27, September 18, 1959, pp. 1-2;  
 U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 27, September 18, 1959, pp. 1-4;  
 U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 28, September 18, 1959, pp. 1-2;  
 U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 36, September 28, 1959, pp. 1-2;  
 U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 55, October 2, 1959, pp. 1-2.  
 U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 68, November 7, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Natural Rulers of the Fungom, Aghem, Beba-Befang, and Essimbi Clans in the Wum Division Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Wum, 8 September, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 50, October 2, 1959, pp. 1-2.

<sup>40</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Tang and Wiya All-Chiefs' Conference Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Ngarum, 29 August, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 24, September 17, 1959, pp. 1-2.

<sup>41</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Chiefs and People of Nkambe Division Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Nkambe, 31 August, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 31, September, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Etemetek Youth Association in Mamfe Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Mamfe, 22 September, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 52, October 2, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the President of the Youth Association, Kamerun National Democratic Party, Bota Branch, Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, 17 September, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 32, September 26, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Nkambe Youths and Elders Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Mutengene, 28 September, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 63, October 8, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Njindom Youths' Association Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Victoria Branch, Victoria, 14 September, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 40, September 30, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Southern Cameroons Youth League Association Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Buea, 28 September, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 46, October 1, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> U.N., T.C., Memorandum on the Issues before the General Assembly Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration Submitted through the Official Southern Cameroons Representation to the United Nations, 23 September, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 33, September 26, 1959, pp. 1-5.

<sup>48</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Mbang Development Association Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Mamfe, 25 September, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 44, September 30, 1959, pp. 1-3.

<sup>49</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Jeuness Democratic du Cameroun Executive Committee Abroad Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration and the Cameroons under French Administration, T/PET. 4 and 5/L. 19, March 25, 1958, p. 2.

<sup>50</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Ibadan Kamerun Students' Association concerning the Cameroons under British Administration and the Cameroons under French Administration, 24 November, 1958, T/PET. 4 and 5/L. 32, December 29, 1958, pp. 1-6.

<sup>51</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Kamerun Union Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, 29 December, 1958, T/PET. 4/L. 13, February 4, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Kamerun National Union Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Lagos, 17 July, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 23, September 17, 1959, pp. 1-3.

<sup>53</sup> U.N., T.C., One Hundred and Twenty-one Petitions Raising General Problems in the Cameroons under British Administration and the Cameroons under French Administration, T/PET. 4 and 5/L. 27/Add. 3, November 12, 1958, pp. 2-3 and passim.

<sup>54</sup> U.N., T.C., Sixty-five Petitions Relating to General Questions Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration and the Cameroons under French Administration, T/PET. 4 and 5/L. 25, June 13, 1959, passim.

<sup>55</sup> U.N., T.C., Fifty-one Petitions Dealing with General Problems Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration and the Cameroons under French Administration, T/PET. 4 and 5/L. 39, February 20, 1959, pp. 1-2.

<sup>56</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Central Committee of One Kamerun, Tiko, Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, T/PET. 4/L. 10, May 2, 1958, pp. 1-3.

<sup>57</sup> U.N., T.C., Four Petitions Dealing with General Problems Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, T/PET. 4/L. 17, April 22, 1959, pp. 1-3.



<sup>58</sup> U.N., G.A., Hearings from Cameroons Petitioners, A/C. 4/SR. 885, November, 1959, p. 14.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-14.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-15.

<sup>61</sup> Documents on Cameroun Affairs in Microfilm Compiled by the University of Chicago, Illinois, Centre for Research Libraries, Circulation Department, and Attached to the KNDP Secession Charter as Appendix IV, pp. 4-5.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5, 15.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., pp. 7-9.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp. 12-13.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., pp. 10-12.

<sup>67</sup> U.N., G.A., Hearings from Cameroons Petitioners, A/C. 4/SR. 885, November, 1959, pp. 13-15.

<sup>68</sup> Kale, op. cit., p. 69.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### STRIKING A COMPROMISE SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1959

At the United Nations, it was Cohen, the British representative, who opened up the discussions. He introduced the Southern Kamerun political leaders, except Ntumazah, and the British Commissioner for the Cameroons, J.O. Field. He then assured the members of the Fourth Committee that the Southern Kamerun problem was not a "Colonial" problem because no "issue arose between the Administering Authority and the dependent people." The real problem was how to "resolve certain differing views held by different political parties operating democratically within the Territory." The Southern Kamerunians "looked to the United Nations to help them to solve the problems connected with their future." His own task was, "as a prologue to a play, to introduce those principal actors to the Committee."<sup>1</sup>

After the introduction, it was Foncha who first spoke. He described the various attempts he had made with Endeley between April and July, 1959, to reach agreement over the alternatives of the plebiscite and the voters' qualifications and how all these attempts foundered. He then gave an accurate description of the organization and representation at the Mamfe Conference. Unfortunately, however, he was not accurate in identifying the positions taken by the various groups vis-à-vis the alternatives. The error was not in describing the cleavages; it was in identifying what the alternatives were. He offered the alternatives which the chairman of the Conference had identified as those upon which the discussions revolved. But he was accurate in showing where each representative or group of representa-

tives stood regarding the two fundamental issues: the second alternative and the qualification for voting at the plebiscite.<sup>2</sup>

Foncha then based his position on the democratic principle. "The KNDP held that in any matter of national importance the wishes of the majority should prevail." He then called upon the United Nations to endorse the wishes of the majority of the Southern Kamerunians. These wishes, as shown by the results of the Mamfe Plebiscite Conference included: (a) that there should be only two alternatives at the plebiscite; (b) that the first alternative should be integration with Nigeria; (c) that "the second alternative should be separation from the Federation of Nigeria and determination of the future of the Territory at a later date"; and, (d) only indigenous Southern Kamerunians should vote at the plebiscite.<sup>3</sup>

Foncha next turned his attention to reunification. Reunification was a possibility which could be achieved "only by negotiation by those who were ready for it," and, "no one section" of Kamerun "was yet ready for it." It would not work if it were "imposed by an external influence or by only one of the sections." If it could not be imposed on the integrationists, it could not also be imposed on "those who wished to have it otherwise." The integrationists were pushing reunification because they intended to use it to "frighten the people" into voting for integration with Nigeria. Southern Kamerunians wished to have an opportunity to see what would happen after their neighbours had achieved independence. They would then decide which way to fall. The independence the Southern Kamerunians aspired to was that "provided for in the Charter of the United Nations." To compel them to accept "a form of independence which was not in accordance with their wishes would be tantamount to a violation of that instrument and of their fundamental

human rights." Foncha made no mention of negotiations for reunification.<sup>4</sup>

When Foncha was questioned, he added little to what he had said although he provided some useful information. He needed a period of trusteeship in order to ensure a smooth withdrawal of Southern Kamerun from Nigeria, to develop the Southern Kamerun economy, and to establish a sound Southern Kamerunian system. The period before independence and negotiation for reunification would have to remain indefinite. It was not yet necessary for negotiation to begin. Southern Kamerunians would not vote for the second alternative if it involved reunification because of terrorist activities in Eastern Kamerun. The majority of Southern Kamerunians would prefer continued trusteeship to either integration with Nigeria or reunification.<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that Foncha had preferred not to talk about negotiations for reunification at this time but members of the Fourth Committee forced him back into it with questions.

The suspicion of the reunificationists for Foncha at the Plebiscite Conference appeared well-founded. Although committed to reunification, circumstances had forced Foncha to abandon it by this time. To be sure, he left the door to reunification open, but, he also left the door to integration open; an opportunity was needed to see which way Southern Kamerun would fall. Foncha was at this stage of the proceedings more inclined to a Smaller Kamerun State forced on him, at least, by the warning of the a-Fon at Mamfe. The die-hard reunificationists were under no illusions. They wanted neither integration with Nigeria nor a Smaller Kamerun State. But they could read through Foncha and Foncha gave them enough reason to be suspicious and to insist on reunification. They were not, however, wise in doing so because they could even ruin the cause of the possibility of reunification, had

circumstances not altered.

Endeley did not challenge or refute Foncha's description of all the attempts at agreement in Southern Kamerun including the Mamfe Conference; instead, he offered an explanation of why they had failed to reach agreement. Foncha's "equivocal stand" on the issue of reunification, and his impugning and intimidation of those who did not support his ideas made agreement impossible. Foncha had "no real plan for the country's future" and was seeking to hide his "incompetence under the cloak of a continued trusteeship administration." Trusteeship was only a means to independence, and the "Opposition could not subscribe to the idea of the Territory standing alone as an independent state." Consequently, one alternative of the plebiscite must indicate that Foncha's "ultimate goal" was reunification. Nevertheless, the United Nations should study the problem "with complete impartiality" and "exercise the utmost discretion and patience," and work out "a lasting solution on the basis of the aspirations of the inhabitants regardless of the conflicting interests of the political parties."<sup>6</sup>

This last sentence was perhaps the most important sentence Endeley made at the United Nations. He agreed that the political parties had different interests and views. But he asked the United Nations to ignore these and use the aspirations of the populace as the guiding principle for its decision. Although this will become more obvious later on, it was at this juncture that Endeley finally surrendered, tacitly opted out of integration with Nigeria, and began to think in terms of a Smaller Kamerun State. Without contesting Foncha's description of the results of the Mamfe Conference and asking the United Nations to use the guiding principle he offered, Endeley virtually asked the United Nations to adopt Foncha's second alternative.

Nevertheless, the Mamfe situation repeated itself at the United Nations. At Mamfe, Endeley acknowledged that he knew his people aspired for secession from Nigeria with no reunification. But he insisted that the alternatives of the plebiscite be integration with Nigeria versus reunification. This was almost precisely what he did at the United Nations. He requested the United Nations to use the aspirations of the majority of the Southern Kamerunians as a measuring rod for its decision. At the same time he asked the United Nations to make integration with Nigeria versus secession to effect reunification the issues at the plebiscite. The reason was that reunification "had been discussed in the General Assembly repeatedly and could not be brushed aside now in deference to the claims of a Government that might well have fallen before the plebiscite took place." It was necessary to refer reunification back to the electorate in order to ascertain its popularity. As to the voters' qualification, he felt that Nigerians and Eastern Kamerunians resident in Southern Kamerun should also have the vote in order not to "jeopardize relations with the neighbours on whom the Territory would depend for trade if it separated from the Federation."<sup>7</sup> This last phrase again indicates that Endeley was preparing for the eventuality of secession alone but not of reunification.

A second major deviation from his policy which Endeley made at this time was to contemplate the postponement of a decision through the medium of a general election rather than a plebiscite.

It would appear from the Government Party's present attitude that it had now realized that a plebiscite might not, after all, be the most appropriate means of ascertaining the views of the inhabitants since it would constrain them to take an irrevocable decision regarding matters on which they might later wish to reverse their judgement. Hence there might be wisdom in finding a less binding method of consultation.<sup>8</sup>

This was not, as Endeley claimed, the attitude of the KNDP. It was without question Endeley's current attitude. Either he was attempting to postpone the plebiscite, capture government, and then demand and manipulate the plebiscite in favour of integration or he was sensing defeat for his programme and looking for a face-saving way out of it. Later events suggest that the latter suggestion was the more likely.

When answering three of the questions put to him by members of the Fourth Committee, Endeley seemed to suggest: that he expected the fall of Foncha's Government; that he was inclined to accept the second alternative Foncha was insisting on; and, that he was no longer strongly committed to integration with Nigeria. About Foncha's Government, he said, "it was possible that there could be a change of government in the Southern Cameroons before the date set for the plebiscite." About the second alternative Foncha provided, Endeley said: if Southern Kamerun "were to be separated from Nigeria, he did not think that [re]unification should necessarily take place at once, but considered that the population should be consulted before any negotiations for [re]unification were opened." On the question of integration, Endeley "was moved by a desire to see the Southern Cameroons become independent at the earliest opportunity and with the minimum of difficulty."<sup>9</sup> What all this seemed to suggest is that at the United Nations, at this time, Endeley had become so confused that he did not seem to know what exactly it was that he wanted.

But Ntumazah was never so confused. As he did one year earlier in 1958 at the United Nations, he reviewed the history of Kamerun and said almost exactly what he said one year earlier. He condemned the idea of continued trusteeship as an attempt to perpetuate imperialism and then argued that

Southern Kamerun could not form an independent viable state, economically and politically. He felt that Western Kamerun should reunite with Eastern Kamerun. Since the Charter provided only for "self-government or independence," any other solution would violate the Charter. The alternatives at the plebiscite should, therefore, be self-government within Nigeria versus independence through reunification; continued trusteeship was neither self-government nor independence. Moreover, the majority of Kamerunians wanted reunification. Nigerians should not have the vote. On the other hand, Eastern Kamerunians who had lived in Western Kamerun "continuously for one year," because they were Kamerunians, should be given the vote. All the Kamerunians living abroad should also "be allowed to vote by proxy."

Foncha's report on the results of the Mamfe Conference was correct but it was that way because "the Premier himself had organized the Conference and selected the participants."<sup>10</sup> Thus Ntumazah conceded nothing.

But he still had to face some questions. The Ghanaian representative, wished to know whether Endeley and Foncha enjoyed the support of the majority of the Southern Kamerunians. Ntumazah thought that it "was difficult to estimate the support enjoyed by the political leaders who had abandoned the positions that had brought them to power." Nonetheless, it was the electorate and not the political leaders who should be consulted regarding the future of the region. There was no doubt that, when consulted, the people would vote for reunification; that was why no political party in Southern Kamerun "had completely excluded the possibility of [re]unification, knowing that if it had done so it would have lost the support which it enjoyed among the populations."<sup>11</sup>

The next representative who asked relevant questions of Ntumzah was



that of Czechoslovakia. He wished to know what Ntumazah thought of Mbile's statement that Kamerun was "an artificial creation of the Berlin Conference of 1885." Ntumazah thought that "the same could be said of many African countries, including Nigeria." He could not understand why another artificial creation should be included in another like Nigeria. Ntumazah was further asked whether he would continue to oppose the postponement of the plebiscite even if Foncha and Endeley agreed to it. Ntumazah felt that if it were possible to rely on the views of the Government and Opposition, then a plebiscite was not even necessary.<sup>12</sup> In retrospect, a student cannot avoid the conclusion that, coming from Bamenda--the home of tradition, and insisting so much on making reunification part of the plebiscite, Ntumazah was playing into the hands of the integrationists.

Whatever the case, it was the turn of Mbile, Endeley's Deputy, who came to New York some days after the others had made their statements, to state his own case. After a long, tedious, and unplausible argument, Mbile came to the following conclusions. A plebiscite was not necessary. He was "ready to accept a solution which would allow each tribe or division to make its own choice between the two alternatives." The more numerous votes of the grasslanders should not be used to force "the people of the coastal belt" to a choice they did not want. The majority of the Southern Kamerunians were politically immature and too ignorant to make a rational decision on their own. But, if a plebiscite must take place, the alternatives should be association with Nigeria versus "joining the Cameroons under French administration." It would not be fair to have a period of trusteeship while the others were marching into independence. In either event, every person living in Southern Kamerun should have the vote. There was no question of forcing

Southern Kamerunians into Nigeria for they were already Nigerians.<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that after struggling for twenty years with his colleagues to assert the identity of Western Kamerun and Western Kamerunians at least, and to assert the unity of the region, Mbile, at long last, denied the existence and validity of the fruits of their labour.

Whatever the case, Mbile proved to be the most contradictory and the most confused of the Southern Kamerun political leaders when he was questioned by members of the Fourth Committee. The Liberian representative, wondered whether, since the populations were politically immature and did not understand the problems involved in the plebiscite, more time was not needed to make the populations more aware of the problems; and, if so, then she wondered why Mbile was so opposed to a period of continued trusteeship. Mbile agreed that patience was needed but felt that secession from Nigeria "would cause lasting wounds and it would be impossible for the Territory to re-enter the Federation of Nigeria once it had broken away."<sup>14</sup> The major part of Mbile's answer had very little, if anything, to do with the question. However, by agreeing that patience was needed, Mbile tacitly submitted that a postponement of the plebiscite was necessary.

When the representative of the Philippines, realized that Mbile had not explicitly answered the question, he pursued it further. He asked Mbile whether a period of trusteeship was not needed to ensure that the populations understood the implications of the issues involved in the plebiscites, and whether Mbile would like to see Southern Kamerunians forced into union with Nigeria. Mbile's answer to the first question was again irrelevant and the answer to the second question once more repudiated the identity of Southern Kamerunians. As he saw it, without Nigerian financial tutelage, Southern

Kamerun could not achieve independence, and Southern Kamerun was already a part of Nigeria and there was, therefore, no question of forcing.<sup>15</sup> It appears that either Mbile did not understand the first question or he chose to avoid it.

But his handling of the next question showed that there was a basic inability in Mbile to understand questions. Another member of the Committee, asked Mbile by which means, other than a plebiscite, Mbile would like to see the wishes of the populations ascertained. Mbile felt that a Mission could be sent to Southern Kamerun to "enquire into the problems likely to arise as a result of secession and ascertain whether in fact the Cameroons had any basis for existence as a separate country."<sup>16</sup> This answer had nothing to do with the question.

After this fumbling from Mbile, the hearings adjourned for a week. During this week, a lot was happening behind the scenes. It is not readily known what was happening and who was making it happen. But there is strong evidence that private discussion took place during this week first, between Endeley and Mbile, and, secondly, between all the Southern Kamerun political leaders and Cohen, except Ntumazah who, probably because of their constant confrontation particularly over Northern Kamerun, Cohen could not bring himself to deal with. That these discussions were going on is indicated by what happened after the week ended.

First, Mbile asked the General Assembly for time to clarify all that he had said a week earlier. This time, it was a series of self-contradictions. As he saw it, the 1959 general election had caused feelings in Southern Kamerun to run "too high for them to be able to express their wishes freely and objectively." The plebiscite should, therefore, be postponed for

"one year or at most eighteen months from now," that is from 1960. The Iraqi representative, at once pointed out that Mbile was contradicting what he said earlier and then asked whether Mbile was not in effect supporting Foncha's second alternative. Mbile replied that the Committee should decide on "what was just rather than who was right." Furthermore, contrary to his previous statement, Mbile now declared that "it was equally wrong to claim that the people of the Southern Cameroons had not yet attained political maturity; the same situation could arise even in more advanced countries."<sup>17</sup> To cut a long story short, before the next scene occurred, Mbile had contradicted most of the major points he made one week earlier. More often than not, when a member of the Fourth Committee pointed out the contradiction, Mbile would seek refuge in the phrase, the Committee should decide on "what was just rather than who was right." It is more than likely that Endeley had a great deal to do with these Mbilean contradictions.

As Mbile was busy contradicting himself, Endeley and Foncha, as well as Cohen and the representatives of the African states--Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, and Libya to name only these,--were making a last minute private attempt to reach agreement. Before Mbile had time to complete contradicting himself, Cohen asked for a suspension of the meeting "because of the private discussions taking place between Mr. Foncha . . . and Mr. Endeley . . . with a view to reaching agreement more rapidly."<sup>18</sup> Although Ntumazah was carefully excluded from these private discussions and attempts at agreement, he had only very little to lose. Foncha was about to play Ntumazah's game for him.

It is not readily known what happened or who made it happen, but either Foncha surrendered or he was squeezed out of his position with an inadequate

offer. An agreement was reached. The text of the Agreed Statement said that both Foncha and Endeley wished to see Southern Kamerun achieve independence as early as possible, that is in 1960. But since the Government and the Opposition did not agree to have the plebiscite in 1960, they thought that "it would be wiser to defer consultation with the people for the time being." Southern Kamerun would have to continue under trusteeship (and this was the inadequate offer to Foncha) "but separate from Nigeria." The separation of Southern Kamerun from Nigeria should be completed by October 1, 1960, the day when Nigeria would become independent. Independence for Southern Kamerun should take place not later than October 26, 1962.<sup>19</sup> This was not, however, the major part of the agreement; it was what would happen after the trusteeship and separation.

When Cohen, Foncha, and Endeley introduced the Agreed Statement to the Committee on September 30, 1959, there was some initial reaction for and against it. Those who reacted against it stated merely that the affairs of the Committee should not have been settled at private discussions. Those who favoured it, indeed those who took part in the discussion, argued that, in light of the circumstances, the approach they took appeared to be the most appropriate; they were merely **attempting**, successfully, to facilitate the work of the Committee. After these initial reactions, the representatives of Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Libya, Mexico, Sudan, Tunisia, the United States, and the United Arab Republic drafted a resolution. This resolution set out the major part of the Agreement which Foncha and Endeley accepted "as a compromise." Later on, after reading through the text, Cuba, Iran, and Panama asked to be included as co-sponsors of the resolution with a slightly revised preamble.<sup>20</sup>

This compromise between Endeley and Foncha which settled the problems of the alternatives to be put at the plebiscite and the voters' qualifications was put out as Resolution 1352 (XIV) of the General Assembly. The compromise stated that the arrangements for the plebiscite should begin on September 30, 1960, and end not later than March, 1961. The questions to be put at the plebiscite should be: "(a) Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Federation of Nigeria? (b) Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Republic of the Cameroons?" Only persons born in Southern Kamerun should vote in the plebiscite. The Administering Authority should consult with the Southern Kamerun Government and take steps to separate the administration of Southern Kamerun from that of Nigeria not later than October 1, 1960."<sup>21</sup> The imbroglio had come to an end as far as the United Nations and these particular Southern Kamerun political leaders were concerned. But not without some major implications for all concerned.

First, Foncha's behaviour. By accepting this settlement as a compromise, Foncha had behaved exactly as the other Southern Kamerun political leaders. After 1955, there was a basic and fundamental conflict between the Western-educated political leaders of Southern Kamerun on the one hand, and the traditional leaders, the a-Fon, on the other. What the a-Fon stood for--a Smaller Kamerun State with membership in the Commonwealth--was never actually supported by any political leader between 1955 and 1959. When forced by circumstances, Foncha, and to some extent Endeley, were inclined in that direction but never without leaving some doors open. When Kale formed the KUP, he came very close to the position of the a-Fon but he was quiet over membership in the Commonwealth. By 1956, all the Southern Kamerun political leaders,

except Foncha, had abandoned the a-Fon. Foncha held on tenuously, until joined by Kale in mid-1959, alone with the a-Fon. But now, in late September, 1959, he completed the trend; he abandoned the a-Fon by accepting the compromise. This action of the Western-educated Southern Kamerun political leaders would have major consequences for the plebiscite and for the trusteeship system as a whole in Southern Kamerun. The United Nations contributed to it.

Secondly, the compromise had at least one major consequence for the Charter. The resolution adopted was inconsistent with the views expressed at the Mamfe Plebiscite Conference and, therefore, with the views of the majority of the Southern Kamerunians. By leaving out the alternative which would either allow Southern Kamerunians to achieve full independence and make a decision later on or which would allow them to achieve full and separate independence in a permanent state of their own, the United Nations acted contrary to expectation. The interests, wishes, and desires of the majority of the Southern Kamerunians were not used by that organization as the guiding principles for its decisions. Instead, this unguided decision was adopted with an overwhelming majority: the Fourth Committee adopted it on October 9, 1959, by a vote of 74-0-2 abstentions; and, the General Assembly adopted it on October 16, 1959, by a vote of 76-0-2 abstentions.<sup>22</sup> Although so overwhelmingly accepted by the United Nations, the Foncha-Endeley Compromise was an unexpected and uncertain parcel to the majority of the Southern Kamerunians. There is little wonder, therefore, that the initial reaction to the Compromise at home was generally unfavourable, and the subsequent reaction to the resolution, to say the least, bitter and massive.

Initial Reaction to the Foncha-Endeley Compromise  
in Southern Kamerun October 1959

The Compromise was greeted in Southern Kamerun with mixed reactions. The reunificationists did not like the delay of independence embedded in the Compromise. Even before the Fourth Committee adopted the resolution, Ngwa of Bafut on October 6, 1959, had already described it in a telegram to the United Nations as "further colonialism" which was unacceptable.<sup>23</sup> John Foku of Mankon Town, Bamenda, who claimed he wrote on behalf of the Metzam (Mankon) population, in another telegram on October 2, 1959, condemned the proposal and requested that the plebiscite take place between 1959 and 1960.<sup>24</sup> Mrs. Magny claimed to write on behalf of the Bafreng women (Foncha's birthplace) and protested, in a telegram on October 2, 1959, "vehemently" Endeley's\* ideas that the plebiscite be postponed until 1962 and that trusteeship be continued until then.<sup>25</sup> Awasong, on behalf of the Bamenda Improvement Union, in a telegram strongly opposed the Compromise and stated that the Union wished to see both sections of Kamerun achieve independence at the same time, namely, January 1, 1960.<sup>26</sup> Tagne Messac, on behalf of the Bassang OK, Bamenda, was opposed to the Foncha-Endeley extension of trusteeship in Southern Kamerun.<sup>27</sup> On behalf of the Bandeng population and the OK, Tchoula, on October 7, 1959, condemned the compromise because it delayed independence.<sup>28</sup> The compromise was, thus, unpopular in the vicinity of Mankon Town, Bamenda. It is important to note that these opponents of the compromise

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\*This should help to indicate how fast information was travelling in Southern Kamerun and how much it was being distorted. The Compromise was introduced at the United Nations in New York on September 30, 1959, and by October 2, 1959, telegrams were already leaving the region protesting against the Compromise. It was no longer the Foncha-Endeley Compromise, but "Endeley's ideas."



were the OK supporters writing from Bamenda, the home of the OK. It is also important to note that they had nothing against the alternatives to be put at the plebiscite; that was a victory for them.

However, there were groups within Southern Kamerun which approved the compromise. The first of these was the Kamerun Society. In a telegram on October 2, 1959, just two days after the compromise was introduced to the Committee, the Society applauded the compromise with its interim period of trusteeship which was needed to build up the sectors of the economy.<sup>29</sup> On October 8, 1959, the Cameroons Youth League Association of Buea supported the decision reached by Foncha and Endeley to the effect that Southern Kamerun should secede from Nigeria by April 1, 1960. While the Association was opposed to any plebiscite before September 1962, it felt that the alternatives of the plebiscite would have to be decided later on.<sup>30</sup> It is significant to note that this Association apparently did not actually know the exact contents of the compromise they were supporting. It appears that these youths were simply supporters of Foncha. Or had the facts been distorted before reaching them?

Some further support for the compromise came much later, on April 12, 1960. This time, it was Mallam L.T. Sale of Nso, Leader and Founder of the Muslim Congress, a political party whose objective was integration with Nigeria. It was founded in the middle of 1960, possibly in early April, and it was based on religious principles. Its members were mainly local converts (so was its leader) and Nigerian Muslims resident in Southern Kamerun.\* The

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\*The Congress was not active during the plebiscite campaigns, a fact which suggests it had little following.

Congress "wholeheartedly" accepted the two alternatives the United Nations had provided for the plebiscite. Its argument was essentially that, as all the British authorities had pointed out, Southern Kamerun could not constitute a viable economic and political entity by itself.<sup>31</sup> The Congress was, at this time, however, reacting more to the storm and confusion in Southern Kamerun than to the Compromise.

#### Delayed Response to the Compromise 1960-1961

Speechlessness, inaction, confusion, and the tendency to disbelieve the fact are among the common initial reactions of most people when something unexpected and undesirable happens to them. The majority of the Southern Kamerunians were no exception. The decision of the United Nations to make reunification one of the two alternatives of the plebiscite and to exclude Smaller Kamerun from the contest was both unexpected and undesirable to the majority of the Southern Kamerunians. Consequently, it took time before those most affected in the region responded to the decision.

The first concrete response to the decision was the emergence of new political parties advocating, under modified circumstances, the policy of the a-Fon. Or, if such parties already existed, they became more active at that time. The KUP had already been introduced in relation to the Mamfe Plebiscite Conference. Two Western-educated a-Fon also founded their own political parties. The first of these was the Cameroons Commoners Congress (CCC), which the integrationists and reunificationists called "Cameroons Cheap Cargo." It was founded around the same time as the KUP by Fon Stephen E. Nyenti of Mamfe. But it stayed in the background and dormant in the

hope that Foncha would get for the Crowned Princes the second alternative they had requested. It was not until Foncha abandoned the second alternative he was advocating that this party became very active. The second of these princely parties was the Cameroons Indigenes Party (CIP) which its detractors stigmatized 'Cameroons Ignorants' Party'. It was founded in early October, 1960, by Fon Jesco Manga-Williams of Victoria, the same Fon whom the British chose in 1942 to sit in the Nigerian Central Legislature at Lagos.<sup>32</sup> It was no accident that the CCC and the CIP were founded by Crowned Princes and that the founder of the KUP, Kale, was related to a royal family.

The aims of these parties were the same as those of the a-Fon in general modified only by the circumstances. They stood for a Smaller Kamerun State with membership in the Commonwealth. But when they became active, they attempted to influence the United Nations to change its mind by occasionally stating that, after full independence, Southern Kamerun would then decide which way to fall; it would join either Nigeria or Cameroun Republic but, in order to be respected in such a union, it must first achieve its own independence.<sup>33</sup>

Due to its late-coming, the CIP did not approach the United Nations until January 19, 1961. On this date, Manga-Williams informed the United Nations about his party, when it was formed, and what it stood for. His party was formed in response to the mood of the country. While the "people" demanded a third alternative, they were opposed to the two alternatives already provided. If the United Nations did not provide the third alternative which was separate independence for Southern Kamerun, they would have it by abstaining from voting on the voting day. The United Nations

should, therefore, regard the number of registered voters who did not vote as representing the third alternative. It was difficult to understand why Endeley and Foncha committed the people to the two alternatives without first consulting with them. Plans were already underway in the forest zone to begin a "civil war" on the voting day because Southern Kamerunians wanted a third alternative as a way out of the imbroglio. Neither Nigeria nor Cameroun Republic received independence with a condition of joining another territory. It was, therefore, difficult to understand why Southern Kamerun had that condition. The absence of a third alternative would produce chaos like that in the Congo. The United Nations would be wise to grant independence to Southern Kamerun unconditionally or, at least, provide a third alternative at the plebiscite. Otherwise, a fifty-fifty split vote on the two alternatives should be recognized as a demand for a Smaller Kamerun State.<sup>34</sup>

One year before Manga-Williams joined in the struggle, Kale was already out in the field. On January 26, 1960, Kale, or rather the KUP, told the United Nations that a plebiscite was no longer necessary. The Parliament was capable of settling the issues without "undue pressure from external forces such as a plebiscite." A plebiscite based on the two alternatives already provided was an outright violation of the Charter because the two questions denied the Southern Kamerunians the right of self-determination. A third question, "Irrespective of Viability or not, do you wish the Southern Cameroons to become a Republic of its own with U.K. Government assistance--financial and otherwise before joining the Federation of Nigeria or the Cameroons Republic," was imperative. In case the United Nations did not provide this third question, the KUP would mobilize public opinion to boycott the plebiscite.<sup>35</sup> Kale himself was thus confused on two

counts. He demanded the cancellation of the plebiscite while at the same time requesting a third alternative for the plebiscite. He wanted Southern Kemerun to become an independent Republic and at the same time he added that the Republic would decide in the future to join Nigeria or Cameroun.

However, the idea of the Republic joining either Nigeria or Cameroun must be understood in light of the fact that Kale was attempting, as Manga-Williams later did, to talk the United Nations into changing its mind.

On September 20, 1960, when it was becoming obvious that the United Nations would not budge through appeals to the Charter, Kale became more threatening. Although the KUP would allow the people to register for the plebiscite, they would be instructed either to abstain from voting or to mutilate their ballots. In short, the KUP would sabotage the plebiscite. This was the only means left for the people to approach the issue. A plebiscite based on the existing issues was undemocratic and it was condemned in its entirety.<sup>36</sup> There could be no better assessment of the situation; a plebiscite based on these two alternatives could be expected to be the most undemocratic elections the Western Kamerun electorate had ever witnessed.

The most prolific of these parties, however, was the CCC led by Fon Nyenti. Because he said nearly the same thing to whoever he contacted, it serves no useful purpose treating each contact in its own right. What will be attempted here is to identify whom he contacted and when in one paragraph and then summarize his ideas in another.

First, the contacts which were as follows: the United Nations on January 1, 1960; Sir James Robertson--the Governor-General of Nigeria, Dag Hammarskjöld--the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Hon. Tufton Beamish--a British Member of Parliament, and J.O. Field--British Commissioner

for the Cameroons on April 4, 1960; the Governments of Nigeria and of the Cameroun Republic on May 10, 1960; H.A. Wieschhoff--Director, Division of Trusteeship at the United Nations, Hon. Ian Macleod--Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sékou Touré--President of Guinea, Krishna Menon of India, J.O. Field, and Tufton Beamish again on June 10, 1960; H.A. Wieschhoff again on June 20, 1960; Dr. Djalal Abdoh (whom he called Abdul Abdoh)--United Nations Commissioner for the Plebiscites in the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration on September 9, 1960; and, the United Nations on January 24, 1961.<sup>37</sup> This amount of writing and number of contacts should throw some light on what would have happened if the majority of the a-Fon had been Western-educated.

Nyenti's ideas were set out in three different approaches. Almost always invariably there was a call for a separate independent state of Southern Kamerun free from any connections with either Nigeria or Cameroun Republic other than diplomatic and trade relations. This Southern Kamerun State would be a member of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations in its own rights. Occasionally, Nyenti, like Kale and Manga-Williams, would say that this state would decide in an indefinite future, if need be, to join either Nigeria or Cameroun Republic. People could not be asked to vote on reunification about which they knew nothing. Initially, Nyenti directed his appeals to the conscience of those he contacted adding arguments in favour of providing a third alternative for the plebiscite. When this approach proved unsuccessful, Nyenti resorted to threats which were intensified as time wore on. The threats consisted mainly of boycotting the plebiscite and of mutilating the ballots. When it became obvious once more that this new approach was futile, Nyenti resigned himself into shaming the United Nations, showing how

that organization had blatantly insulted the Charter, denied the Southern Kamerunians the right to self-determination, and how, because of all this, the plebiscite was meaningless and dishonourable.<sup>38</sup> Nyenti's attempts, like those of Manga-Williams and Kale, to have the United Nations change its mind and provide a third alternative failed.

Unsuccessful attempts were also made by others. The a-Fon of Ntenako and Ndekwai of Mamfe, together with their Councillors, on July 30, 1960, pleaded with the United Nations to change its mind. The two alternatives already provided, they said, were an imposition against which they protested very strongly. The Southern Kamerunians desired neither integration with Nigeria nor reunification. The idea that Southern Kamerun could not form a viable economic and political entity was irrelevant. Britain could always come to their aid financially. The integrationists and the reunificationists including Foncha had become very unpopular because the people wanted their own fully independent and sovereign state.<sup>39</sup>

If these protests against the two alternatives already provided struck no responsive chord in the United Nations, they did bother the Southern Kamerun political leaders with the possible exception of Ntumazah and the university students and graduates.

No matter how hard Foncha tried, he could not avoid being questioned nearly every day as to what arrangements reunification would entail. Worse still, these questions came more and more often from the Western-educated supporters and opponents of Foncha. Particularly when teachers began to question Foncha on the same issue, it was becoming obvious that Foncha would have to produce a constitution or find himself alone. The Kamerun Society had even raised the issue at the Mamfe Conference saying people could not

vote on reunification about which they knew nothing. Furthermore, J.O. Field, the British Commissioner for Cameroons, requested Foncha to arrange a meeting between all the political parties in Southern Kamerun and the Government of Cameroun Republic to discuss the nature reunification would take should it be voted for. Foncha could ignore neither the Commissioner's request nor the questions from these Western-educated Southern Kamerunians, particularly the teachers. However, Foncha decided, in partial disrespect of the Commissioner's request and went it alone. The outcome was the Foncha-Ahidjo discussions on the nature of eventful reunification.<sup>40</sup>

These discussions were also in line with what Ahidjo, President of Cameroun Republic, had said previously at the United Nations when he was still Premier of Eastern Kamerun. On February 25, 1959, Ahidjo said at the United Nations that Eastern Kamerunians "were unanimous in their desire for [re]unification." But he saw one "real problem" of a "practical" nature involved in the issue. This problem was how "to ascertain the most appropriate means of achieving [re]unification." The means, however, "would depend above all on the position to be taken by the populace of the zone under British administration." Eastern Kamerunians "did not wish to bring the weight of their population to bear on their brothers" of the zone under British administration and had no desire to "impose integration" in disregard of the wishes of the latter. He had taken note of the statement Foncha made at the pervious meeting of the Fourth Committee. (The statement was to the effect that the KNDP would prefer a Federation in the event of reunification although the issue would still have to be discussed by the two Governments.) If Southern Kamerunians desired reunification, the Eastern Kamerunians "were ready to discuss with them, on the footing of equality,



methods of achieving [it]." But the discussion would best be conducted "on Cameroonian soil."<sup>41</sup>

When the time came for the discussions to take place "on Cameroonian soil," Foncha and Ahidjo met at least four times in 1960,<sup>42</sup> but failed to reach full agreement on one of the two most important issues, and any agreement on the other. On December 20-21, 1960, Foncha, Ahidjo, and Charles Assalé, the Prime Minister of Cameroun Republic, met at Douala and agreed that reunification would be in the form of a Federation; possibly, this had been agreed to earlier. After this meeting Foncha came home with a document called "United Cameroons--Federal Constitution." The contents of this document, which indicated it was a Confederation they had talked about, was reported as having been agreed upon. When Endeley raised an alarm against it pointing out that the contents had only been discussed but not agreed upon, Foncha was forced to alter paragraph 3 which had made the assertion. Before Endeley's alarm, this paragraph read in part: "It is at this juncture, therefore, only possible to indicate in broad outline what the Southern Cameroons and the Republic of the Cameroun have agreed are the basic provisions of a Federal Constitution." After the alarm, both the title and paragraph 3 of the document were altered to read: "United Cameroons--Federal Constitutional Proposals by KNDP"; the text of paragraph 3 now stated that the "proposed outline indicated what the KNDP considers are the basic provisions of the Federal Constitution."<sup>43</sup>

What these provisions aimed at was indicated by what Foncha told Ahidjo on the issue in one of their earlier meetings. Foncha

has said that he seeks a Cameroons Federation in which the Southern Cameroons would remain much the same as it is now, with the powers presently held by the Administering Authority to be vested in the

central government of the Federation. This is not an arrangement which is favoured by President Ahidjo; as a matter of fact, when Foncha first suggested it in Yaoundé last year [1960] he was turned down out of hand.<sup>44</sup>

In essence, Foncha was thinking in terms of a Confederation and it is very significant that he was still looking for it after the plebiscite. Ahidjo was prepared, in spite of his preference, to accept a Federation but not a Confederation. Consequently, although they agreed on a Federation, when Foncha insisted on a Confederation, he became very lukewarm about reunification. At no time did Ahidjo come close to wishing Southern Kamerun on Nigeria. His lukewarmness was due to Foncha's perception of the Federation and not because Southern Kamerun was perceived as a financial liability from the Yaoundé rostrum..

Another issue discussed was the relationship between the proposed 'Confederation of Kamerun' on the one hand, and France and Britain on the other. On this issue, Foncha presented the viewpoint of the reunificationists in Southern Kamerun and, to some extent, that of the majority of the Western-educated Eastern Kamerunians. The majority of the Kamerunians, including many of the Parliamentarians, were opposed to Kamerun membership in the French Community. The position in Northern Kamerun is not readily known. But, the Southern Kamerunians, to a man, including Foncha, the students, and Ntumazah were opposed to membership in the French Community. What Foncha perceived was a Confederation of Kamerun free of any control or influence by either Great Britain or France. Foncha "has stated that during the talks [with Ahidjo and Assalé in mid-1960], they will discuss the eventual setting up of a Cameroon Federation, 'outside the Commonwealth and the French Community'."<sup>45</sup> In this way, Foncha sought perhaps to allay the concerns of the

a-Fon in 1960. In order to do so, Foncha sought the co-operation of Ahidjo by requesting that they both sacrifice the Commonwealth and the French Community in the interest of reunification.

But, unfortunately, Ahidjo was too committed both to France and to the French Community. On May 10, 1958, in a speech marking the first celebration of the first 'national' holiday of Eastern Kamerun, Ahidjo declared

We shall never forget, when the time comes, the innumerable bonds which unite us to France . . . With the same ideals, free from all hindrances, we shall be able to determine with full clarity, on a plane of equality but also of friendship, the conditions of our association with a vaster organization which will be, we earnestly hope, inspired by France.<sup>46</sup>

Eastern Kamerun, or rather Ahidjo, had been united to France by "innumerable bonds," and, the "vaster organization" with which Eastern Kamerun would associate on the footing of "equality" and of "friendship," and which would be inspired by France, could be nothing other than the French Community. Even more important was the military alliance between France and the Cameroun Republic which allowed French-officered troops under French command to be stationed on Cameroun soil.<sup>47</sup> With these commitments, it was difficult for Ahidjo to contemplate Foncha's demand that the reunified Kamerun pull-out of the French Community. This was possibly the more important basis for Ahidjo's lukewarmness to reunification with Southern Kamerun.

Foncha's two conditions for reunification to Ahidjo were not made for their own sake. Foncha was looking at the a-Fon over his shoulder. Now that he had abandoned them, like the rest of the Western-educated Southern Kamerun political leaders had done much earlier, he sought to soothe their fears and confusion. If Foncha could assure the traditional leaders (and

even many Western-educated Southern Kamerunians) that in the event of reunification, Southern Kamerun would remain as it was at the time, out of Nigeria, but reunified with Eastern Kamerun, yet ruled from Buea rather than from Yaoundé, perhaps they could be satisfied. To be ruled from Yaoundé was interchangeable with the French Community. If Foncha could assure the a-Fon that in the event of reunification, Kamerun would pull out of the French Community, the loss of the Smaller Kamerun State would not have been too much for the a-Fon to take. No Fon could take the French Community. But Ahidjo did not co-operate. The outcome of the failure of the Ahidjo-Foncha Talks was a last minute attempt by the Southern Kamerun political leaders, in response to local protests, to reach an agreement.

This attempt took place in London in November 1960. Endeley, Foncha, Kale, J.O. Field, and two or more unidentified a-Fon met with the Colonial Secretary. At the conference, it "was observed that the questions were too rigid and that since plebiscite decisions were generally irretrievable the matter required careful handling." It was also felt that a request should be made to the United Nations to review the whole situation "with a view to cancelling the plebiscite altogether and embarking on the 'middle course,' that is, separation from Nigeria and independence of the Cameroons as a separate entity." At one point, it seemed that agreement on the issue was around the corner, "but after some time the atmosphere changed dramatically with a diversity of views and so these other [sic] 'round table' talks also ended in smoke."<sup>48</sup> The last chance to alter plebiscite questions had been lost.

The present writer has made several attempts, through correspondence, to find out what happened before this last chance was lost. Unfortunately,

only one of his correspondents, Joseph N. Lafon--former Minister of Local Government (whose "Government [was] hot like pepper"\*), former Minister of Education, and former Minister of Lands and Surveys, all in the KNDP Government--was kind enough to write back. Lafon's explanation was not very helpful. He states that "The British Government, misled by the Cameroonian Opposition, opposed the third question for the modified Trusteeship."<sup>49</sup> This statement does not explain why Foncha and Endeley in particular failed to seize on the chance.

A plausible explanation was hinted at by Kale, one of the participants, in his book. He observed that, at the conference, "It was also pointed out that there was confusion and a great deal of misunderstanding."<sup>50</sup> What seemed to have happened, and this for the moment is only a suggestion, is that these leaders, particularly Endeley and Foncha, had become too confused to know exactly what they wanted, and they had also become too suspicious of each other's motives to achieve a new agreement.

Whatever the reason, the very occurrence of the London November Talks had its effect on some of the Southern Kamerun electorate and on what happened thereafter. Kale reported simply that the situation "incidentally led to a shift in public opinion."<sup>51</sup> But he did not say in which direction the shift was except that it was a product of confusion and misunderstanding. Although the London Talks had failed, some of the a-Fon and their subjects came to believe that, because of the conference, the second alternative had

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\*Lafon is best remembered by his constituents of Nso for this his notorious phrase, "Govmin wom yur moo shishur beiy--My Government is as hot as pepper," and for his mastery of Nso proverbs and idiomatic expressions.

been altered; it was now secession without reunification. The source of the misinformation is not known, but it was difficult to talk any of them out of it once he had initially accepted it. Although not an impartial observer, Fon Nyenti reported the situation\* to the United Nations on January 24, 1961. As a result of the London November Talks most

natives believe that voting for the white box [reunification] means Southern Cameroons is breaking away from Nigeria in order to be a separate sovereign state. It had never occurred to them that voting for the white box means Southern Cameroons has been swallowed by Cameroun Republic Empire.<sup>52</sup>

This was the high-watermark of confusion, confusion of some of those who held the destiny of Southern Kamerun in their own hands. As a result of this confusion, some of the a-Fon, would interpret the plebiscite questions to mean what they perceived and not what the questions actually implied. The political leaders would take advantage of it. The situation might have been averted if the Concert of the a-Fon was still alive. But, between November 1959 and February 1961 (and even thereafter), it had ceased to operate: the general elections of 1959 inflicted it with a malaise; the United Nations' decision on the two plebiscite questions weakened it further; and the London November Talks almost laid it to rest. Indeed, between 1960 and 1961, the a-Fon were acting either individually or in groups, taking into consideration only the interests of the individual Fondoms or groups of them.

The break-down of the Concert had one significant implication for

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\*Nyenti reported this about three weeks before voting and from Mamfe (see map). As will be seen in chapter seven, after the plebiscite, some groups from Wum and Nkambe Divisions, the extreme north of the region (see map) reported that some people were already complaining that they voted for Smaller Kamerun, not reunification. This would seem to give credence to Nyenti's earlier report.

Southern Kamerun and for the trusteeship system in that region. The first nationalist organization, the CYL, which embedded in its programme the idea of building a 'Cameroons Nations', predicated it on the unity of the various Fondoms in Southern Kamerun (see chapter two). The emergence of the Concert fulfilled that promise; indeed, the unity of Southern Kamerun was symbolized by the Concert of the a-Fon. Consequently, the break-down of the Concert meant the disunity of Southern Kamerun. By taking an adverse decision, therefore, the United Nations undermined the most significant achievement it could point to in Southern Kamerun.

Nevertheless, as far as the plebiscite was concerned, the break-down of the Concert was advantageous to some political leaders and disadvantageous to others. To be sure, the situation gave all the political leaders the opportunity to set one Fondom against the other, one ethnic group against the other, and one area of the region against the other, and, to exploit local politics of the various Fondoms in their favour. But, the question was, who would gain more by doing so, the integrationists or the reunificationists including Foncha. Circumstances were in favour of the reunificationists: if Bum was set against Bali Nyonga, the integrationists would be at a loss; if local politics of Nso were exploited, the integrationists would be at a loss; and, if Bamenda Division was set against the rest of the region, the reunificationists would still come on top. What all this amounts to is that by the middle of 1960, the Southern Kamerun Plebiscite had been lost and won; reunification had defeated integration.

There are strong indications that all the Southern Kamerun political leaders knew this would be the case. Ntumazah seemed to know it. That might have been why, during the campaigns, the OK avoided the electorate

as much as possible and directed its appeal, in written form, to the Western-educated, assuring them that the constitution, which this group was most concerned about, would be drafted after the plebiscite and that they themselves would have a hand in drafting it.<sup>53</sup> Endeley and Foncha seemed to have known it. That might have been why, as the United Nations Plebiscites Commissioner reported, Endeley approached Foncha during the campaigns and requested that both of them renounce their programmes and jointly demand a Smaller Kamerun State from the United Nations, and that might have been why Foncha turned down the request.<sup>54</sup> That might have been why, as the Plebiscites Commissioner reported, the Cameroons People's National Convention (CPNC)--a fusion, in early 1960, of the KNC-KPP--entered the plebiscite campaigns reluctantly and late.<sup>55</sup> That might have been why, as Welch said, almost "to the eve of the plebiscite, both the KNDP and the CPNC hoped that the terms of the General Assembly resolution could be reinterpreted in more favourable terms . . . [with neither] willing to admit the finality of the choice between Cameroun and Nigeria:"<sup>56</sup> the CPNC, perhaps because it knew it had lost, and, both, perhaps because they knew they had schemed, confused, and abandoned those who supported them and forced the majority of their countrymen to vote for what they did not want. The only group of organizers who did not seem to have known it were the British. That was why they proceeded with the organization of the plebiscite which had almost been settled.



<sup>1</sup>U.N., G.A., Hearings from Cameroons Petitioners, A/C. 4/SR. 885, November, 1959, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-15.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>5</sup>U.N., G.A., Hearings from Cameroons Petitioners, A/C. 4/SR. 888, November, 1959, p. 30.

<sup>6</sup>U.N., G.A., A/C. 4/SR. 885, November, 1959, p. 16.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 16-17.

<sup>9</sup>U.N., G.A., Hearings from Cameroons Petitioners, A/C. 4/SR. 888, November, 1959, pp. 29-30.

<sup>10</sup>U.N., G.A., Hearings from Cameroons Petitioners, A/C. 4/SR. 889, November, 1959, pp. 33-34.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 34-36.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>13</sup>U.N., G.A., A/C. 4/SR. 885, November, 1959, p. 17.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>U.N., G.A., Hearings from Cameroons Petitioners, A/C. 4/SR. 890, November, 1959, pp. 37-38.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>19</sup>U.N., G.A., Agreed Statement by Mr. John Foncha, Premier of the Southern Cameroons, and Dr. E.M.L. Endeley, Leader of the Opposition in the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly, A/C. 4/414, September 30, 1959, pp. 1-2.

<sup>20</sup>U.N., G.A., Year Book of the United Nations 1959, Office of Public Information, United Nations, New York, 1960, pp. 363-364.

<sup>21</sup>U.N., G.A., Resolutions Adopted by the General Assembly during its Fourteenth Session, September 15-December 13, 1959, Supplement No. 16, A/4354, 1960, p. 26.

<sup>22</sup>U.N., G.A., Year Book of the United Nations 1959, New York, 1960, pp. 363-364.

<sup>23</sup>U.N., T.C., Petition from the Bafut Population Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Bamenda, 6 October, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 64, October 8, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup>U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. John Foku on Behalf of the Population of Metzam Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Bamenda, 2 October, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 59, October 6, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup>U.N., T.C., Petition from Mrs. Magny on behalf of the Bafreng Women Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Bamenda, 2 October, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 58, October 6, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup>U.N., T.C., Three Petitions Dealing with General Problems Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, T/PET. 4/L. 66, October 12, 1959, pp. 1-2.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>U.N., T.C., Petition from the Secretary of the Cameroons Society Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Buea, 2 October, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 57, October 6, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup>U.N., T.C., Petition from the Cameroons Youth League Association Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Buea, 8 October, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 67, November 7, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup>U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. Mallam L.T. Sale, President of the Muslim Congress Party Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Bansa, 12 April, 1960, T/PET. 4/L. 82, April 28, 1960, pp. 1-5.

<sup>32</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, pp. 107-108.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. J. Manga-Williams, Leader and Founder of the Cameroons Indigenes Party, Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Victoria, 19 January, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 103, February 1, 1961, pp. 1-4.

<sup>35</sup>U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 79, February 25, 1960, pp. 1-3.

<sup>36</sup>U.N., T.C., Petition from the Kamerun United Party Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Buea, 20 September, 1960, T/PET. 4/L. 96, October 13, 1960, pp. 1-2.

<sup>37</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. Stephen E. Nyenti on Behalf of the Cameroons Commoners Congress Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Mamfe, January 1, 1960, T/PET. 4/L. 81, April 11, 1960, pp. 1-2; U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. Stephen E. Nyenti on Behalf of the Cameroons Commoners Congress Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Mamfe, April 6, 1960, T/PET. 4/L. 81, Add 1, April 28, 1960, pp. 1-4; U.N., T.C., Two Petitions from Chief Stephen E. Nyenti, Leader, Cameroons Commoners Congress Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, T/PET. 4/L. 85, September 2, 1960, pp. 1-7; U.N., T.C., Petition from the Central President of the Cameroons Commoners Congress Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Mamfe, 9 September, 1960, T/PET. 4/L. 94, October 12, 1960, pp. 1-3; U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. S.E. Nyenti, Central President, Cameroons Commoners Congress Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Mamfe, January 24, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 106, February 25, 1961, pp. 1-2.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Ntenako-Ndekwa Community Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Mamfe, 30 July, 1960, T/PET. 4/L. 86, September 2, 1960, pp. 1-2.

<sup>40</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. J. Manga-Williams, Leader and Founder of the Cameroons Indigenes Party, Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Victoria, 19 January, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 103, February 1, 1961, pp. 1-2.

<sup>41</sup> U.N., G.A., Hearings from Cameroons Petitioners, A/C. 4/SR. 849, May 1959, p. 566.

<sup>42</sup> Rubin, op. cit., p. 107.

<sup>43</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, pp. 111-112.

<sup>44</sup> Le Vine, "Calm Before the Storm in Cameroun," Africa Report, Vol. 6, No. 5, May, 1961, p. 4.

<sup>45</sup> "Yaounde," West Africa, July 16, 1960, p. 795.

<sup>46</sup> Guy Devernois, "Cameroons 1958-1959," Civilizations, Vols. 9-10, 1959-1960, p. 234.

<sup>47</sup> "Cameroun under Strain," The Economist, Vol. 196, July-September, 1960, p. 175.

<sup>48</sup> Kale, op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>49</sup> Letter from Mr. Joseph N. Lafon, September 26, 1975, p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> Kale, op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 106, February 25, 1961, pp. 1-2.

<sup>53</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, p. 115.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., pp. 112-113; it is difficult to explain Foncha's behaviour at this time, except to suggest that he was sentimentally inclined to reunification, saw the opportunity at no cost to his power, and no longer had scruples in getting it.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>56</sup>Welch, op. cit., pp. 227-228.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE CONDUCT OF THE PLEBISCITES 1959-1961

Because there were two plebiscites in Northern Kamerun and only one in Southern Kamerun, and because those in Northern Kamerun were organized separately, by the British in conformity with the United Nations resolution, from that in Southern Kamerun, it makes sense to deal with this aspect of the phenomenon in Northern Kamerun separately from that in Southern Kamerun.

#### The Conduct of the Northern Kamerun Plebiscites 1959-1961

Before the United Nations informed the Northern Kamerunians that they would have a plebiscite in November 1959, there was no indigenous political party in the region. With the knowledge that there would be a plebiscite organized by the British and supervised by the United Nations, some Western-educated Northern Kamerunians, all of whom were Muslims, formed a political party for the purpose of fighting the plebiscite. This was the Northern Kamerun Democratic Party (NKDP). It was formed in February, 1959, the month in which the Trusteeship Council and the General Assembly decided that there would be a plebiscite in Northern Kamerun. But it was not launched until April, 1959.

The NKDP had several aims, mostly directed against the way the British had reorganized Northern Kamerun politically. In essence, the aims involved secession from Nigeria, independence for Northern Kamerun either in a state of its own or in a state of Western Kamerun, unification of Western Kamerun, and the ultimate reunification of Kamerun. Closely allied with these goals

was the desire to develop Northern Kamerun in all aspects of life, the desire to put Northern Kamerunian affairs in the hands of Northern Kamerunians, the desire to overthrow Fulani domination and reinvigorate Northern Kamerunian traditional institutions, and the desire to ask the Nigerian workers and administrators to go back home.<sup>1</sup>

These goals made the NKDP suspect in the eyes of the local authorities who were mainly in favour of the integration of Northern Kamerun with Nigeria. On July 26, 1959, over thirty-two of its members were arrested at Sugu and locked up in several prisons in Jada and Yola.\* They were neither charged nor tried. The incident had to do with permits. There was a 'law' that persons wishing to campaign in an open or public lecture must acquire permits before doing so. The NKDP in this area attempted several times unsuccessfully to acquire these permits. Having failed, its members went to the Chief of Sugu to find out why permits were being granted to branches of the Nigerian parties in Northern Kamerun and denied to the NKDP. This Chief at once ordered the arrest of these NKDP members. Soon after, the area was ransacked and "all in possession of [the] party's registration cards were arrested and locked up."<sup>2</sup> The attempt to intimidate the advocates of secession from Nigeria had thus begun, but many more would follow.

The NKDP leaders also alleged that they and their supporters were being taxed heavily because of their political ideas. They saw the heavy taxes as an attempt to dissuade them from opposing the Northern Nigerian proposition.<sup>3</sup> There is no way of knowing whether this was a mere allegation or a

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\*British observations on what was reported in this petition confirm what this paragraph reports. See, U.N., T.C., T/OBS. 4/68, December 15, 1959.

fact, but that is how the NKDP reported whatever happened. However, in order to redress the situation, the NKDP requested the United Nations to depose all Northern Nigerian rulers in Northern Kamerun, to expel Nigerian administrators and Dan-dogas\* from the region before the plebiscite, to not permit the headquarters of the plebiscite to be in Yola, Nigeria, where the British had tried to set it, and to ensure the plebiscite be conducted on a provincial basis.<sup>4</sup> The United Nations, in response to these complaints and requests, did relocate the plebiscite headquarters at Mubi.

Non-Northern Kamerunians campaigned in the plebiscites. Dr. Djalal Abdoh, the United Nations Plebiscites Commissioner, was informed on August 28, 1959, by the British Mission at the United Nations that "action could not be taken to exclude Nigerians and Southern Cameroonians from the Trust Territory unless they broke the law or endangered law and order." The Governor-General of Nigeria later on repeated the same information in identical words, adding that even Eastern Kamerunians could do the same thing "provided they did not break the law or endanger law and order."<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, when Ntumazah suggested, after the first plebiscite, that integration with Nigeria should no longer form part of the second plebiscite, Cohen, the British representative in the Fourth Committee reacted sharply: "Ntumazah is not of course in any way entitled to speak for the people of the Northern Cameroons . . . he is not somebody from the Northern Cameroons or qualified or I believe deputed to speak for the people of Northern Cameroons."<sup>6</sup> This statement raises the question why non-Northern Kamerunians were allowed to

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\*A kind of local police force responsible to the local authorities; it was also called dogari. In Southern Kamerun they were called Fon's messengers.

participate in the plebiscite.

Indeed, out of the five political parties that campaigned in the first plebiscite, four were Nigerian parties with local branches in Northern Kamerun while only one was an indigenous political party. These local branches of Nigerian political parties included the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), the NCNC, the UMBC, the AG, and the NPC. Out of these, the NCNC, the UMBC, and the AG joined forces to campaign in favour of the second alternative, which was to make a decision later on. The NPC alone campaigned in favour of the first alternative which was to be integrated permanently with Northern Nigeria.

Aside from the fact that non-Northern Kamerunians participated in the plebiscite and that Nigeria-based political parties also took part, instructions from the Governor-General of Nigeria concerning the conduct of the plebiscite were distorted by the Northern Nigeria authorities before they reached Northern Kamerun. For example, on June 18, 1959, as Dr. Abdoh reported, the Governor-General instructed the Governor of Northern Nigeria to the effect that those in authority charged with the conduct of the plebiscite "should be at pains not only to ensure the complete impartiality of the plebiscite but also make the impartiality obvious and unassailable." Ministers involved in the plebiscites should "deny themselves the public expression of partisan views on the matter to be decided as the result of the plebiscite."<sup>7</sup> When the instructions reached Sokoto, Ahmadu Bello distorted them. On September 16, 1959, his government recognized that it "should not participate actively in the campaign preceding the Northern Cameroons Plebiscite." Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries "other than those who represented constituencies in Trust Territories," should not



attend meetings and rallies connected with the plebiscite. However, they could hold private meetings with the representatives of their parties, and were "at liberty to express their personal views on the plebiscite publicly" although they should make it clear that they were not speaking "as members of the Government," but as "elected representatives of the people."<sup>8</sup> In these words, the Sardauna of Sokoto virtually nullified the Governor-General's instructions.

There is little wonder then that the arrests and harassment of those connected with the NKDP occurred at the grass-roots level. When the British did not flatly deny the existence of the arrests, they defended them in legal terms or issued warnings against the crimes. This is how the British defended the arrests of NKDP members. On July 26, a representative of the NKDP applied for a permit to the District Head of Sugu. The permit was neither granted nor denied, but as the conduct of the NKDP leaders led the District Head "to apprehend a breach of the law, he ordered the arrest of the applicant and two of his supporters." Then a noisy sequel and "provocative demonstration of some fifty persons before the District Head's house" followed. As a result, "twenty-six persons were arrested for conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace."<sup>9</sup> On July 29, the three leaders arrested and the four leaders of the demonstration were arraigned before the Court of the Lamido of Adamawa. They were charged with "conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace." All the twenty-six were convicted and fined with sums ranging from £1 to £10.<sup>10</sup>

As said in the preceding paragraph, sometimes the British merely issued warnings against the harassment of the NKDP leadership and supporters and, then, proceeded to offer an explanation seemingly in defence of the harassment.

One example will suffice. The local authorities defied the neutrality appeal and Sir John Dring, the British Plebiscite Administrator, issued warnings "again" and then indicated the legal impossibility of controlling them. Dring informed Dr. Abdoh that the Resident of Yola "had again warned Native Authority Officials" to be impartial "when carrying out their official duties." But that those "officials could not be barred from taking part in political activities in their personal capacities." Furthermore, there was "no constitutional authority for vesting the issue of permits in British officials." Arrests could continue provided they were made only "in cases where it was necessary in the interests of the law and order." Those already in prisons would be interviewed and released "on bail" until the plebiscite was over.<sup>11</sup> Issuing warnings, of course, is one thing but enforcing the regulations effectively is quite another. That the warnings were issued "again" would seem to suggest that they were never heeded.

Indeed, an incident which Dr. Abdoh reported occurred during the voting process would seem to suggest that, if the allegation was a fact, then the warnings were simply ignored. As Dr. Abdoh put it,

A delegation of leaders from the areas alleged to the United Nations observer that the presiding officer had instructed the people to put their ballots in the white box [Nigeria proposition] at the opening of the station and that the polling officers accompanied the voters into the booths and directed them to put their ballots in the white box . . . This complaint had been lodged with the plebiscite Administration [the British team] and concerns the Chigide Registration Area . . . The United Nations observer remarked that Chigide was the only mountain area in the Gwoza Circle which had a majority for white (677-33)--the other areas voted overwhelmingly for the second alternative.<sup>12</sup>

It is important to note that Gwoza, and indeed the Chigide area, was inhabited mainly by the non-Fulani Northern Kamerunians.

Whatever the case, it is now possible to attempt a summary of the con-

ditions under which the first Northern Kamerun plebiscite was fought. Nigerian and Northern Kamerun political parties participated in the plebiscite. Of these parties, only the NPC campaigned in favour of integration with Northern Nigeria; the others campaigned in favour of making a decision in the future. During the conduct of the plebiscite, the majority of the local authorities, if not all of them, were in favour of integration with Nigeria. These local authorities defied the Governor-General's appeal for Neutrality and influenced opinion in favour of their political ideas. But, because the political ideas of the NKDP ran contrary to those of the local authorities, the latter harassed the former mainly by denying them permits to lecture and by arresting them and their supporters for alleged breaches of the law. The British Plebiscite Administrator issued warnings again and again against the activities of the local authorities but apparently did little to enforce the regulations; instead he offered explanations which seemed to defend the conduct of the local authorities.

In spite of all this, one thing seems to come out very clearly. The harassment was directed against the leaders of the NKDP and a few of their supporters. The majority of the Northern Kamerun populace were thus left free to take their own decisions. This meant the a-Fon and their subjects and the dissident Fulani were allowed to decide which way they wanted to fall. They did; and the outcome was apparently.\* an overwhelming victory for a future decision. 133,859 people registered for the plebiscite. Eighty per cent of them cast ballots. 42,788 (about 36%) of these voted in favour of remaining a permanent part of Northern Nigeria. 70,546 (about

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\*See next paragraph.

64%) of them apparently voted in favour of making a decision in the future.<sup>13</sup>

The United Nations' team--the Plebiscite Commissioner, his staff, and the observers--were agreed, however, that the votes of the majority at least spoke a peculiar language. As they saw it,

It would appear that the majority of the voters made use of the opportunity offered by the plebiscite to register what was in effect a protest vote against the system of local administration prevailing in the Northern Cameroons. The information that [they] gathered in the Territory supports the view that the people desire the introduction of reforms in the system of local government--which to them is synonymous with Government--and that one of the reasons why the majority voted in favour of the second alternative [Future Decision] was to express the wish for a speedy introduction of these reforms.<sup>14</sup>

This, of course, meant that, like in most plebiscites and general elections for that matter, the majority of the Northern Kamerunians had interpreted the United Nations' questions in light of their local conditions and circumstances.

Whatever the case, the results of the plebiscite surprised the British delegation at the United Nations. As Cohen put it, the British were very surprised by the results of the vote; they expected "quite a substantial vote for the second alternative," but not a majority in favour of that alternative. He then proceeded to offer an explanation. According to him, Northern Kamerunians, under the trusteeship system, "secured an exceptional share of development finance for roads, schools and hospitals,"\* and were, therefore, "well disposed to the trusteeship system." By deferring their decision, they hoped to gain more of this development finance under the continued trusteeship system. However, "Northern Cameroons is still to be wooed

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\*The reader should make his decision about this statement by looking at the historical background.

and much may be won during courtship that may not be offered after marriage." The vote was the consequence of the "dissatisfaction" of the people "at not being able to play a larger part in the system of local administration\* . . . which to them is synonymous with Government". It was the local Native Administrations, not the Northern Nigerian Government, that was unpopular. The vote in the plebiscites was "emphatically not to be regarded as a vote against Nigeria."<sup>15</sup> Cohen thus indicated that he did not believe the Northern Regional Government or the Nigerian Government for that matter could be unpopular among the majority of the Northern Kamerunians.

However, it was during this explanation that the impartiality Cohen professed for so long at the United Nations was negated. The Northern Kamerunians were "still to be wooed." Who was to do the wooing, when, how, and for what reason? Much "may be won during courtship that may not be offered after marriage." Who was to win what, and what would be offered that may not be delivered?

After this explanation, however, Cohen stated his point of view regarding the organization of the next Northern Kamerun plebiscite. He suggested a second plebiscite which should be conducted at the same time with that of Southern Kamerun, and whose questions should be identical with those asked the Southern Kamerunians; "Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Federation of Nigeria? or Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Republic of the Cameroons?" The votes in Northern Kamerun should have nothing to do with those of Southern Kamerun and

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\*Here, Cohen was merely reiterating the conclusion of the United Nations Plebiscite team in Northern Kamerun, although Cohen stretched it to suit his own interest.

the future of each section of the territory should be decided according to its own number of votes. The voters in Northern Kamerun should "include genuine residents of the Trust Territory, even those who might have been excluded from the Federal register on grounds of nationality";<sup>16</sup> (the qualifications for voting in Northern Kamerun should thus be different from those of Southern Kamerun and non-Nigerians as well as non-Northern Kamerunians should vote). In either event, the Nigerian Government must be consulted before the voters' qualifications are determined.<sup>17</sup> The voting qualifications which Cohen suggested here, before the United Nations, must be borne in mind.

Cohen's suggestion notwithstanding, with the results of the plebiscite apparently in favour of a future decision, one might have expected the United Nations to consult with the Northern Kamerunians before making a further decision. This consultation could take the form of another Visiting Mission. But, without further consultation, the United Nations acted. Its decision was set out in the General Assembly Resolution 1473 (XIV). The British should organize a further plebiscite beginning from September 30, 1960, and ending not later than March 1961. The two questions for the plebiscite, in this order, should be "(a) Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Republic of the Cameroons? (b) Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Federation of Nigeria?" The plebiscites should be conducted "on the basis of universal adult suffrage, all those over the age of twenty-one and ordinarily resident in the Northern Cameroons being qualified to vote." The British should separate the administration of Northern Kamerun from that of Nigeria not later than October 1, 1960. Northern Kamerunians may participate in the general elections to the

Nigerian Federal Legislative Assembly, but, this "should in no way interfere with, or influence, the free choice of the people of the Northern Cameroons in deciding their future in the forthcoming plebiscite."<sup>18</sup> It is surprising, however, that the United Nations still put the organization of this second plebiscite in British hands. Cohen's statement that Northern Kamerun would still have to be wooed and that much might be promised during courtship that might never be delivered was enough to warn the United Nations that the British could not be expected to be impartial in the next plebiscite.

There is little wonder, therefore, that the Northern Kamerun political leaders who favoured secession from Nigeria became suspicious, not only of the British and local authorities but also of the United Nations' decision. Before the United Nations adopted Resolution 1473 (XIV) Mallam Ibrahim Abba, Founder and President of the NKDP, and Mallam Iya, General-Secretary of the NKDP, were already at Buea, capital of Southern Kamerun, making arrangements for the unification of Western Kamerun. They apparently did not expect a further plebiscite, at least not until after a period of five years. As soon as it was remoured in Southern Kamerun that the United Nations was planning an immediate plebiscite for Northern Kamerun, these two leaders, in a telegram from Southern Kamerun at once protested to the United Nations. On December 7, 1959, five days before the adoption of the resolution, they told the United Nations what was required at the time. Northern Kamerunians should abrogate the Nigerian Federal elections. A separate administration for Northern Kamerun should be established and administrative reforms begun. They considered "completely unacceptable British intention that [their] plebiscite take place at same time as that of Southern Cameroons which [was] much more politically developed." Time was needed before the next plebiscite

to study the problems at stake and to educate the people. The British had an obligation to develop them and bring them up to the level of their neighbours before they could be ready to make a final decision.<sup>19</sup>

The same day, these leaders followed up the telegram with a petition. But because they knew that it would take time for the letter to reach New York, they gave their Mubi address. This petition clearly indicated what was discussed at Buea. They did not want the Minister for Northern Cameroons Affairs to represent or speak for Northern Kamerun. This Minister was representing Nigerian interests and himself. Northern Kamerun should be separated at once from Nigeria because its inhabitants were Kamerunians, not Nigerians. The region should be given its own Government and after 1960, the Governor-General of Nigeria should not have anything to do with "British Cameroons," that is Western Kamerun. The Commissioner for Western Kamerun would then deal directly with London and Northern Kamerun would be under the authority of the Commissioner at Buea. In this way, Northern and Southern Kamerun would be linked together. This was to be the first step to the ultimate unification of Western Kamerun. In either event, the Southern Kamerun plebiscite should take place before the second plebiscite of Northern Kamerun. Western Kamerun should constitute an independent state before the ultimate reunification of all Kamerun.<sup>20</sup>

When the Northern Nigerian Government decided to send someone to speak for Northern Kamerun, the NKDP reacted sharply. The NKDP reminded the United Nations that it was the only indigenous party of Northern Kamerun and, therefore, the only party qualified to speak for the region. It called on the United Nations to reject whatever that delegate would say. The Northern Nigerian Government had been deceiving the United Nations for a



long time. Northern Kamerunians wished to manage their own affairs with their own government and legislatures. To fail to listen to these pleas would be an indication of the United Nations' intentions to force Northern Kamerun to vote under fear and suppression in the next plebiscite.

Furthermore, only Northern Kamerunians should vote at the plebiscite.<sup>21</sup>

It is important to note here that the NKDP was, indeed, the only political party qualified to speak for Northern Kamerun. It was the only indigenous political party and that explains why the local authorities directed their efforts mainly against it. Its supporters were only Northern Kamerunians, Fulani and non-Fulani, Muslims and non-Muslims. On the other hand, the rest of the parties operating in the region were branches of Nigerian parties and took instructions from their headquarters in Nigeria.\* It was because

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\*Vaughan reported that these local branches of Nigerian parties refused to take instructions from their headquarters in Nigeria. This appears to be incorrect; there are indications to the contrary. Document U.N., T.C., T/1491/Add. 1, Annex VIII, November 25, 1959, pp. 1-8, makes, among other things, the following points. Some time before August 4, 1959, a "two-day conference of all political parties in the Northern Cameroons has decided on further period of Trusteeship. The decision was contained in a joint declaration signed by representatives who attended the conference." These parties included the "Northern People's Congress . . . UMBC-Action Group . . . Northern Kamerun Democratic Party . . . NEPU . . . [and] Bornu Youth Movement." Before August 5, 1959, "The UMBC delegates to the Conference said that it was their policy to break away from the North, especially those in Adamawa Province." After this declaration, the "Northern Working Committee of the NPC" at the headquarters "dissociated itself from the decision of all the political parties in the Northern Cameroons that a further period of trusteeship should be sought for the Territory." Before August 10, 1959, the local branch, that is, "The Adamawa branch of the NPC also dissociated itself from the conference decision in a statement issued at Yola." Some time before October 19, 1959, Malam Tanko Yakassai, National Publicity Secretary of NEPU declared that "his party would not 'dive into the internal affairs of the Northern Cameroons' . . . NEPU was of the view that the people of the Trust Territory were dissatisfied with the NPC Government policies . . . it was desirable to allow the people complete autonomy to constitute their own Native Authority in order to bring improvements in the area [for what] the people wanted was not secession as such but a recognition of their status with their own Native Authority."

(continued)

of these instructions that the other parties combined forces with the NKDP in 1959 in order to weaken the NPC in Nigerian politics.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, these parties included both Nigerians and Northern Kamerunians.

Whatever the case, the protests against an immediate plebiscite continued. This time, it was one of the Northern Kamerunians who sat in the Nigerian House of Representatives, Hon. Mr. Philip Maken, who protested. On April 26, 1960, he asked for the postponement of the second Northern Kamerun plebiscite. Trusteeship should be continued until the people were ready to make a decision. Before this decision, however, Northern Kamerun should have independence either in a Northern Kamerun state or in a "British Cameroons" state. All of Western Kamerun should be separated from Nigeria and given a separate and single House of Assembly as from October 1, 1960, the day when Nigeria would become independent. He was quite aware that the two alternatives of the plebiscite were a "trick" from the Northern Nigerian Government. So also was the government's demand for an "immediate" second plebiscite. It was surprising that the United Nations failed to see through these "tricks" and failed also to listen to the pleas of the NKDP and its associate parties. Nevertheless, he and his colleagues were only concerned with the postponement of the second plebiscite until "British Cameroons" had

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Before November 5, 1959, Malam Aminu Kano, Leader of NEPU, "reasserted his party's belief in the right of any people to self-determination. The people of the Northern Cameroons, he pointed out, do not want to secede from Nigeria but they only wanted a Provincial Administrative [sic] set up for themselves." On October 26, 1959, the Publicity secretary of NEPU again, "said his party refused to issue directives to its branches in the Northern Cameroons . . . because it believed that the issue was purely a matter for the local people to decide. He added: 'We of NEPU are of the opinion that the people of the Northern Cameroons have decided to vote against continued association with the North because they are fed up with the present tyrannical at [sic] [i.e. tyrannical] rule of the NPC'."

been ruling itself after a period of trusteeship. Only then could the people in their own House of Assembly decide which way to fall. The immediate plebiscite was a Northern Nigerian scheme to "swallow the Northern Cameroons." Worse still, the Northern Nigerian Government was already twisting the questions of the second plebiscite and making a mockery of the first.<sup>23</sup>

Nor were the branches of the Nigerian parties in Northern Kamerun which co-operated with the NKDP in 1959 silent on the issue. On July 13, 1960, they informed the United Nations that the future of their\* "dear father land the Northern Cameroons" was uncertain. The general problem had produced a "great anxiety" among the Northern Kamerunians. The "British and Nigerians [had] already prepared a great trap for the people of Northern Cameroons." They, the leaders of the Kamerun Freedom Party (KFP)--a second indigenous Northern Kamerun political party formed in the middle of 1960 to fight the second plebiscite, the AG, the NKDP, and the NEPU wished to tell the United Nations "the exact position" before things became "too late." If the United Nations wished to see the second plebiscite conducted in a free atmosphere, the present British "Resident, British and Nigerian Administrative Officers" in the region should be "removed without delay and replaced by other Administrative Officers direct from the United Kingdom or somewhere else."<sup>24</sup>

These leaders followed their demands with accusations. The British Resident and the Nigerian administrators, they said, were already "freely campaigning for Northern Nigeria," and thereby taking an "active part in politics." They were setting "one tribe against another" and making the

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\*It should be remembered that these branches had members who included Nigerians and Northern Kamerunians.

plebiscite "tribalistic." They were oppressing, victimizing, and threatening those in favour of the Cameroun proposition. They were still appointing district heads that were not Northern Kamerunians, and they were employing "mostly those who did not support the separation of Northern Cameroons from Northern Region of Nigeria." About 90 per cent of "the workers in Northern Cameroons [were] Nigerians" while those "who fought to free Northern Cameroons from Northern Region" were no longer employed.<sup>25</sup>

These accusations were followed by suggestions regarding what ought to be done. All Nigerian soldiers and policemen in the region should be removed at once before the plebiscite ever took place because they would "do their worst there." The proposal to make Northern Kamerun a Province of Northern Nigeria was totally unacceptable because the region had "rejected Northern Nigeria in the last Plebiscite." The proposal itself was an indication that Northern Kamerun had "no place in Nigeria except in Northern Region." The name "Trusteeship Province" was an attempt to obliterate the name "Cameroons"; Northern Kamerunians were Kamerunians and wished to maintain their "national identity." The United Nations should treat Northern and Southern Kamerun "as one State." The British policy of "divide and rule" was unacceptable. Northern and Southern Kamerun should be unified before independence as was the case with Togoland. The world knew that there was "only one British Cameroons not two British Cameroons." It was difficult to understand how Southern Kamerun with a population of 753,000 had a Government and Northern Kamerun with a population of 800,000\* had none.<sup>26</sup>

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\*These figures were taken from an official demographic survey record of 1953 and are probably accurate. It should be noted that in 1919, Southern Kamerun had a larger population than Northern Kamerun. The change of position now is hard to explain.

On July 25, 1960, another branch of a Nigerian political party, the NCNC, joined the group to register yet another charge. This time it involved the alleged nullification of the results of local elections by a British Resident. When the local reforms, to be seen presently, were undertaken in Northern Kamerun after the first plebiscite, elections were held to the newly-formed numerous councils. In the Mubi District, it was alleged, NEPU won 16 out of the 24 contested seats and the NPC won 8. In the same District NEPU secured 14 seats out of the 19 contested seats to the Town Council, the NPC won 4, and one went to an independent candidate. This meant the party in favour of the Nigeria proposition had lost control of those two councils. On July 22-23, the District Officer virtually nullified the results of the elections by nominating village heads and traditional rulers, the a-Fon, to the councils.\* The NEPU members staged a walk-out.<sup>27</sup>

As the Northern Kamerun political leaders were busy protesting against the immediate second plebiscites, making recommendations about what ought to be done, and accusing the authorities in the region of malpractices, the British were busy introducing the administrative reforms in conformity with the United Nations' resolution. Northern Kamerun was carved into four administrative Divisions located entirely within the region. The four Divisions constituted one Province of Northern Nigeria. This new Province was under the Authority of a British Resident, the first time a British Official of this rank was resident in Northern Kamerun. Each Division had a

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\*The regulations connected with the administrative reforms gave the District Officers the right to appoint Special Members to the various councils. The choices of Special Members in this area might have been such as to make NEPU leaders suspicious and to regard the situation as a deliberate attempt to nullify their majority in the named councils.

Native Authority and under the Native Authorities were District Councils. Each Native Authority comprised several Districts. Both the Native Authorities and the District Councils were supervised by Administrative Officers, the British.<sup>28</sup> The groundwork for wooing had been set and indeed wooing had begun. Northern Kamerun administration had been separated from that of Northern Nigeria; although Northern Kamerun was, as a Province of Northern Nigeria, part of the Northern Region of Nigeria, the majority of the Northern Kamerunians, the a-Fon included, had not reached that level of understanding--local government, as Dr. Abdoh observed, was synonymous to them with government. Furthermore, the British Resident and Administrative Officers were now present in the region to protect the non-Fulani from the Fulani while the dissident Fulani thought they had recovered from their subordination to the Nigerian Fulani. In their minds, the separation of Northern Kamerun administration from Northern Nigeria, which was synonymous with the separation of Northern Kamerun from Nigeria as a whole, and the present direct administration by the British was tantamount to: in the case of the non-Fulani, the overthrow of the Fulani domination, and the overthrow of Islam which was a threat to their cultural identity and lives; and in the case of the dissident Fulani, the 'German time tyrants', it was the recovery of their authority and freedom from subordination to the Northern Nigeria Fulani. What remained to be done was to put their local affairs in their own hands. There were two steps which must be taken to accomplish this.

The first step was to determine how and who should sit in the governing bodies of the Native Authorities and the District and Town Councils. All the previous councils "which had been established under the method of indirect elections," were abolished, and the new councils--district, town,

and outer--had democratically "elected members," as well as the "nominated and ex officio members." In some cases, "former district heads found to be unacceptable to the people were withdrawn and were replaced by temporary appointments." In either event, the District Councils were given an opportunity "to confirm their acceptance of the district heads." The members of the Native Authority Councils were elected from the members who were already members of the District Councils. The heads or chairmen of the Native Authority Councils were approved by the District Councils. All the elections for these positions were based on adult male suffrage and secret ballot. The District Councils were composed of "a majority of elected members, a number of ex officio village heads [the a-Fon] and a number of nominated members representing special interests and minority groups." The Native Authority Councils were composed of "elected members (except in Dikwa), ex officio district or village heads [the a-Fon] and nominated members." All the ex officio members of the councils "were appointed in consultation with the district councils within the particular Native Authority and with the elected members of the Authority." Each council was responsible for choosing its own Chairman or President.<sup>29</sup>

Free, direct, and secret elections in Northern Kamerun proper, without reference to Nigeria, had never been heard of. Now it happened. Northern Kamerunians as a whole for the first time had been consulted in their local affairs. Northern Kamerunians, a-Fon and their literate or illiterate subjects, were now in control of their local affairs, a thing to be protected. The undesired "district and village heads and staff were dismissed or retired.";<sup>30</sup> this meant the previously dismissed true a-Fon of Mambilla came back. At the grass-roots level, therefore, the people of the particular area

had both their affairs in their hands and those they desired over them.

Twenty a-Fon from the former regime were dismissed and 15 of them imprisoned during the time of the second plebiscite.<sup>31</sup> All this came by the grace of the British who now would administer the region directly. The a-Fon and their subjects and the dissident Fulani had been effectively wooed. But, all this would have no meaning unless the people actively participated in the administration.

The next task was, therefore, to provide the new authorities with functions. The Native Authorities had some lucrative functions. In general, they were "responsible for the levying of taxes for local services, the appointment of local government staff, local education and health services, maintenance of law and order, agriculture and veterinary services," and the appointment of numerous committees to help them in their functions. The District Councils could "levy rates for certain public services, engage, control and discipline their staffs," and they could make recommendations to the Native Authorities regarding "adult education, reading rooms, communal forests, nurseries, roads, sanitary services." The newly created Mambilla council had more powers than the others; "besides having an important advisory function to the Gashaka-Mambilla Native Authority, [it] levies tax for local services." The a-Fon, "the lowest ranking Native Authority officials," collected taxes, and assisted in the "maintenance of law and order, reporting deaths, births, marriages," to name only these.<sup>32</sup> The task was complete.

The wooing process, one of the two most important aspects of the second plebiscite, can now be summarized. In the minds of the Northern Kamerunians, the a-Fon and their subjects and the dissident Fulani, Northern Kamerun was separated from Northern Nigeria and Nigeria. They were thus surely protected



from the Northern Nigerian Fulani and Islam. The British administrators in the region had come to protect them from the local Fulani and Islam. They were now actively masters of their own affairs. The British had given them all this and the British must be retained to protect the gift. In any event, the reforms were now completed and the Northern Kamerunians had received what they asked for in the 1959 plebiscite.

As soon as the reforms were completed, the campaigns for the second plebiscite got off the ground. As was the case during the 1959 campaigns, Sir John Dring, the British Plebiscite Administrator for Northern Kamerun, allowed the local branches of Nigerian political parties to participate. This might have been acceptable if three conditions were fulfilled: if these local branches which came together and formed a Consortium, comprising NPC, NEPU, NCNC, and AG,\* for the purpose of the plebiscites cut off links with their mother branches; if their Nigerian supporters in Northern Kamerun had not taken part in the campaigns; and, if Dring had treated the NKDP/KFP as he treated them. But, as will be seen presently, none of these conditions was fulfilled. Instead, Dring allowed the Northern Nigerian Minister of Local Government in the Northern Region of Nigeria to take leave of absence from his post, come to Northern Kamerun, organize and direct the activities of the Consortium "working for the Union of the Territory with Nigeria."<sup>33</sup> This did not take place in Southern Kamerun.

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\*It is important to note that these local branches in 1959 supported a future decision but in the second plebiscite, they received instructions from their headquarters and joined forces with the NPC with whom they were in opposition in 1959. This shows Nigerian interests in the plebiscite.

†See footnote 33.

The Plebiscite Administrator himself seemed to have been particularly interested in the integration of Northern Kamerun with Northern Nigeria. One of the instruments he used to this effect was the law. The law dealing with permits, which was the only one used in 1959, has already been indicated. In 1961, another law was added to the list to reinforce the first. As Dr. Abdoh described it,

. . . section 393 of the Penal Code of the Northern Region of Nigeria . . . refers to 'injurious falsehood' and gives the Native Authorities the power to punish with imprisonment for terms of up to two years ' any person who, by words either spoken or reproduced by mechanical means or intended to be read or by signs or by visible representations, makes or publishes any false statement of fact, intending to . . . harm the reputation of . . . the Government or of any Native Authority . . . or of any local government authority. [It] places the burden of proof that a statement is substantially true on the accused and confers on the Court the power to decide whether a statement is a statement of fact or a mere expression of opinion and, consequently confers on the Native Authorities, and through them on the Native Courts, virtually arbitrary powers of adjudication.

This law was first applied during the second plebiscite against six known supporters of NKDP before Dr. Abdoh arrived in Northern Kamerun. According to Dring's explanation, the majority of them were simply criminals. One was arrested for contempt of court; (what brought him to court in the first place was not indicated.) Another was arrested for cutting down without permission a protected tree. A third was arrested for delivering a lecture without a permit (a continuation of the 1959 situation). The fourth threatened to kill the son of a man who had killed his father. A fifth made trouble and misinformed the people "concerning the Native Authority Court." The sixth, "the Organizing Secretary of the NKDP at Jada, on charges of subversion and sedition." If it was by accident that all these six 'criminals' were supporters of the Cameroun proposition, then accidents in the

Northern Kamerun of the plebiscite period had a logic of their own.

When Dring's attention was drawn to the continued arrests, on November 21, 1960, he merely asked for the transfer of the charges "at the discretion of the Resident and the Senior District Officer, from the Native Court to the Court of next appellate instance." Prosecution under section 393 would then take place "only with the advice of the Legal Secretary of the Northern Cameroons".

When the trials subsequently took place, the following were convicted for the following offences. Suleiman Salihu, Organizing Secretary of the NKDP at Jada, for making a speech on October 10, 1960, and "inciting his listeners to violence and riot against the constituted authority of the Government, quoting the Congo as an example to follow"--he was sentenced for one year, hard labour; (the main pillar of the NKDP campaign had been removed and denied the vote). Mallam Hamman Jalo was arrested for drinking\* and later for holding a public meeting without a permit; his sentence is not known. Usman Bake Micika received six months for holding a public meeting without a permit; (he was thus denied the right to campaign and to vote). Saidu Gulak received six months for an offence under section 393 of the Penal Code; (he too lost the rights to campaign and vote). Zira Baki Zaggara was sentenced for six months for refusing to answer a summons. Tumba was sentenced for three months for holding a public meeting without a permit. Fayamu Gulak and Abba Gana Gulak were "arrested by the police in Mubi on the charge of assault on the son of a Head Man who had been sent by his father to enquire about the meeting which the local leaders of the NKDP

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\*Muslims are not supposed to drink alcohol in public.

in the Gulak-Madagali area had organized"; their sentences are not known. Daniel Njenwe, Vice-President of the KFP, was charged under section 393 with uttering falsehood but was released on bail. While all these were supporters of the Cameroun proposition, a search has not produced a single case where any supporter of the Nigeria proposition was either arrested or tried under similar conditions; at least, none of them reported it.

Dr. Abdoh became worried over this situation and suggested to Dring that cases involving political offences should be punishable by fines instead of prison sentences, "in order not to deprive persons charged with such offences from participation in the campaign." On December 2, 1960, Dring turned down the request. He, Dring, "found it difficult to expose his views on the Native Courts, because, as with any judicial organ, they should be independent. At the same time he wished to avoid giving political parties an opportunity to undermine the authority of the Native Authorities and Native Courts."

There are many examples of such arrests and imprisonment,\* but they involved mainly the most effective campaigners of the NKDP/KFP. Due to want of space the discussion of them would be summed up by the United Nations Plebiscites Commissioner himself.

It is an inescapable fact that prior to the introduction of the modifications concerning the application of section 393, it was open to Native Courts to use the provisions of this section as a powerful weapon. If they so wished, they could arrest and bring speedily to trial persons affiliated with or supporting political views which were different from those held by the Native Authorities. This section, frequently misunderstood by Native Courts, had created particular confusion when applied to cases involving the issuance

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\*See for example, U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, pp. 199-204 which involved 29 persons and a further 47 persons.

of permits for public meetings and to cases involving the allegations of 'injurious falsehood' attributed to the speeches made by members or adherents of the NKDP and KFP.

Arrests, trials, and imprisonment were not, however, the only way by which the proponents of reunification were frustrated. As in 1959, the refusal of permits to them was used extensively. At best, they were delayed. This occurred so often that both the United Nations Liaison Officer and Plebiscites Commissioner were forced to make repeated appeals to Dring to remedy the situation. Dring refused to respond for a long time. When he acted, he merely promised to issue "a proclamation whereby Native Authorities were required to grant a permit for any public assembly." However, he immediately nullified the proposed proclamation with "unless the Native Authority was satisfied that a breach of the peace was likely to arise from such an assembly." Aside from this phrase which rendered barren the proposed proclamation the process was so long as to be of no use. Within twenty-four hours, applicants for permits would be informed about the decision by the District Head or appropriate Native Authorities. If this was unavailing, the applicant could appeal to a Superior Police Officer (who was Nigerian). If there was "no question of a threat to or the breakdown of the maintenance of peace, security and order," the Police Officer could overrule the Native Authority and force a permit to be granted. "No permit could, however, be issued to persons who were ineligible to register in the plebiscite." This procedure took so much time that the proclamation was almost useless. If Dring was willing to remedy the situation, he would have merely abrogated the law.

Not surprisingly, however, the proclamation remained on paper. The Liaison Officer in Mubi continued to receive complaints from the NKDP/KFP.

leaders that they were being denied permits. On November 21, 1960, the Liaison Officer brought the continued problem to Dring. "As it happened, the proclamation had not even been issued, although the text had been in the hands of the printer for a full month. It was not until 2 December that the proclamation and instructions of the Administrator were published and distributed to the Native Authorities." Thus the proclamation was issued only six weeks to the voting day.

The proclamation, when it came, did not mean the problem was solved. As late as January 21, 1961, three weeks to voting, the NKDP/KFP were still refused permits on the grounds that the lectures would take place on market days and market places. Nonetheless, referring to the Southern Kamerun, his headquarters, the Plebiscite Commissioner remarked that, "Once the campaign was in full swing, hardly a market day went by without a lecture being given by either group of parties." Indeed, market days and market places in all of Kamerun are precisely best suited for messages to reach mass audiences. Furthermore, the Plebiscite Commissioner made an investigation and found that in two districts, Mubi and Cubunawa/Madagali, the NKDP/KFP made 35 applications and 12 of them (34%) were denied them. On the other hand, the Consortium made 86 applications in the same districts and only 2 of them (about 2%) were denied them.

As close as two weeks to the voting day, the supporters of the Cameroun proposition continued to be harassed. On January 28, 1961, three women supporters of the NKDP visited one of the NKDP leaders. On their way back home, they were accused of creating "a disturbance grave enough to lead to their arrest." The next day, January 29, 1961, when they were being tried, their husbands and numerous men came to listen to the trial but were accused

of attempting "to force their way" into the court. None of the United Nations Plebiscite team was able to ascertain either "the reasons for trying the women in the Native court, or . . . the dispositions made in their cases." Nevertheless, all the 34 people who had come to listen to the case were arrested, tried, and "found guilty of attempting to intimidate the native court by a show of force." Four of them were sentenced to two months imprisonment on each of the two counts (enough time to deny them the vote). The remaining 30 were fined £30 each on each of the two counts and given fourteen days to raise the money. Indeed, section 393 of the Penal Code "did not appear to be applied with restraint" against the "supporters of the proposition favouring the Republic of Cameroun."

In his proposed proclamation on the issue of permits, Dring insisted that no permits would be given "to persons who were ineligible to register in the plebiscite." Yet, the Information Department of the Government of Northern Nigeria was campaigning in the plebiscite. The NKDP protested to the Plebiscites Commissioner that this "constituted an interference by the Northern Regional Government." When Dr. Abdoh brought this to Dring's attention, the latter argued that the posters from that Department which exhorted people in Hausa to vote for Nigeria were printed prior to the separation of Northern Kamerun administration from that of Northern Nigeria. It was, therefore, difficult, "at that stage, to remove all such posters." It should be noted that Dring's explanation hinged on the difficulty of removing all such posters at that stage of the game.

This difficulty would not apply in the case of the proponents of the Cameroun proposition. Early in December 1960, the NKDP produced two posters, possibly printed in Cameroun Republic but translated into Hausa. The posters

outlined the advantages of reunification and the proposed constitution of a reunified Kamerun. One of these posters mentioned Nigeria to the effect that Northern Kamerun did not benefit from its association with Nigeria and asked the electorate whether they wished to be deceived to stay in the same situation. None of these posters bore either the author's name or the place of origin. The Consortium complained about the posters and Dr. Abdoh drew Dring's attention to it. Dring went in search of a law to apply against the posters. He touched on the matter lightly on December 22, 1960. But on January 3, 1961, he pursued the matter further and argued that, in the Commonwealth, "printing presses were required to make a declaration to the authorities [and] every paper printed within the Territory concerned was required to bear the name and address of the printer and, if the paper was to be published, the name and address of the publisher." The law did not apply to "papers printed outside the Territory." Ordinarily, however, such papers would be "prohibited imports under the Penal Code." Though such a measure would be open to objection on several counts, "he would have to insist that posters and pamphlets circulated . . . should bear the printer's and publisher's identity . . . no extraneous factors should be permitted to interfere with the free expression of wishes of the people of the Territory." Dring's personal activities, those of the Northern Nigeria Minister of Local Government, and those of the Nigerians and Northern Nigerian Information Department in Dring's view were not extraneous factors.

Since no law existed which could be used to harry the NKDP over the posters, Dring, overnight, on January 7, 1961, manufactured one called "A Law to Provide for the Regulation of Political Publications." This law "required persons or organizations wishing to publish printed matter of a



political nature to notify the Administrator of the name and address of the persons wishing to conduct a meeting, and to deposit with him two copies of the text prior to publication." The publication itself should bear the name of the printer and publisher upon its face. This was followed by an enumeration of penalties "to be meted out to offenders." The purpose of the new law (a law without Royal Assent) was to identify "those responsible for publishing and printing political publications." It remains to be added that it might have been meant to identify those who would publish "injurious falsehood."

The purpose of the law and those against whom it was fabricated were soon to be known. Early in February, 1961, a few days to voting, the NKDP came out with a poster which, according to Dring, broke the Law of January 7, 1961, because it was deliberately intended, so he said, to mislead the population. The text of the poster was identical to one of those mentioned above. Indeed, except for its mention of Nigeria to the effect that the association of Northern Kamerun with Nigeria was unbeneficial to Northern Kamerun and that Northern Kamerunians should not be misled into voting for the Nigeria proposition, the poster concentrated on the advantages to be gained from reunification. But its authors did break the law in one respect. They refused to deposit two copies with Dring prior to its publication. Apart from this aspect, they complied with every other aspect of the law. Nevertheless, Dring summoned the NKDP/KFP leaders at once "and asked them to remove immediately all such posters already exhibited in the Territory and to desist from exhibiting the others." The difficulty of removing all such posters which obtained with the posters of the Northern Nigerian Information Department at an earlier stage of the game no longer existed at a

later stage in the case of the NKDP/KFP.

This was, however, just one way of making sure the NKDP/KFP campaign did not benefit from extraneous factors. Early in the campaign, the NKDP/KFP campaign went badly because it had no financial and transportation facilities. When their leaders appealed to Ahmadu Ahidjo, President of the Cameroun Republic, he provided them with these facilities. Dring initially allowed vehicles with Cameroun plates to travel freely into and within Northern Kamerun. This did a lot to improve the campaign situation of the NKDP/KFP. But, a new regulation appeared. These vehicles now had to produce "certain documents issued by authorities in Yola and Maiduguri," both in Nigeria (and at the other end of the region separating Nigeria from Cameroun Republic). The documents included registration cards, insurance policies, and driving permits. This was an effective way of excluding these vehicles from Northern Kamerun. Since these vehicles must be left at the border until the documents were produced, the drivers must trek for days to obtain the documents from Nigeria. This took time. Moreover, there was no guarantee that the documents would be provided; if they could, then what was the necessity for the regulation? Furthermore these vehicles were being required to have double registration, one in Nigeria and the other in Cameroun. Due to this regulation, "vehicles being used in the Northern Cameroons by advocates of the Cameroun proposition and coming from the Republic of Cameroun [were] systematically detained at the border after 1 October, 1960." It is important to note that this was occurring when Northern Kamerun was officially administratively separated from Northern Nigeria and Nigeria as a whole.

Dr. Abdoh brought this situation to the attention of Dring who "by that

time, was already apprised of the complaint." Dring then asserted that instructions "had been issued to the police to permit vehicles from the Republic of Cameroun to enter the Northern Cameroons freely." But there was a catch: "subject to the registration of vehicles . . . with the Resident of the Northern Cameroons." Nothing substantially was, therefore, altered. The Resident was resident in Mubi. To be sure, the trekking distance was shortened. But the trekking, the probability of not receiving the registration, and the loss of time remained.

At the same time that Dring was barring Cameroun vehicles from the region, Nigerian vehicles operated in the region. The Northern Nigerian Information Department established a centre operated by a British expatriate official (no longer an extraneous factor) employed by the Government of the Northern Region of Nigeria. This centre promoted the Nigeria proposition, distributing posters and leaflets to that effect, and its "loudspeaker vans" visited, "under its auspices, the various districts of the Territory for the same purpose." When Dr. Abdoh suggested that the centre be abolished, Dring refused to do so and instead retorted that Cameroun could establish a similar centre in the region if it wished. Dr. Abdoh also heard from the Plebiscite Liaison Officer of the Cameroun Republic on February 7, 1961, that eight days to voting, February 3, 1961, the Resident, the highest British Authority in Northern Kamerun, accompanied by the Senior District Officer, visited Siguel, called the people to a meeting, campaigned for the Nigeria proposition, and warned that punishment "would be meted out to village heads [a-Fon] whose people voted in favour of union with the Republic of Cameroun." On February 12, 1961, Dring described the "allegations" as "completely unfounded and untrue." The Resident "had called the meeting to explain to the people

the importance of the plebiscite and the value of the vote." Since both Dring and the Plebiscite Liaison Officer of the Cameroun Republic were interested parties, it is difficult to say for sure what really happened.

Unlike in Southern Kamerun where voting took place in one day, February 11, 1961, voting took place in Northern Kamerun in two days, February 11 and 12. The British gave two reasons for this approach. Northern Kamerun husbands were "unwilling that their villages be left unguarded throughout an entire day when the population went to vote, and the men did not want their wives meeting in close proximity with other men around the polling stations." One would have therefore expected the men to vote on one day and the women on another. But, "Generally speaking men and women voted on both days in most areas, although there were a few stations where men voted on the first day and women on a second day." John Ngu Foncha, Sam Mofor, and Benedict S. Lawon, all of Southern Kamerun, later charged that the two-day plebiscite allowed Nigerian residents in the region to vote twice.<sup>34</sup>

Despite the fact that Dr. Abdoh's impartiality was widely acknowledged both at the United Nations and in Kamerun, Dring attempted to involve him in some uncertain activity. This took the form of another suggested law. About January 16, 1961, Dring suggested to the United Nations Plebiscite Commission that

No petition based upon the grounds specified in sub-paragraph (a) and (b) of paragraph 1 shall be entertained by the Court unless the Administrator, after consultation with the United Nations Commissioner, certifies that it is a petition, the determination of which might materially affect the results of voting in any registration area.

The existing law or regulation did not give Dring the power to certify that a petition was a petition before it could be heard by the court.

Any person who--(a) complains that any person who was not a registered

voter voted in the plebiscite; or (b) being a registered voter, complains that his vote was only accepted as a vote on the tendered votes list; or (c) complains that any corrupt or illegal practice, bribery, treating or undue influence, within the meaning given to those expressions in the Regulations has taken place in any registration area may petition the Court which exercises jurisdiction in respect of the area to which the petition relate: Provided that no petition may include matters which relate to more than one registration area.<sup>35</sup>

Dring's attempt to nullify this regulation with his new proposition speaks for itself and needs no further comment. In any case, Dr. Abdoh refused to be party to the suggestion. The only modification Abdoh agreed to was that the decisions of the courts be transmitted to Dring who should forward a copy to Abdoh. After the plebiscite, Dring informed Abdoh "that he had received no voting petitions within the time limit established." It is thus difficult to escape the conclusion that Dring's personal activities, if personal they were, rendered the conduct of the plebiscite almost sterile.

But it was not Dring's activities alone which interfered with the free and effective conduct of the plebiscites. The local authorities of Northern Kamerun contributed greatly to the irregularities involved. Furthermore, aside from the suspicion and allegations involved in the plebiscites on the part of the opponents of the Nigeria proposition, the campaign speeches of all the political parties bore but little resemblance to the plebiscite questions.

Two unidentified posters, with strong indications that they were unwisely put up in 1959 by the NPC, the only party which campaigned in favour of the Nigeria proposition, made Government the issue at the plebiscite. The headline of one of them read, "IT IS YOUR DUTY AS A CITIZEN TO VOTE IN THE PLEBISCITE SO THAT YOU CAN DECIDE HOW THE NORTHERN CAMEROONS WILL BE GOVERNED."<sup>36</sup> The second one seems to indicate the authors. It began by

asking who was then "responsible for the government" of Northern Kamerun. Then the answer followed. It was "governed under a Trusteeship Agreement" drawn up by Britain and the United Nations. Under the Agreement, the region was "administered as an integral part of the Northern Region because [it] was not large enough to be a country on its own." Six elected Northern Kamerunians were 'representing' the region in the House of Assembly at Kaduna. One of them was the Minister for Northern Cameroons Affairs whose function was "to look after the interests of the people of this area." Other Northern Kamerunians had been elected to the "Federal House of Representatives at Lagos to represent the people of the Northern Cameroons in the Federal Government." The Northern Nigerian Government was administering Northern Kamerun only "as the agent of Her Majesty's Government."<sup>37</sup> Unwisely again the NPC added that when Nigeria became independent, the Trusteeship Agreement would be modified, Northern Nigeria would cease to administer Northern Kamerun, and the region would be administered "for the well-being of its peoples under Trusteeship Agreement."<sup>38</sup>

It was unfortunate that the NPC made government the issue of the 1959 plebiscites. As Dr. Abdoh explained, government at the grass-roots level was interchangeable with local administration. The a-Fon had had more than enough to worry about in the local administration controlled either by the Fulani or the usurpers of the Fondoms. In making government the issue of the plebiscite and adding that if Nigeria became independent Northern Kamerun would continue under trusteeship, the NPC played into the hands of the UMBC/AG. The Nigerian Daily Times, Lagos, August 4, 1959, reported that in a two-day conference, all the political parties in Northern Kamerun, except the NPC, decided that Northern Kamerun must continue in a period of

trusteeship, and the UMBC in particular declared that "it was their policy to break away from the North."<sup>39</sup> Although the NPC sent out a campaign team of Northern Nigerians to campaign for "two weeks in the northern portion of the Trust Territory," centering their campaign "on the advantages to be derived by the Trust Territory, in continued association with Nigeria,"<sup>40</sup> these advantages had no meaning for the a-Fon under the Fulani and without the British protectors. Nor did the advantages mean anything to the dissident Fulani who resented their subordination to the Nigeria Fulani.

If the NPC made government the issue of the 1959 plebiscite, the parties which campaigned apparently in favour of making a decision in the future, amplified the disadvantages of continuing under the existing government. Fon V.H. Bang reported in 1958 that no one in Northern Kamerun could hold a contrary idea "under Fulani rule," and that he led the Mambilla a-Fon to separate from Northern Kamerun because of "too much [Fulani] suppression."<sup>41</sup>

But, it was the NKDP which, in 1959, made much out of the Fulani oppression and made government the central issue of the plebiscite. Northern Kamerun administered as a part of Nigeria, was "the most ill-treated people in the whole Federation of Nigeria." Some of the legislators who represented Northern Kamerun in the Nigerian legislatures were Nigerians. Their a-Fon "had been deposed and replaced by Northern Nigerians." These new chiefs did "not care about the welfare of the people." Their entire wish was to "secede from the Federation of Nigeria," and to "continue under a modified form of U.K. Trusteeship agreement during which time [they would] determine [their] future." Every authority in Northern Kamerun was a Nigerian. Their a-Fon were being ignored.<sup>42</sup> Two weeks after the vote, they requested the United Nations to develop them politically, socially, culturally, and

educationally. This was because their "long link with Nigeria" brought them nothing good but "backwardness, poverty and sickness."<sup>43</sup> In one word, the parties which favoured the idea of a future decision in 1959 centred their campaign on local issues around local administration and the under-development of the region.

The situation was identical in 1961. The parties which campaigned for the Nigeria proposition offered the electorate the government of the period, the reformed administration. That is the government in which the British were involved as protectors, in which the councils--Native Authority, District, Town, and Outer--were almost fully controlled by the Northern Kamerunians, Fulani and non-Fulani alike, with the a-Fon sitting as equals of the former Fulani rulers, in which even the a-Fon had to be consulted before any decision, and in which even the a-Fon and their subjects had active functions to perform in the administration. As these parties put it themselves, when it was rumoured that Cameroun Republic was attempting to have the results nullified, "We have elected our Native Authorities and want to keep them. We do not want the Cameroon Republic."<sup>44</sup> The democratic element in the existing government, actually local administration, was stressed. "MUBI NATIVE AUTHORITY DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT OBJECTS ATTACK ON ITS SERVANTS IN CAMEROUN BOOK\* REJECTS CAMEROON CLAIM TO THIS TERRITORY."<sup>45</sup>

On the other hand, the NKDP/KFP offered the electorate a constitution and advantages to be gained from reunification. The proposed constitution

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\*After the 1961 plebiscite, the Cameroun Government compiled a list of irregularities involved in the conduct of the plebiscite in an effort to have the plebiscite nullified. Sections of this booklet accused the current local authorities of some irregularities. This is probably the BOOK referred to here.



provided for a reunified Kamerun outside the Commonwealth and the French Community. A reunified Kamerun would be an independent Federation with "its own emblem, its own National Anthem, and its own flag." None of the Regions of the Federation would have power over the other and all would be equal. Each Region would have its own Government and House of Representatives. Northern Kamerun could either have its own Region or unify with Southern Kamerun.<sup>46</sup>

The advantages to be gained from reunification were set out in the poster which Dring described as 'intended to mislead the public.' In the event of reunification, Kamerunians would rule their country themselves, Northern Kamerun would continue its education in English, and its "customs" and position of service in their country would not be changed. Its children would have more education because they would be given "scholarships to different countries in the world." Kamerun was previously one country and Northern Kamerunians had been given a chance "to join with [their] brothers." The last forty years brought nothing to Northern Kamerun "except suffering." The Northern Kamerunians should not be deceived "to return to the former position" of suffering. All taxes then paid were too high and a vote for Cameroun would reduce the taxes. There was no reason to return to Nigeria after rejecting it in 1959. Cameroun was a rich country which would share its wealth with Northern Kamerun. A vote for Cameroun was a vote for their country and a vote for themselves as well.<sup>47</sup> The conduct of the second Northern Kamerun plebiscite was now over. It was left for the electorate to play their part.

However, it is important at this juncture to note the conditions and characteristics of the conduct of the plebiscite. The second plebiscite was

fought, as shown by the available evidence, when the reformed local administration was largely in the hands of Northern Kamerunians, Fulani and non-Fulani; or at least, the local inhabitants were actively involved in the administration. Britishers were present in the region more than ever before as administrators--Resident and District Officers. This gave the impression that Northern Kamerun had been separated, if not from Nigeria as a whole, then from Northern Nigeria at least and, that the British were now ruling the region directly. The conduct of the plebiscite was characterized: by the abuse of power directed mainly against the political leaders who supported the Cameroun proposition and a few of their outspoken supporters; and by suspicion and accusation directed against the British and the local authorities.

#### The Conduct of the Southern Kamerun Plebiscite 1959-1961

If suspicion, accusation, and the abuse of power were elements in the conduct of the Northern Kamerun plebiscites, these same elements were much more common in that of Southern Kamerun. All the organizers in Southern Kamerun, except the leaders of the OK, which had no power to abuse, took advantage of their positions or authority. Moreover, far more accusations and much more distrust were evident during the campaign in Southern Kamerun.

It was the Southern Kamerun integrationists who began to take advantage of their positions or authority when they were in power. Their target was the UPC and, later, the OK. Even before the dissolution of the UPC, that party had gone through strange experiences in the political history of Southern Kamerun. On June 3, 1956, the authorities confiscated a large

amount of its funds. On August 4, 1956, its offices in Bamenda were destroyed by fire. On December 12, 1956, those in Santa suffered the same fate.<sup>48</sup> The UPC blamed everything on the British agents in Southern Kamerun. The British, on their part, denied any involvement and tended to blame everything on people coming across the border from Eastern Kamerun. Those involved were never actually known but, it appeared that the culprits were Southern Kamerunians themselves; the UPC was becoming very unpopular. But the confiscation of the funds was not in doubt; it was the authorities who searched UPC offices and confiscated funds and materials.

When more of these searches were carried out in early 1957 and the UPC stormed the United Nations with petitions, the British were forced to offer an explanation. The searches which took place on February 25, 1957, were carried out because the "Police had reason to believe that a number of typewriters which had been reported stolen from the Cameroons under French Administration might be found in the offices of the UPC in the Cameroons under British Administration." No typewriters were found, "but during the search prohibited literature was found, and a number of documents, most of which were in French, were removed for examination."<sup>49</sup>

When the UPC was declared illegal, the authorities once more confiscated its funds and property. After the Trusteeship Council received several petitions protesting the act, it asked the British to explain what happened with the confiscated funds and property. The explanation was readily available. Section 67 of the Criminal Code provided that "all property of a society declared to be unlawful becomes invested in an officer appointed by the Governor-General who is required to wind up the affairs of the society and, after defraying all debts and liabilities of the society and the cost

of winding it up, to apply the surplus assets in such a manner as the Governor-General may approve." When the debts of the UPC and its associate organizations were paid off, and their property sold, the cash assets amounted to approximately £1,000 and 115,000 francs. The amount was used in transporting "the thirteen leading members of the societies who were deported" to the Sudan.<sup>50</sup> While this amount of money appears to be too large for the transporting of thirteen persons from Kamerun to Sudan at the period, it is also doubtful whether the way the money was used might not also be queried.

Except for this isolated case of the confiscated funds and property, the British refused to offer any observations on any petitions originating from any member of the UPC or its associate organizations after May 30, 1957. The rationale was that these were already illegal organizations with which the British could not deal. That was the excuse, for instance, that the British used to refuse to comment on a petition written by Ngambus, Vice-President of the Cameroons Democratic Youth, Kumba Branch.<sup>51</sup>

Once the UPC had been dissolved as a political party, its former supporters were still subjected to arrests which usually ended in their execution, not by the British but by the French. Very often policemen moved into villages without wearing police uniforms and acted as 'agents provocateurs' in order to identify undesirables. Once identified, their arrests followed. This was how Tenguia Richard Reclus was arrested in December 1958, in his Tombel shelter where he was avoiding the French. This was how Isaac Tchoupé and Pierre Simo were also arrested.<sup>52</sup> These arrests were followed by repatriation to Eastern Kamerun. There Pierre Simo was executed on or about June 10, 1959, and Isaac Tchoupé on Friday, August 14,

1959.<sup>53</sup> This was also how Kamto Donald, Kemden Justin, Marcus Mondì, James Pega, and Jean Djomo who had sought asylum in Southern Kamerun sanctuary also died.

The British explained their action of sending people to their death in legal terms. Kamto Donald was arrested on March 2, 1958, "for the unauthorized carriage of [private] mails, in contravention of section 176 of the Criminal Code." Kemden Justin was arrested the same day for "being in possession of poisonous drugs in contravention of section 59 of the Pharmacy Ordinance." The rest who were repatriated were prohibited immigrants who had entered Southern Kamerun illegally. Others were imprisoned for criminal offences. Marcus Mondì and James Pega were arrested at Santa on December 13, 1958, "detained and given two weeks and all necessary facilities to make their own arrangements to leave the Southern Cameroons." After that, "they would be placed on the first convenient ship, aircraft, motor or other vehicles to leave Nigeria."<sup>54</sup> If it was by accident that all these 'criminals' were former supporters of the UPC, then accidents in the Southern Kamerun of the time had a special logic of their own.

When the UPC transformed into the OK, its leader, Ntumazah, also went through some strange experiences. One of these involved the difficulty of obtaining a passport to travel to the United Nations. He, as was the case with Moumié, alleged that he was usually denied passports to the United Nations. When given, they were usually delayed in such a way as to make the journey useless. Moreover, when given, they had very unreasonable conditions such as requiring him to deposit his passport with the Government in Lagos, Nigeria, and to start all over again when he wanted to travel the next time.<sup>55</sup> The British answered this charge very easily. Ntumazah applied for passports to the UN.

to the Nigerian Government and received them. (The British were quiet about the delay and the conditions therein.) Moumié was denied passports because he was not a British subject.<sup>56</sup>

The integrationists also entered into informal alliances with some of the a-Fon to frustrate the leaders of the OK. An example was the informal alliance between Endeley and the Fon of Nso. In this alliance, Endeley's Government undertook to support the Fon against his traditional rivals on the understanding that the Fon supported integration with Nigeria. Nso was the largest Fondom in Western Kamerun with an estimated population of 80,000 in early 1960 (126,000 voted in the 1973 general elections in Nso). The Fon was facing some challenge from Shufai Ndzendzevf,\* whose name was Njodzeka, and who was second to the Fon in command of Nso. Endeley took sides in favour of the Fon. It was, it seems, because of this alliance, which lasted until the Fon Sehm III (his real name was Mbinglo) died in 1972, that Sehm III prevented the OK of Nso from meeting the United Nations' Mission of 1958. Sehm III ordered the seizure of the OK placards, and prevented J.T. Lawong, Nso OK leader, and its supporters both from presenting petitions to the Mission and from having interviews with the Mission.<sup>57</sup> In this way, a Nso family affair was exploited in favour of integration with Nigeria. It is important to note that no serious attempts were ever made during this period to settle the problem. Indeed, it was only in 1969-1970 that the squabble was settled.

One further way the OK was harassed was subjecting its offices to

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\*Shufai means Lord and Ndzendzevf is the name of the family; Shufai Ndzendzevf, therefore, means Lord of Ndzendzevf.

arbitrary searches, and, it was alleged, over-taxing some of its supporters, seizing some of its funds, and arresting some of its leaders on the grounds that they belonged to an organization which no longer existed.<sup>58</sup> The British gave explanations for some, not all, of these charges. Jean Djomo, Treasurer of the OK, was arrested and the funds he had with him seized, because he transgressed "some specific provision of the law and not because of [his] membership of the OK Party which is not an illegal organization"; he was "charged with being a member of an unlawful society (the proscribed UPC)."<sup>59</sup> Epeyé Bulu Yoko was originally assessed the flat tax rate of £1.10s.0d. Later on, because he did not give particulars about his income, he was assessed £6.11s.3d. on an income of £320 per year. He did not appeal. Alphonse Njomo was originally assessed £2.5s.0d. on an income of £120 per year. Later, this was changed to £5.16s.3d. on an income of £310 per year. He appealed, "but it was out of time and was not heard." Bufok Ofan John was assessed to pay £2.5s.0d. on an income of £12- per year and he lodged no appeal.<sup>60</sup> It is important to note that all these were workers in the OK offices.

Patronage, which was unknown in the Southern Kamerun system, was also practised. For example, the constitution provided that Special Members would be appointed to represent interests otherwise not represented in the Parliament. One of such appointees was to be a woman representative. Some time between July and August, Endeley recommended the appointment of Dorcas Ekowole Idowu and she was appointed to the Parliament. Idowu was a Southern Kamerunian born in 1903 and was married to a Nigerian in 1919. The Southern Kamerun Women's organization, a rejuvenation of the dissolved UPC women affiliate organization, mistook Idowu for a Nigerian and challenged the

appointment.<sup>61</sup> The British had no problem proving that she was a Southern Kamerunian. But, they argued that she was appointed because she was active in public life, being the "Leader of the Victoria Branch of the Kamerun National Congress [KNC] Women's Section." Her appointment was advised by "the Commissioner of the Cameroons and the Leader of Government Business in the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly."<sup>62</sup> As an active supporter of the KNC, this Special Member was expected to vote in favour of integration with Nigeria in the Parliament.

As the January 24, 1959, general elections drew nearer, the integrationists did several things to prevent the KNDP from winning the elections. Since these have been dealt with in chapter three, the reader will only be reminded here about them. The introduction of the ministerial system of government was a step in that direction. The use of government vehicles and Government Information Service for campaign by the Government Party was unjustifiable. The manipulation of the electoral districts was one of these acts. One of those attempts which has not yet been dealt with was the discrimination in voters' qualifications for that election. Nigerians with two years of residence in Southern Kamerun registered and voted with ease. On the other hand, Eastern Kamerunians resident in Southern Kamerun had to be in the region continuously for ten years and produce tax slips to that effect before being allowed to vote. Even when they satisfied these requirements, it was alleged, registration forms were always exhausted when they were around and available when Nigerians came.<sup>63</sup> In spite of all these frustrations and alleged frustrations Foncha still arrived at Government House and much of this power now fell into his hands.

But, before Foncha began to abuse his own power, the OK had issued



several accusations against the way the British were organizing the plebiscite. The first accusation involved the revision of the register for the plebiscite. It was alleged that everything possible was done to employ only people with integrationist sympathies to act as registration clerks. These clerks then did everything possible to register or rather give the vote to as few secessionists and reunificationists as possible.\* One way of doing this was to continue pretending, when the undesirables came around, that registration forms were not available.<sup>64</sup> When the British were questioned in the Trusteeship Council about the charge, they argued accurately that the majority of "registration clerks were Cameroonians but in a few cases, where there were large numbers of non-Cameroonians resident, persons of Nigerian descent but resident in the Southern Cameroons, were appointed. The clerk in the Misselele registration district [where the charge originated] was one of these."<sup>65</sup>

The OK was also very suspicious of the limited time allotted to registration for the plebiscite. For a vast area like Southern Kamerun with very poor means of communication and transportation, only a few weeks for registration were allotted. The OK protested against the limited time. The OK looked with "suspicion at the fact that the Registration for the February, 1961, plebiscite which starts on October 26, 1960, will last only a few

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\*The secessionist and reunificationist registration clerks handled this act very effectively. When they went to areas known to be secessionist or reunificationist, they registered people who died several years earlier and babies in the womb. Who voted for these groups of people and how is still mysterious. The present writer discovered this personally at Ibar, Oku, Nso, when he went there as a presiding officer during the first Presidential elections of the Cameroon Federal Republic when the plebiscite was over and reunification effected.

weeks." It felt that since one and a half million people would be deciding their fate, the registration period should last between October 15 and December 15, 1960. This extension of time would "give every mature person" the opportunity "to contribute to the decision."<sup>66</sup>

Nor did the OK look kindly on the supervisors of the plebiscite. These were, in the main, British expatriates, administrators, and missionaries, all of whom, it was alleged, had integrationist sympathies.\* On September 15, 1960, the OK protested against the appointment of anti-reunificationists such as missionaries and British administrators as supervisors of the plebiscite. The OK felt that the selection of such officers should be the work of an impartial body. As the British were not impartial, the United Nations should nullify the existing selection and start from the beginning again.<sup>67</sup> The United Nations, however, had had enough problems with Southern Kamerun to want more.

The reunificationists were also very suspicious of the Enlightenment Officers whom, in conformity with the United Nations recommendations, the British recruited from Nigeria and Britain to help instruct the Western Kamerun populace on the political implications of the plebiscite questions. On July 19, Omar B.B. Sendze, who was pursuing a masters programme in Britain at the time, described these officers as "a large army of political agents" sent to Western Kamerun to deceive the populace into voting for integration with Nigeria. He then asked the United Nations to study carefully

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\*The OK's suspicion is understandable. Even the Colonial Secretary had stated earlier, see chapter three, that the best friends of Western Kamerun did not see a brighter future for the region other than in association with Nigeria. Furthermore, the headquarters of the missions were in Nigeria, a fact which could give the missionaries integrationist tendencies.

the British plans for the plebiscite because the British had "a vital interest in the results."<sup>68</sup> A few months later, Sylvester N. Diah (who was also pursuing a masters programme in Nigeria), leader of the Kamerun Students in Nigeria, asked the United Nations to "take immediate steps to prevent Britain from sending out its numerous Plebiscite Enlightenment Officers and its militia." These officers, he charged, were "already misleading the masses on the disadvantages of voting for Re-unification." Britain was opposed to "Reunification" and the local British agents were supporting "the reactionary forces to sabotage the smooth running of the unificationist government."<sup>69</sup>

Although British and Nigerian forces were in Western Kamerun probably to ensure the smooth running of the plebiscites, the reunificationists and secessionists saw it quite differently. As soon as the first contingent of the forces landed in the Territory, some time around March, 1960, they were accused of campaigning and intimidating the populace into voting for Nigeria.<sup>70</sup> Later on, some time before or around July, 1960, when a contingent of British soldiers from Britain arrived in Western Kamerun, Sendze charged that the reason for these troops was to put pressure on the "illiterate masses" to vote for integration. He felt that if there was any need for these troops, and he found no need, troops could be raised locally or provided by the United Nations; such United Nations' troops should exclude British troops.<sup>71</sup> On August 22, 1960, George B. Mbanga, speaking for the OK, requested that a United Nations police force, rather than the British army, should be stationed in Western Kamerun during the plebiscites if there was any need for it.<sup>72</sup>

Even the British local officials were suspected of threatening and

intimidating the Southern Kamerunians in an effort to procure a pro-Nigerian vote. On January 26, 1961, the OK sent a telegram to the United Nations requesting it to "intervene urgently" and halt the intimidation of the Southern Kamerunians by the British troops.<sup>73</sup> Some British local officials, it was alleged, had threatened their junior employees with loss of jobs should they vote for the second alternative. When the issue was reported to the Commissioner for Cameroons, he apparently did nothing to redress the situation.<sup>74</sup> It must be added, however, that these allegations had no concrete evidence.

As these accusations were being made against the British, Jabea Dibonge, founder of KUNC, who by now had transformed into an integrationist, pleaded with the leaders of the major political parties of Nigeria--NCNC, AG, NPC--to contribute to the cause of integration.\* The appeal met receptive ears. These leaders promised (and did send) propaganda materials to the integrationists. These included Land Rovers and trucks, campaign funds, and a large number of propaganda experts.<sup>75</sup> Dibonge made the request some time in February, 1960, from Lagos where he was working at this time.

The United Nations gave the vote to persons born in Southern Kamerun. Secessionist and reunificationist registration clerks read that to mean persons born of Southern Kamerun indigene parents. At Wum Division, such registration clerks attempted to deny the vote to the Fulani on the grounds

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\*In a letter (a copy of which the reunificationists sent to the United Nations to back up their charge of Nigerian interference,) addressed to Endeley, but intercepted by the reunificationists, Dibonge described his initiative and the fruitful talks he had with the Nigerian Leaders and the promises these leaders had made, adding that all the leaders expressed surprised that "for one reason, or the other" the Kamerun integrationists had not approached much earlier. Dibonge also requested Mbile and Endeley to stop squabbling with each other.

that they were Nigerians. Consequently, it was no surprise that on September 8, 1959, thirteen Ardo\* of Wum Division lodged a complaint to the United Nations concerning the new Government's attempt to deny them votes which they had had in all previous elections.<sup>76</sup> Around the same time, too, the KNDP Government was determined to deny any other Nigerians, whether born in Southern Kamerun or not, the vote. On September 21, 1959, these other Nigerians asked the United Nations to intervene and redress the balance on the grounds that they were responsible for the development of Southern Kamerun in all aspects and that they had always voted in the previous elections.<sup>77</sup> With Governmental power and power over the police in Foncha's hands, it was obvious that any Nigerian who was qualified to vote had to register through a registration clerk who was integrationist in sentiment.

If Endeley used patronage to make circumstances conducive to a pro-Nigerian vote, Foncha used it more extensively to procure a pro-Cameroun vote. As soon as Foncha took over power, he pressed for the promotion of Southern Kamerunians as Heads of Departments. These newly promoted 'big guns' became active supporters of reunification if they were not already that. More importantly, however, since employment and promotion of junior workers in their respective departments were now in their hands, it was alleged, they made sure these went to those who agreed to promote reunification morally and financially.<sup>78</sup> In other areas, Nkambe Division for instance, where the people were certain they wished to secede from Nigeria

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\*Ardo, plural unknown by writer, is a Fulani title, a rank below Sardauna and Lamido but higher than Garidima.

but were more against reunification than integration with Nigeria, the KNDP Government, so it was said, threatened them with loss of jobs and positions if they persisted against reunification.<sup>79</sup> The Southern Kamerunian Civil Servants and Police who also campaigned actively for the second alternative promised jobs and promotions, the accusation went on, to those who supported the second alternative publicly.<sup>80</sup>

Closely linked with patronage was direct bribery and corruption.\* At Babessiy in Ndop and at Oku in Nso, two Native Authority Dispensaries were summarily built and opened for use without adequate equipment; (the local KNDP leaders now had something to show as an example of what would follow should the second alternative win). In Bafut, Ngie, and Ngwo, the KNDP distributed salt, blankets, money, and alcoholic beverages to men and women in order to buy their votes.<sup>81</sup> (There was such an outcry against this aspect of bribery that even some of Foncha's supporters were forced to admit that it was a political blunder. But at a time of confusion which characterized the period, only few, if any, could have time to think properly about its effects). Many resigned themselves to the remark that the plebiscite campaign was marked by "Corruption of the Highest Order."<sup>82</sup> Before the campaign period, the Wat and the rest of Nsungli, Nkambe Division, were under the jurisdiction of one Court. But the Wat had been demanding a separate Court for themselves. The NKC-KPP Government refused to grant this request because it had about a 90 per cent hold on the Nsungli who were opposed to reunification. During the campaign period, the KNDP Government granted this request in order to buy

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\*The present writer, from experience, testifies to what this petitioner is reporting in this paragraph.

the votes from the Wat area.<sup>83</sup> Even taxes, it was alleged, were paid for those who indicated they wished to vote for the second alternative but who also complained that they might not even vote because they were hiding away from the tax collectors and police for overdue taxes.<sup>84</sup>

Another weapon the KNDP used was organized hooliganism. The KNDP organized a "system of hooligans" whose duty was to intimidate, prevent from lecturing, and, if very necessary beat up "lecturers of the opposing parties, but mainly those of the CPNC."<sup>85</sup> The actions of these political saboteurs was so rife that A.A. Tamasang, leader of the KNC in Foncha's own village, Sarki\* Sula Manu, a Hausa Fon in Mankon Town, and V.T. Lainjo, leader of the KNC in Nso, reported on February 7, 1961, four days to voting, that hooliganism by the KNDP was "the order of the day." Here and there, hooligans, backed by Eastern Kamerun immigrants and "Police Constables," were disturbing and preventing the supporters of integration from lecturing or campaigning. During lectures given by the KNDP, the police were around to maintain order but the police were hardly ever around during the lectures given by the other parties. Out of the nineteen reported cases of hooliganism in one area, only six arrests were made.<sup>86</sup> It should be added that V.T. Lainjo was so trustworthy a politician that everything he said was always accepted even by his opponents although they might disagree with the logic behind his reasoning.

Perhaps the most effective weapon the KNDP used was that of preventing some of the a-Fon and their subjects from knowing what the second alternative actually involved and from being influenced by the so-called Anglo-

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\*Sarki is a Hausa equivalent of Fon.

Nigerian "large army of political agents". On January 23, 1961, the KNDP hooligans prevented the integrationists from lecturing at the Bambui market and drove the lecturers out of the market place despite the permit they had. When these lecturers threatened to bring in the police, the hooligans complacently replied, so it was reported, "The police is KNDP. The Court is KNDP, so do not trouble yourselves. Go or we will kill you."<sup>87</sup> Of course, these hooligans merely said explicitly what had become obvious and these lecturers had to leave the scene if they wished to avoid some time in a hospital.

The idea of preventing people from attending these lectures was so widespread that only a few places can be mentioned as examples. At Ndop and Bafreng, the KNDP campaigned strongly to prevent the people from attending the enlightenment lectures; indeed, in these two areas, the 'enlightenment officers' were expelled from the scene. Any other person who attempted to explain the two alternatives was threatened and forced to be silent.<sup>89</sup> The a-Fon of Mukuru, Kom,\* Fungom, and Bafut prevented their subjects from attending and listening to lectures given by the 'enlightenment officers.'<sup>99</sup> On February 22, 1961, that is after the plebiscite, the a-Fon of Beba-Befang-Essimbi, all from Wum, informed the United Nations that they prevented their subjects from attending the enlightenment lectures.<sup>90</sup> Even A.N. Jua openly told Edwards, the Plebiscite Supervisor for Wum East, so it was alleged, that "he had ordered his [Kom] people not to listen to [Edwards'] lectures,"<sup>91</sup> In this way, the KNDP made the enlightenment campaign ineffective.

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\*At Kom, it was not the Fon who gave the instructions but Augustin N. Jua who was Foncha's lieutenant in the KNDP.



The last, and possibly the most important, way in which the KNDP was accused of abusing its power involved its relationship with the a-Fon. When Endeley began to alienate the a-Fon with his integrationist inclinations, Foncha began to woo them. When Endeley collided with the a-Fon in 1958, many of the a-Fon began to look forward to Foncha to come to them. That brought him indirectly to power in 1959. Once in power, Foncha attempted to consolidate the confidence of the majority of the a-Fon in him: he began to avoid any mention of the word 'reunification,' at least in public, just one month after he came to power; at the United Nations and at the Mamfe Plebiscite Conference, at the pleasure of the a-Fon, he argued vigorously for the exclusion of reunification from the plebiscite. All this should have become obvious to the reader by now. It is true, after the United Nations had decided on the two plebiscite alternatives, the Concert of the a-Fon petered away. The breakdown of the Concert became an asset not a liability for Foncha; it prevented some of the a-Fon from knowing that the choice to be made now was between "water" and "fire." This was later reinforced by the unfortunate belief, following the November, 1960, London Talks, that the second alternative was now secession without reunification. Many of the a-Fon, therefore, though individually, began to regard Foncha and the second alternative as representing their true desires.

But Foncha also contributed to his hold on the majority of the a-Fon in some other ways when he came to power. In areas, Nkambe Division for instance, which were strongly opposed to reunification, he gave some of the a-Fon membership in the Native Authority and other Councils, dismissed integrationist Councillors, and promoted people with at least strong secessionist tendencies as Councillors.<sup>92</sup> In areas, Nso for instance, where there were

power struggles between the subjects of the other a-Fon within the empire and those of the supreme Fon, the KNDP sided with the opponents of the Fon of Nso including Shufai Ndzendzevf\* since it was well-known that Sehm III and his central subjects were in alliance with Endeley and the British.<sup>93</sup>

If Foncha used the carrot to get the majority of the a-Fon behind him, he also used the stick against those who were, in his mind, intransigent.

At a meeting in Victoria with the a-Fon, it was alleged, Foncha threatened a few who had integrationist tendencies with either deposition or deportation,<sup>94</sup> none of which he could actually carry out. This threat, if it happened, was probably his least effective weapon, which he could use only because the Concert was dead; he had nothing to lose by threatening these few. However, Foncha's good relations with most of the a-Fon did pay a lot of dividends. A few days to voting, many a-Fon assembled their subjects and asked them to vote for the second alternative.† Areas for which there is written evidence included Mukuru, Kom, Fungom, Bafut,<sup>95</sup> Ngolo-Bolo, Kombone, Dikome, and Ngbanji.<sup>96</sup>

The KNDP advised the a-Fon and their subjects not to attend and listen to those so-called enlightenment lectures because they were more campaign lectures in favour of the Nigeria proposition than what they were supposed to be. But there was more to it than that. The KNDP had its own interpretations of the two questions which it did not want to conflict with what

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\*This will be elaborated upon and given more evidence in the next chapter.

†In Nso, and as a threat to the subordinate a-Fon within the empire and those who opposed integration for various reasons, at the Kimbo market, a live white cock was hung on a pole to die.

the a-Fon and their subjects had heard elsewhere. In some areas, the questions were, 'Do you like Dr. Endeley, the Bakweri man? Or, Do you like Foncha, the Bamenda man?' In others, indeed, the majority of areas, the questions were, 'Do you wish to stay in your country, the Cameroons? Or, Do you wish to sell your country to the Ibo who will dethrone your a-Fon and take away all your land and property?'<sup>97</sup> It was around this last question that Foncha's, or rather the KNDP's, campaign offers revolved.

As Dr. Abdoh reported, the KNDP claimed that "a vote for Nigeria meant the domination of Cameroonians and the occupation of the Southern Cameroons by the Ibos." (Ibo had been substituted for Nigeria.) But, "to join the Republic of Cameroun meant unification of all the Cameroons as a national state, independent from either the Commonwealth or the French Community and freedom from Ibo domination." A vote for Nigeria also "meant the continuation of the influence of the Commonwealth and the domination of the Cameroonians by the Ibos." (Ibo again had been substituted for the Commonwealth.) The "Germans had done a great deal for the Southern Cameroons, but little progress had since been made during some forty years of British Administration." In the event of a vote for Nigeria, Southern Kamerun would lose its identity and, worse still, it would not be able to resist domination by Nigeria. (When addressing areas with apparently known reunificationist sentiments), the KNDP would argue that the plebiscite was the last chance for Southern Kamerunians to realize their "national identity . . . through reunification with their kin in the Republic of Cameroun."<sup>98</sup>

If the KNDP saw nothing good in the Nigeria proposition, the CPNC thought the other way. As argued in the preceding chapter, the CPNC entered the campaign very reluctantly because it was already aware of its defeat.

This awareness was further indicated when it began its campaign. The first statement of its campaign was that, "in the event of a vote in favour of the Cameroun Republic the CPNC . . . will request unconditionally that the United Nations PARTITION the territory between the group of persons desiring a union with the independent Federation of Nigeria and those seeking a union with the Cameroun Republic." As the campaigns progressed, however, it showed the advantages of "association" with Nigeria. Southern Kamerun would be a "self-governing Region within the Federation" of Nigeria. The House of Chiefs would be retained; (an attractive but belated offer). The "system of land ownership without European settlers would be preserved; (again, an offer which could only make sense to the Bakweri and the indigenous inhabitants of Kumba Division). The existing monetary system would be retained. Moreover, while "freedom of association, of speech and religion would be guaranteed," the existing "Legal and judicial systems would remain unchanged." Furthermore, Southern Kamerun would continue "to share in the economic prosperity of the Federation of Nigeria" and enjoy "full independence." Finally, Southern Kamerunians should "Choose Green\* and Remain British --White is French."<sup>99</sup>

Nor did the OK play a different game. It asked† voters to vote for the second alternative which was "independence and reunification of the Kamerun." The plebiscite was the Southern Kamerunians' "last resort" by which they could "return or surrender" their "identity." A vote for Nigeria constituted the

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\*Green meant Nigeria proposition and White meant Cameroun proposition.

†The OK avoided contacting the majority of the electorate in their own rights and instead addressed mainly the literate populace through written material.

"continuation of the 'imperialistic relationships' with the Commonwealth."

The OK was in favour "of a Republic which would be entirely cut off from any political association with the 'Colonial Powers'." An "all Kamerunian Constitutional Conference" composed of the representatives of Northern, Southern, and Eastern Kamerun would be arranged immediately after the plebiscite. This conference, assisted by the United Nations, would draft the reunification constitution.<sup>100</sup> If the OK talked about a constitution, it was because it addressed itself to the literate Southern Kamerunians. During the plebiscite period, this section of the society, including those who supported Foncha, became very worried about the constitutional arrangements for reunification. Indeed, they played a major part in the breakdown of the talks between Foncha and Ahidjo; they were firm on the idea that Southern Kamerun would not be part of the French Community. The OK was attempting to tell them that they themselves would be involved in the working out of a constitution.

The other political parties, the KUP, the CCC, the CIP, and the Muslim Congress played no significant part in the campaign,<sup>101</sup> the first three because what they stood for was not involved in the plebiscite, and the last because, founded on a religious principle, it could not stand the pressure of loyalty to the Fondom. Whatever the case, the conduct of the Southern Kamerun plebiscite was over.

As was the case in Northern Kamerun, this aspect of the phenomenon was characterized by suspicion, the abuse of power, and accusations which were sometimes factual and sometimes not. But, these elements were more common and frequent in Southern Kamerun than in Northern Kamerun. Furthermore, while in Northern Kamerun the suspicion and accusation were a possession of

the reunificationists and the abuse of power that of the organizers and authorities, in Southern Kamerun, except the OK regarding the abuse of power, all the organizers were involved in the three elements. More importantly, however, while in Northern Kamerun these elements were directed mainly against the organizers, in Southern Kamerun they were directed against both the organizers and the respondents. Nevertheless, the organizers in both regions interpreted the United Nations' questions to suit their interests. It would not, therefore, be surprising if the conduct of the plebiscites coupled with the limitations of the questions posed in both regions and the timing of the plebiscite in the case of Northern Kamerun made voter response anything but straightforward and clear cut.

Footnotes - Chapter Six

<sup>1</sup> U.N., T.C., Report of the United Nations Commissioner for the Supervision of the Plebiscite in the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, T/1491, November 25, 1959, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Organizing Secretary of the Northern Kamerun Democratic Party Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Jada, August 1, 1959, T/PET. 4/190, August 21, 1959, pp. 1-2; See also T/PET. 4/201, December 14, 1959.

<sup>3</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Members of the Northern Kamerun Democratic Party in Yola Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Yola, 18 August, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 25, September 18, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 25, September 18, 1959, pp. 1-2; T/PET. 4/L. 30, September 26, 1959, pp. 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1491, November 25, 1959, p. 49.

<sup>6</sup> U.N., G.A., Statement Made by the Representative of the United Kingdom at the 988th Meeting of the Fourth Committee, A/C. 4/438, December 7, 1959, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1491, November 25, 1959, pp. 48-49.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> U.N., T.C., British Observations on Petitions, T/OBS. 4/68, December 15, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1491, November 25, 1959, p. 80.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 84-85.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 86-90; for figures only.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>15</sup> U.N., G.A., Statement Made by the Representative of the United Kingdom at the 988th Meeting of the Fourth Committee, A/C. 4/438, December 7, 1959, pp. 1-6.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 7-10.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> U.N., G.A., Organization of a Further Plebiscite in the Northern Part of the Territory: Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly during Its Fourteenth Session, Supplement No. 16, A/4354, December 12, 1959, pp. 38-39.

<sup>19</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Northern Kamerun Democratic Party Concerning Cameroons under British Administration, Buea, 7 December, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 74, December 8, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Northern Kamerun Democratic Party Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Mubi, 7 December, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 78, January 18, 1960, pp. 1-2.

<sup>21</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. Muhammadu Iya, Secretary of the Northern Kamerun Democratic Party, Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Mubi, 6 May, 1960, T/PET. 4/L. 84, May 23, 1960, pp. 1-3.

<sup>22</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1491/Add. 1, Annex VIII, November 25, 1959, pp. 1-8. Vaughan reported that these Nigeria-based parties refused to take instructions from their headquarters in Nigeria. This is incorrect. The pages cited in this footnote show clearly that they acted on instructions from the headquarters.

<sup>23</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Honourable Philip Maken Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Gurum, Yola, 26 April, 1960, T/PET. 4/L. 89, September 6, 1960, pp. 1-2.

<sup>24</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Leaders of the Kamerun Freedom Party/AG Alliance, NKDP, and NEPU Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Mubi, 13 July, 1960, T/PET. 4/L. 90, September 6, 1960, pp. 1-2.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-3.

<sup>27</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from NEPU/NCNC, KFP/Action Group, NKDP Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Mubi, 25 July, 1960, T/PET. 4/L. 91, September 6, 1960, pp. 1-2.

<sup>28</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, p. 176.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 177-178.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 178-179.



<sup>33</sup> U.N., T.C., Report of the United Nations Commissioner for the Supervision of the Plebiscites in the Southern and Northern Parts of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, T/1556, April 3, 1961, pp. 9-11. Because what will be said from here onwards to the end of this section, unless otherwise indicated, depends very heavily on this comprehensive source, in order to avoid unnecessary Ibids, only the pages from which the information is taken will be indicated here: pp. 186-189, 165, 191-217, 247-248.

<sup>34</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Kamerun National Democratic Party Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Buea, 30 March, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 147, April 7, 1961, pp. 1-8.

<sup>35</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1491/Add. 1, Annex III(b), November 25, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1491/Add. 1, Annex V(a), November 25, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1491/Add. 1, Annex V(b), November 25, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., question 2 and its answer.

<sup>39</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1491/Add. 1, Annex VIII, November 25, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>41</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 15, February 20, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Northern Kamerun Democratic Party Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Mubi Town, Adamawa, T/PET. 4/L. 21, July 13, 1959, pp. 1-4.

<sup>43</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Northern Kamerun Democratic Party Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Mubi, 18 November, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 71, December 4, 1959, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Federated Parties for Union with Nigeria Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Mubi, 5 April, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 162, April 21, 1961, p. 1. See also T/PET. 4/L. 168, passim.

<sup>45</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Mubi Native Authority Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, 8 April, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 150, April 17, 1961, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, pp. 208-209.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 209-210.

<sup>48</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4 and 5/L. 17, November 5, 1957, p. 2; U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4 and 5/L. 17 Add. 1, 1957, passim; U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4 and 5/L. 17/Add. 2, 1957, passim

- 49 U.N., T.C., British Observations on Petitions, T/OBS. 4/32, July 22, 1957, p. 1.
- 50 U.N., T.C., British Observations on Petitions, T/OBS. 4/46, January 30, 1959, p. 1.
- 51 U.N., T.C., British Observations on Petitions, T/OBS. 4/39, January 8, 1958, p. 2.
- 52 U.N., T.C., Six Petitions Protesting Against the Repatriation to the Cameroons under French Administration of Three Political Refugees, Who Had Sought Asylum in the Cameroons under British Administration, Tombel, 12 December, 1958, T/PET. 4 and 5/28, February 5, 1959, pp. 1-3; U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4 and 5/62, November 3, 1959, pp. 1-2.
- 53 U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4 and 5/28, February 5, 1959, pp. 1-2/
- 54 U.N., T.C., British Observations on Petitions, T/OBS. 4 and 5/19, August 20, 1958, p. 1.
- 55 U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4 and 5/8, illegible date, passim.
- 56 U.N., T.C., British Observations on Petitions, T/OBS. 4 and 5/14, September 24, 1957, pp. 1-2.
- 57 U.N., T.C., Petition from One Kamerun (OK), Banso Branch, Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Banso, 4 November, 1958, T/PET. 4/170, December 29, 1958, pp. 1-2.
- 58 U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4 and 5/8, illegible date, passim; U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/175, illegible date, passim; U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/191, November 3, 1959, passim; U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/191/Add. 1, January 15, 1969, passim; U.N., T.C., T/OBS. 4/58, July 10, 1959, pp. 1-2.
- 59 U.N., T.C., British Observations on Petitions, T/OBS. 4/58, July 10, 1959, pp. 1-2.
- 60 U.N., T.C., British Observations on Petitions, T/OBS. 4/75, March 28, 1960, pp. 1-2.
- 61 U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/132, illegible date, passim.
- 62 U.N., T.C., British Observations on Petitions, T/OBS. 4/34, August 12, 1957, pp. 1-7.
- 63 U.N., T.C., Petition from the President of the KNDP Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Kumba, 20 February, 1958, T/PET. 4/L. 7, March 18, 1958, p. 1; U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/102, May 7, 1954, passim; U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/102/Add. 1, August 30, 1954, passim; T/PET. 4/102/Add. 2, September 8, 1954, pp. 1-2.

- <sup>64</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Secretary of the Women's Section of One Kamerun, Modeka Branch, Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Tiko, 3 July, 1959, T/PET. 4/189, August 17, 1959, p. 1.
- <sup>65</sup> U.N., T.C., British Observations on Petitions, T/OBS. 4/67, December 8, 1959, p. 1.
- <sup>66</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 93, October 12, 1960, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>67</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. M.B. Achini on Behalf of One Kamerun Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Bamenda, 15 September, 1960, T/PET. 4/L. 95, October 12, 1960, p. 1.
- <sup>68</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 87, September 6, 1960, p. 2 and passim.
- <sup>69</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 97, October 13, 1960, pp. 1-6.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 1.
- <sup>71</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the National Union of Kamerun Students (Gt. Britain and Ireland) Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, London, 19 July, 1960, T/PET. 4/L. 87, September 6, 1960, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>72</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Organizing Secretary of One Kamerun Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Kumba, 22 August, 1960, T/PET. 4/L. 93, October 12, 1960, pp. 2-3; see also, U.N., T.C., Petition from the National Union of Kamerun Students (Nigeria) Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Enugu, 14 September, 1960, T/PET. 4/L. 97, October 13, 1960, pp. 1-2; U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. Johnson Awandom Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Molyko, 19 December, 1960, T/PET. 4/L. 105, February 10, 1961, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>73</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from One Kamerun in Bamenda Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Bamenda, 26 January, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 104, February 3, 1961, p. 1.
- <sup>74</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 113, March 9, 1961, p. 2.
- <sup>75</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. S.N. Musie, Secretary of Kamerun Federal Party Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Victoria, 16 March, 1960, T/PET. 4/L. 80, April 11, 1960, pp. 1-4. and passim.
- <sup>76</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Leaders of the Fulani and Hausa of Wum Division, Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Wum, 8 September, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 36, September 28, 1959, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>77</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the All-Nigerian Union Concerning the Cameroons under British Administration, Victoria, 21 September, 1959, T/PET. 4/L. 42, September 30, 1959, pp. 1-2.

<sup>78</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Cameroons People's National Convention, Bamenda, Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Mankon, 7 February, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 110, March 9, 1961, p. 4.

<sup>79</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Nobles and Youths of Nkambe East Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Ndu, T/PET. 4/L. 120, March 21, 1961, p. 2.

<sup>80</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Ngaw Iwise Njesi and Others Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Wum, 11 March, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 143, April 13, 1961, p. 2.

<sup>81</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 110, March 9, 1961, p. 3.

<sup>82</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 120, March 21, 1961, p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. E.N. Ali on Behalf of Nkambe Aborigenes Resident in Wum Division Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Wum. 19 February, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 115, March 21, 1961, p. 3.

<sup>84</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. Mallam L.T. Sale, President of the Muslim Congress Party Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Bansa, 24 February, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 123, March 21, 1961, p. 1.

<sup>85</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Anti-Unification Movement, Bamenda, Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Bafinge, 29 January, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 111, March 9, 1961, p. 1.

<sup>86</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 110, March 9, 1961, pp. 3-4.

<sup>87</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 112, March 9, 1961, p. 2.

<sup>88</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 110, March 9, 1961, pp. 3-6.

<sup>89</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. J.M. Boja, M.H.A., Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Beba-Befang, Wum, 17 February, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 118, March 21, 1961, p. 2.

<sup>90</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Chiefs and Peoples of Wum West (Beba-Befang-Essimbi) Clans Plebiscite District Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, 22 February, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 137, April 13, 1961, p. 1.

<sup>91</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Cameroons People's National Convention, Belo, Kom Branch, Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Belo, 10 March, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 165, April 25, 1961, p. 1.

<sup>92</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 120, March 21, 1961, p. 2.

<sup>93</sup>U.N., T.C., Petition from the Fon of Nsaw Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Kumbo, 3 March, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 132, April 13, 1961, p. 2 and passim.

<sup>94</sup>U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 118, March 21, 1961, p. 1.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>96</sup>U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. S.E. Nyenti on Behalf of the Cameroons Commons Congress Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Kumba, 14 February, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 125, March 28, 1961, p. 3.

<sup>97</sup>U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 110, March 9, 1961, pp. 4-5.

<sup>98</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, pp. 111-112.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., pp. 113-114.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE MEANING OF THE VOTES<sup>III</sup>

Despite the irregularities, the suspicions, and the accusations involved in the conduct of the plebiscites, in spite of the fact that the United Nations refused to postpone the Northern Kamerun second plebiscite and denied the Southern Kamerunians a third choice, namely, Samller Kamerun, the Western Kamerunians appeared enthusiastic about the plebiscites.

About the 1959 Northern Kamerun plebiscite, the Plebiscite Commissioner, Dr. Abdoh, had this to say.

Polling was scheduled to commence at 8:00 a.m.; but well in advance of this time crowds began gathering at the polling stations and by opening time had attained relatively large proportions. There was some shoving and pushing and jostling for position by some of those eager to vote but the crowds were for the most part good-natured and well-behaved. Voting was orderly and polling was completed in most cases by early afternoon, but, in accordance with the requirements of the plebiscite regulations, polling stations remained open till 5:00 p.m.<sup>1</sup>

The potential electors in the region were estimated at 142,400. But, the number which actually registered was 129,549, representing 91 per cent of the estimated number. 113,859 (88%) of the registered voters cast their votes.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Abdoh also had this to report regarding the 1961 plebiscite in the same region.

The weather on both polling days was bright and clear. Throughout the Northern Cameroons, people turned out in large numbers and the majority of the voters, both men and women, had cast their votes on both days well ahead of the closing of the polls. . . . Polling on both days proceeded in an exemplary manner and with the exception of minor errors made by presiding and polling staff at a few of the

polling stations, voting proceeded without major incidents.<sup>3</sup>

292,985 voters registered for the plebiscite. Of these, 243,955 (83%) cast valid votes.

Regarding the Southern Kamerun situation, the Plebiscite Commissioner said

The weather on polling day was fine throughout the Southern Cameroons. Long before the polls opened at 8:00 a.m. on 11 February large numbers of people were seen walking to the stations and by 7:00 a.m. many of the polling stations were already crowded with people eagerly waiting to cast their votes . . . . Voting was extremely heavy throughout the Territory and, generally speaking, by mid-day most of the eligible voters had cast their ballots. . . . In other places, local chiefs [the a-Fon] had seated themselves outside the polling stations, and were requested to move away in order to avoid giving the impression that their presence was intended to sway votes in one way or another.<sup>5</sup>

The total number of registered voters was 349,650. Of these, 331,312 (94%) cast valid votes.<sup>6</sup>

What all this seems to suggest is that the Western Kamerunians of all levels of the society took the plebiscites very seriously and, to say the least, were more than enthusiastic about them and their results. The presence of the a-Fon at the polling stations and the absence of major incidents should be noted carefully. Both suggest (a) the presence of local consensus and, (b) the fear of some a-Fon that some persons might be disloyal to the Fondom. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the basis of this enthusiasm and to determine what the electorate hoped to gain by voting one way or the other. To achieve this goal, the balloting will be analyzed separately for each region. In addition, the votes are analyzed by district and in some cases by Division and/or Fondom.

### The Meaning of the Votes in the Northern Kamerun Plebiscites

Unfortunately, the only group, other than the political leaders in Northern Kamerun, which used to write, the Mambilla, were so satisfied with the 1960 reforms and protective of them that they no longer wrote. Indeed, the very few petitions, already used, that came from Northern Kamerun between 1960 and 1961 were from the political leaders. This section has, therefore, been denied the opportunity to see what the electorate, its spokesmen or its leaders in Northern Kamerun had to say in writing, as opposed to the interviews which Vaughan conducted, about the way they perceived the plebiscites. This section of this chapter, therefore, depends almost exclusively on the two reports of the United Nations Plebiscites Commissioner, Dr. Djalal Abdoh. Since Dr. Abdoh wrote his report on this issue on the district basis, the same approach is adopted here. But, in order to handle this issue more easily for both plebiscites, the same district for 1959 and 1961 is treated in one place. However, since in 1959 there were six plebiscite districts and nine in 1961, the latter would have to be regrouped to correspond with the 1959 situation.

Dikwa plebiscite district was made up of that area identified in chapter one as Dikwa Emirate, the area around Lake Chad. Its western boundary with Nigeria was just as long as its eastern boundary with Cameroun Republic. Located in the extreme north, it was flanked on both sides by mainly Fulani dominated neighbours. But, it should be remembered that it was the centre of the 1953 demonstration whose Emir was the first to be deposed. It was, therefore, an area dominated by the dissident Fulani.

In 1959, the NPC was the most active political party in this district.



The party's activities were organized and led by Abba Habib who had become Minister of Trade in the Northern Nigerian Government. The four parties, NKDP, UMBC/AG, NEPU, supporting the idea of a future decision were not significantly active in this district. During the campaign, in the district, "interest centred on local issues and on dissatisfaction with local administration." There was "very little understanding of the broader issues involved in the plebiscite." Nevertheless, when the votes were told, there was a total of 45,780 votes. 19,822 of these were for the Nigeria proposition and 25,958 were for making a future decision.<sup>7</sup> The district had, therefore, voted to make a future decision.

After the 1959 plebiscites, Dikwa Emirate Division remained intact as it was before the plebiscite. But its administration was reformed radically. The British established committees such as education, finance, appointments and discipline, development, general purpose, and Shuwa Land Disputes. There was also a Tender Board for the granting of contracts to advise its Native Authority. The members of these committees were elected annually and included members from the Native Authority staff, some councillors, and "qualified persons from the public." There was a woman on the education board.<sup>8</sup> The local people themselves were now actively involved in, and were in control of, their local affairs because they themselves elected the members of these committees and the Native Authority.

During the 1960-1961 campaign, posters urging people to vote for Nigeria were the first to appear in this district. During this early period, "No posters urging union with the Republic [of Cameroun] were seen anywhere." When the supporters of the Cameroun proposition entered the race, they distributed "gowns with the portrait of President Ahidjo printed in the

fabric," and concentrated on areas bordering on Cameroun. As the voting day drew closer, the "Emir of Dikwa\* and his entourage visited many villages to rally the people in support of union with Nigeria." Deputies from Cameroun Republic did the same thing in favour of the Cameroun proposition. This was also the area where the British Resident, was alleged to have campaigned for Nigeria and warned that the a-Fon whose people voted for Cameroun would be punished. This district had the largest electorate. The Consortium worked hardest in this district. The voting pattern was interesting; "Areas along the Republic's border, as well as large population centres, went against union with the Republic and areas close to Nigeria went against union with Nigeria." A total of 106,896 votes were cast. 69,577 of these were for Nigeria and 37,319 for Cameroun.<sup>9</sup> Dikwa had, therefore, reversed its decision and voted for Nigeria.

Adamawa North (a combination of Adamawa North East and Cubunawa/Madagali) consisted of that area described in chapter one as Yola Emirate North of the Benue River. It was the narrowest part of Northern Kamerun. It was flanked on the west by Nigeria and on the east by Cameroun Republic. The boundaries shared with either neighbour were of equal length. Its population was a mixture of Fulani and non-Fulani and it contained very many non-Fulani Muslims. It was the most developed area of Northern Kamerun. Before the 1959 plebiscite, it was part of Adamawa Province of Nigeria. Consequently, it was located partly within Northern Kamerun and partly within Nigeria.

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\*It is not readily known whether this was the first person who was deposed after the demonstration of 1953 or not. But, if he was still alive, it is possible--only a suggestion--that the wind of appeasement which swept over Northern Kamerun in 1960 could have brought him back.

In the 1959 plebiscite, political activity in this area was intense, with all the parties very active. Campaigning in this district was bitter but with no "untoward incidents." Here, the Native Authority officials used their influence to campaign in favour of Nigeria. Most of the arrests took place here and the refusal of permits to the proponents of Cameroun was rife. "The campaign was fought mainly on local issues." The parties supporting the idea of a future decision "made full use of the feeling of dissatisfaction among the people about what they considered to be mal-administration by the Native Authority . . . They also made capital out of the arrests . . . in presenting the Native Authority in an unfavourable light." The total number of votes cast was 33,763. Out of these, 10,367 were for Nigeria and 23,396 for a future decision.<sup>10</sup> Adamawa North plebiscite district had, thus, apparently voted to make a decision in the future.

After the plebiscite, this Adamawa North plebiscite district became a full Division of its own, the Northern Trust Division, located entirely within Northern Kamerun. Its headquarters was Mubi. For the first time in history, it had its own Native Authority and Districts under it. For the first time its local affairs were in the hands of its inhabitants who were consulted and took active part in administration. Perhaps more importantly, besides other British District Officers, it was the home of the British Resident, the highest British authority in Northern Kamerun.<sup>11</sup>

In the 1961 plebiscite, this district (now a combination of Mubi and Cubunawa/Madagali) saw an active and lively campaign. Campaigning began here much earlier than in Dikwa and the two groups of parties were well established. This was the home of the President and General Secretary of the

KFP. It was also the home of the Vice-President of NKDP. Campaigning was intense and there were "numerous and well-attended mass meetings." Door-to-door campaigning was also tried here. The NKDP/KFP supporters continued to be arrested and to be denied permits. This district had the second largest number of registered voters. This was where the Northern Nigerian Government established its Information Service. A total of 65,133 votes were cast in this district. 24,431 of these were for Cameroun and 40,702 for Nigeria.<sup>12</sup> The people of the Northern Trust Division, thus, apparently voted for Nigeria.

Adamawa South (Chamba) lay immediately south of the Benue Valley. It was bounded on the west by Nigeria and on the east by Cameroun Republic. Its western boundary with Nigeria was equal in length with its eastern boundary with Cameroun. It was inhabited mainly by the Chamba, a non-Fulani group. It was the nearest of the non-Fulani-dominated areas to the Fulani-dominated areas. Indeed, it separated Fulani-dominated Northern Kamerun from the non-Fulani-dominated area, a gateway to both. Prior to the 1959 plebiscite, it was administered as part of Nigeria Adamawa Province and was, therefore, ruled by a Native Authority located in Nigeria. It was the home of the Minister for Northern Cameroons Affairs and the home of the NKDP leader.

In 1959, political parties were very active in the district and used vehicles to penetrate even the most remote villages. The NKDP leader, as a native of this area, had the people under his control and although the UMBC/AG and NEPU campaigned with the NKDP in this area, the leader of the NKDP had an ascendancy over them. The NKDP directed its appeal to the Chamba, "emphasizing that a vote for the second alternative [future decision]

would free them from non-Chamba control and so pave the way for better roads, more hospitals and schools and better jobs for the Chamba." It played on local issues and "dissatisfactions with the existing administration." The NPC campaign here was also vigorous, wide-spread, and centred on local issues. The NPC campaign was led by the Minister for Northern Cameroons Affairs. The people saw the plebiscite in the light of local issues and "not strictly in terms of the questions they were being asked." No wonder then that "there was little real understanding of the wider issues involved in the two questions." District heads, the next highest authorities over the a-Fon and the lowest in the old regime aside from the a-Fon, used their influence to secure a pro-Nigeria vote. They also refused permits for meetings to the parties in favour of a future decision. A total of 16,190 votes were cast in the district. Out of these, 4,539 were for Nigeria and 11,651 for a future decision.<sup>13</sup>

After the plebiscite, Chamba became part of the Southern Trust Division located entirely in Northern Kamerun. It also received its own Native Authority with headquarters at Ganye. Its local inhabitants were thus in control of and actively involved in their local affairs.<sup>14</sup> But, because it was a new Native Authority, it had not quite got off the ground before the 1961 plebiscite although it had elected its councillors.

In 1961, the plebiscite campaign in Chamba "got off to a slow start." During this period, the Consortium was joined by another party, HABE, "which drew its main support from the pagans in Chamba," and was an ally of the AG. Its centre of activity was in Bauchi. Both groups of parties here received a lot of propaganda material from Nigeria and from Cameroun as the case may be. The Consortium distributed medals "commemorating the attainment

of self-government by the Northern Region of the Federation of Nigeria." On the other hand the NKDP/KFP supplied their supporters with "gowns imprinted with a likeness of President Ahidjo." Once the campaigns reached their peak, "hardly a market day went by without a lecture being given by either group of parties." Campaigns were interesting and extensive. Neither Nigerians nor Camerounians campaigned in this district. "Party organizers and speakers of both political groups moved freely about the area and, on the whole, met with friendly receptions. The contending parties "held processions in which they displayed their banners." A "substantial number of District and Village Heads, as well as Councillors were known to be members or sympathizers of the NKDP/KFP Alliance." The total number of votes cast was 34,881. Of these, 9,704 were for Nigeria and 25,177 for Cameroun.<sup>15</sup> The Chamba had, thus, consistently voted against Nigeria.

The Plebiscites Commissioner did not say what the campaigns were centred on. But he brought out certain points which helped explain the vote particularly as this was the only district which voted for Cameroun in 1961. There was no outside interference and no major complaints. There was no harassment of the supporters of the Cameroun proposition and both groups of parties campaigned freely and held processions. Campaigns were conducted on every market day; this means the message reached a large audience which might have received accurate information about the plebiscite questions. More importantly, District Heads, Village Heads, and Councillors were either members or supporters of the NKDP/KFP; this explains the absence of arrests and refusal of permits. In addition, although this was not brought out by Dr. Abdoh, it was the home of the Minister for Northern Cameroons Affairs

and the home of the founder and President of the NKDP.

The Adamawa South (Toungo and Gashaka) plebiscite district was, in geographic terms, the largest district. It was bounded on the west by Nigeria and on the east by Cameroun. Its eastern and western boundaries were almost of equal length. Prior to the 1959 plebiscite it was part of Adamawa Division and was located partly in Nigeria and partly in Northern Kamerun.

The road situation in this district was so bad that political activity in 1959 was restricted to the main centres of Sugu, Toungo, and Gauye. Except for one political meeting held by the NKDP at Serti, there was "little organized political activity elsewhere." Nowhere in the district did the people understand the issues involved in the questions of the plebiscite. Continued rainfall and poor communication aggravated the difficulty. The majority of the people were "influenced by their leaders." The total number of votes cast was 4,351. Of these, 2,252 were for Nigeria and 2,099 for a future decision.<sup>16</sup> The district had thus voted with a slim majority for union with Nigeria.

After the plebiscite, this district became the largest portion of the Southern Trust Territory with its own Native Authority separated from Adamawa Native Authority and District, Town, and Outer Councils. The headquarters of its Native Authority was at Gembu. Its Native Authority, established in September 1960, had a general purpose committee which was the executive, and "an established committee whose task it [was] to make recommendations to the Native Authority Council on all matters in respect of Native Authority staff."<sup>17</sup> Its local inhabitants were thus very active.

In the 1961 plebiscite, the campaign of the Consortium was very lively,

vigorous, and extensive. The Consortium displayed posters counting the advantages for union with Nigeria and "warning against the 'evils of joining the Republic'." The NKDP/KFP concentrated on heavily populated areas of the district. The NKDP/KFP had fewer posters but "directed their appeal to individuals and small groups." Occasionally they held large meetings. Deputies from Cameroun toured the area but did not participate in political rallies. The NKDP distributed about 200 gowns to its supporters with Ahidjo's picture imprinted in the fabric. A total of 8,107 votes were cast, 4,999 for Nigeria and 3,108 for Cameroun.<sup>18</sup> This district had thus voted consistently in favour of Nigeria. It is not known what the issues were.

The Adamawa South (Mambilla) plebiscite district was the only district which had no boundary with Nigeria. It had an extensive boundary on the south with Southern Kamerun and on the east with Cameroun. From time immemorial, it was always in touch with Southern Kamerun. Indeed, many of its people emigrated to Southern Kamerun and many were working with the CDC. Except for the super-imposed Fulani rulers, it was inhabited almost wholly by non-Fulani and non-Muslim. Prior to the 1959 plebiscite, it was administered by the Emir of Admawa. There were no roads in Mambilla and illiteracy was highest in all of Northern Kamerun. But it had many a-Fon who, as usual, had the loyalty of their subjects, or were their spokesmen.

In 1959, despite the lack of roads and hilly nature of the area, the NPC and NKDP had agents campaigning in the area. "The NKDP directed its appeal to the Mambilla tribes and their fear of the Fulani, based on memories of slave-raiding in times past." Local issues dominated the campaigns of both the NPC and the NKDP. The NKDP also appealed to the Fulani cattle owners who paid heavy jangali (cattle tax) to Yola. "The observer felt



that there was little understanding of the broader issues of the plebiscite." The social and political organization of the Mambilla interfered "with a free individual vote and votes [were] cast according to the wishes of the elders . . . simply because it had always been the custom of these people to accept the advice of their elders." 10,098 votes were cast, 2,745 for Nigeria and 7,353 for a future decision.<sup>19</sup>

Mambilla District was the most satisfied after the 1959 plebiscite. Its links with Adamawa were severed and the Mudagas were sent back to Yola. Some of its deposed a-Fon returned, and some of the usurpers were jailed. It became part of the Southern Trust Division whose Native Authority was called Gashaka-Mambilla Native Authority. It had its own District with special powers: "besides having an important advisory function to the Gashaka-Mambilla Native Authority, levies tax for local services." Its a-Fon collected taxes and maintained law and order. This "had fulfilled the desire of the Mambilla people to receive local authority in their own district and to be separated from the administration of the Adamawa Emirate."<sup>20</sup>

The response was not disappointing. At the beginning of the campaign, there was little political activity, "except for an extensive tour undertaken by the District Head, who lectured to the people in favour of the alternative for joining the Federation of Nigeria." Later on, the two groups of parties began to campaign actively, particularly the NKDP and the NPC. The new rulers began to refuse permits to the NKDP until forced by the United Nations observers to do so. 20,990 votes were cast, 7,467 for Cameroun and 13,523 for Nigeria.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, Mambilla reversed its 1959 position and voted for Nigeria.

The last plebiscite district, Wukari East (United Hills) was the only

one that had no boundary with Cameroun. But it had an extensive boundary on the south with Southern Kamerun and on the west with Nigeria. Prior to the 1959 plebiscite, it was a Division of the Benue Province of Nigeria and thus had no Native Authority in its own right. Culturally it seemed to have more links with its Nigerian neighbours than with the Southern Kamerunian and Mambilla neighbours.

This was the area which in 1959 had the least political activity. The NPC was relatively more active than the other parties. But there was no understanding of the issues involved in the plebiscite questions. There was a "fear that this area might be transferred to the Southern Cameroons if the second alternative [future decision] won, an eventuality repugnant to many who felt perfectly satisfied with their present status." When the votes were tallied, they totalled 3,152. Eighty-nine of these were for a future decision and 3,063 for Nigeria.<sup>22</sup> The United Hills district had voted with the highest majority for Nigeria. It appears that it voted against Southern Kamerun.

After the plebiscite, the district received its own Native Authority independent of the Wukari Native Authority Federation. The members of the previous three district councils in the area became members of the new Native Authority. It had "an appointed administrative councillor assisted by a total of 22 staff in managing its day-to-day local government affairs." It created a Finance Committee "composed of five of its elected members and the Administrative Councillor."<sup>23</sup>

The NPC was the only member of the Consortium that campaigned here and its campaign agents were members of the local branch. The NKDP was not very active in this district. The votes were 157 for Cameroun and 7,791 for

Nigeria, a total of 7,948.<sup>24</sup> There is no indication of what the issues were. But with the NPC as the major campaigner, there might be no question about the issues. They were perfectly satisfied with a Division in 1959. In 1961 they had a Native Authority independent of Wukari. In 1959, they voted against Southern Kamerun. In 1961, "French Community" was added to the already repugnant Southern Kamerun. These appear to have been their issues and their votes remained consistent.

What then is the conclusion? In the absence of sources from the electorate itself, this study must depend heavily on Dr. Abdoh's report for its analysis. Dr. Abdoh reported that in the 1959 plebiscite, the majority of the Northern Kamerunians voted to make a decision in the future; only in one plebiscite district was there a majority against that alternative. But when he took a look at the meaning of the votes for that plebiscite, he came out with a conclusion which, although already cited, must be repeated here for emphasis. As he put it,

It would appear that the majority of the voters made use of the opportunity offered by the plebiscite to register what was in effect a protest vote against the system of local administration prevailing in the Northern Cameroons. The information that I gathered in the Territory supports the view that the people desire the introduction of reforms in the system of local government--which to them is synonymous with government--and that one of the reasons why the majority voted in favour of the second alternative was to express the will for a speedy introduction of these reforms.<sup>25</sup>

The description embedded in this section of the study regarding the 1959 plebiscite would seem to add credence to Dr. Abdoh's conclusion. In the only district that voted against a future decision, Dr. Abdoh suggests that it was a vote more against Southern Kamerun than anything else. Essentially, therefore, the votes in that plebiscite not only had little reference to the United Nations' questions but were votes for local

administration which was interchangeable with government, whether of the Northern Region or of the Federation of Nigeria.

This situation, however, is not surprising. Historically, at the time of the plebiscites, Northern Kamerun was composed of five main groups of people: the Fulani who felt they had cultural identities and affinities with Northern Nigeria, many of whom were in authority, and nearly all of whom preferred the status quo; the dissident Fulani who probably recognized their affinities with Northern Nigeria but did not like either their subordination to the Northern Nigeria Fulani or the fact that their "German time iron rule" lost them their power; the non-Fulani Muslims who had accepted Islam in the first place as a means of protecting themselves against Fulani slave raiding; the christians, the majority of whom were non-Fulani, who had never forgiven the Fulani slaving activities and the threat of Islam to their cultural identity; and, those whose religion was paganism, the majority of whom were the a-Fon and their subjects, who still identified Islam and the Fulani of whichever region with the threat to their lives and cultural identity. Furthermore, there was numerically an insignificant minority, the Western-educated, who were unhappy with the fact that the only British industry in the region, administration, was mainly in the hands of Nigerians proper, Fulani and non-Fulani. All these groups, except the first which was in a disproportional minority, therefore, saw the 1959 plebiscite, not as a means of making a future decision, but as a way of redressing what they considered undesirable; the grievances were centered on local administration which was perceived as the Governments of the Northern Region and of Nigeria.

After the 1961 plebiscite in that region, Dr. Abdoh stated the results

of the plebiscite but refused to venture an opinion on the meaning of the votes. However, he did indicate that the meaning of the vote in that plebiscite might have had little connection with what the United Nations had intended in the two questions. As he put it,

The plebiscite in the Northern Cameroons, as a whole, has to be viewed in the context of the circumstances prevailing in the Territory as set forth in the chapter of the present report devoted to the political situation. [These circumstances included the "Separation of the administration of the Northern Cameroons from that of the Northern Region and local government reforms, Police forces in the Northern Cameroons, [and] The political parties and their activities in the plebiscite\*]. It should also be mentioned that, although the majority of the people of the Northern Cameroons may not have grasped the intricate and complex constitutional implications of the two alternatives, they were aware, nevertheless, that the decision they were called upon to make at the plebiscite meant joining one or the other of the two neighbouring countries.<sup>26</sup>

This statement is crucial to the understanding of the meaning of the votes in the Northern Kamerun 1961 plebiscite.

For the purpose of this study, Dr. Abdoh brings out four main points: the electorate was aware that it was called upon to make a choice between Nigeria and Cameroun; the same electorate might not have grasped the implications for joining Nigeria or Cameroun; the activities of political parties and the police who were Nigerians played a role; and, this is most important, the separation of Northern Kamerun administration from that of Nigeria and the introduction of reforms in local government, which was synonymous to government, in 1960 played a role. The factors which could have influenced the voting pattern as described earlier in this section included: geographic location of each district and the composition of its inhabitants, the boundary relations of each district to either Nigeria or

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\*See U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, p. 5.

Cameroun, the activities and offers of the political parties as shown in the preceeding chapter, fair play, the separation of Northern Kamerun administration from Nigeria, and the reforms of local government as indicated in the last chapter. These factors seem to suggest only two main differences between the situations of 1959 and of 1961. One of these, and that which was universal for the region, was the separation of the Northern Kamerun administration from that of Northern Nigeria and the introduction of reforms in the new administration. The second, fair play, was unique to the Chamba plebiscite district. It is in these two factors that the meaning of the vote in the 1961 plebiscite must be sought.

First, the Chamba plebiscite district, the only district which voted in favour of Cameroun in 1961. Although the factors which might have influenced the vote in this area had been stated earlier, the reader must be reminded about them here. There was no outside interference and no major complaints. There was no harassment of the supporters of the Cameroun proposition and both groups of parties campaigned freely and held processions. Campaigns were conducted on every market day. District Heads, Village Heads [the a-Fon], and Councillors were either members or supporters of the NKDP/KFP. It was the home of both the Minister for Northern Cameroons Affairs and that of the founder and President of the NKDP. Three points in particular are crucial here: the political ideas of the local authorities; the absence of harassment; and the lectures given on market days. The totality of these three factors suggest that the electorate was well-informed about what would happen after the plebiscite, namely, that the British would leave and with them the trusteeship system and that Northern Kamerun would then be either part of Nigeria or of Cameroun. Consequently, the electorate

of the district confirmed their desire to quit Nigeria.

On the other hand, the constant arrests and harassment of the outspoken supporters of the Cameroun proposition, and the activities of Sir John Dring during the conduct of the plebiscite denied the electorate of the rest of the plebiscite districts the knowledge that, after the plebiscite, the British would leave, trusteeship would be terminated, and Northern Kamerun would then be either part of Nigeria or of the Republic of Cameroun. Consequently, the Consortium which campaigned in favour of Nigeria sold to the electorate of those districts the idea that what was at stake was the reformed administration with its democratic element, the administration in which the dissident Fulani would be free from subordination to the Nigerian Fulani, and in which the non-Fulani Muslims, the christians, and the a-Fon together with the rest of their subjects would not only have their local affairs in their own hands but would also be ruled and protected by the British from the Fulani. As the Consortium itself put it, in a telegram to the United Nations, when it was rumoured, correctly, that Cameroun Republic was attempting to have the results of the 1961 plebiscite in Northern Kamerun nullified:

We have elected our Native Authorities and want to keep them. We do not want the Cameroun Republic.<sup>27</sup>

As seen in the preceding chapter, the democratic element in the election of the Native Authorities was stressed.<sup>28</sup> It would appear, therefore, that the majority of the votes in Northern Kamerun, in 1961, for Nigeria were votes for the reformed local administration.

Indeed, the apparent reversal of the 1959 decision in 1961 by the Northern Kamerunians was, in fact, not a reversal. In 1959, the majority

of them voted to have their local administration in their hands, to have the British stay, rule, and protect them, and to free themselves from subordination to the Nigerian Fulani as the case may be. The vote gave them all they looked for. In 1961, they voted to retain and protect the reformed local administration, gained in the last vote, with its advantages. That is why, as Vanghan found out, "Indeed, the proposed withdrawal of the British from the area with the end of the [1961] plebiscite was matter of gravest concern to many pagans,"<sup>29</sup> in the case of the non-Fulani.

British withdrawal threatened a lot: to subordinate the dissident Fulani to the Nigerian Fulani; to take away administrative jobs from the Western-educated Northern Kamerunians and give them to the Nigerian imperialists; to take away the control of local affairs from the a-Fon and their subjects and give them to the Yola monopolists; and, to remove British protection of the non-Fulani from the threat to their lives and cultural identity.

Freedom from subordination to the Nigerian Fulani in the case of the dissident Fulani, control of local affairs by the Northern Kamerunians, (Fulani and non-Fulani), continued trusteeship by the United Kingdom with its implied protection of the non-Fulani by the British, all form a continuum of what was promised during courtship that was not delivered after marriage.



The Meaning of the Votes in the  
Southern Kamerun Plebiscite

It would have been more appropriate to analyse the meaning of the votes in the Southern Kamerun Plebiscite Fondom by Fondom or ethnic group by ethnic group. But this approach, although best suited to reveal the accurate picture of the situation, has many problems, some of them insurmountable. These Fondoms number in the hundreds and it is very difficult to handle all of them in any detail in such a general study like the present one. Secondly, some of the Fondoms were integral parts of empires which have already been reduced here to large Fondoms, Kom, Nso, Bafut, Bali Nyonga for instance. Without any personal experience of the local politics of such large Fondoms, politics which the political leaders could and did exploit, it would be very difficult for any author to read the accurate meaning into the votes of its component parts. In his book, Johnson hinted this of Nso, and with firsthand information of this empire, the present writer shall use Nso to show that Johnson's hint was more than a suggestion, to show scholars how much there is still to be investigated about the meaning of the votes in the Southern Kamerun plebiscite, and to show the effectiveness of exploiting local issues for national events. Finally, written evidence is not enough to permit such a thorough approach; future scholars, working specifically on the topic of this chapter, might find interviews helpful. This study is general and only leading the way and cannot handle all that.

The approach adopted here, therefore, is one of looking at the individual Administrative Divisions separately and, where possible, going beyond them and looking at the various plebiscite districts within such Divisions. The approach for each Division is determined by the amount of evidence available.

This approach is bound to cause some discrepancy in the amount of time and space allotted to each Division or plebiscite district. But, on the whole, it is an improvement on the approaches adopted by current conventions. By treating the plebiscite on an all-Southern Kamerun level, the current literature had done a lot to blur the picture. It does not matter from which Division one begins, but it appears that the reader would have a clearer picture if the Divisions are analysed systematically from one end of the region to the other beginning from Nkambe in the extreme north. Before this is done, however, it might be better to put the results of the plebiscite in a table in order that the reader might see who apparently voted for what before reading the analyses.

Results by Number of Votes  
in the Southern Kamerun Plebiscite<sup>30</sup>

Administrative Divisions and Plebiscite Districts	Number of Votes for Nigeria	Number of Votes for Cameroun
<u>Nkambe Division*</u>		
Nkambe North	5,962	1,917
Nkambe East	3,845	5,896
Nkambe Central	5,095	4,288
Nkambe South	7,051	2,921
Total	21,917	15,022
<u>Wum Division*</u>		
Wum North	1,485	7,322
Wum Central	3,644	3,211
Wum East	1,518	13,133
Wum West	2,137	3,449
Total	8,784	27,115

\*Area or Division in the grasslands.

Administrative Divisions and Plebiscite Districts	Number of Votes for Nigeria	Number of Votes for Cameroun
<u>Bamenda Division*</u>		
Bamenda North (Nso)	8,073	18,839
Bamenda East (Ndop)	1,822	17,856
Bamenda Central West (Bafut)	1,230	18,027
Bamenda Central East (Ngemba)	529	18,193
Bamenda West (Menemo, Ngie, Ngwaw)	467	16,142
Bamenda South (Bali Nyonga, Moghamo)	220	19,426
Total	12,341	108,485
<u>Mamfe Division†</u>		
Mamfe West	2,039	8,505
Mamfe North	5,432	6,410
Mamfe South	685	8,175
Mamfe East	1,894	10,177
Total	10,070	33,267
<u>Kumba Division**</u>		
Kumba North-East	9,466	11,991
Kumba North-West	14,738	555
Kumba South-East	6,105	12,827
Kumba South-West	2,424	2,227
Total	32,733	27,600
<u>Victoria Division**</u>		
Victoria South-West	2,552	3,756
Victoria South-East	1,329	4,870
Victoria North-West	4,744	4,205
Victoria North-East	3,291	9,251
Total	11,916	22,082
Grand Total--Southern Kamerun	97,741	233,571

\*Area or Division in the grasslands.

†Area or Division partly in the grasslands but mainly in the forest zone.

\*\*Area or Division in the forest zone--coastal belt.

A swift look at the preceding table would reveal that two Administrative Divisions, one in the grasslands and the other in the forest zone, voted for the Nigeria proposition while the region as a whole voted for the Cameroun proposition. What the Nigeria proposition or the Cameroun proposition actually meant to the voters in each Division and/or Plebiscite District is the subject of the following pages. Fortunately, unlike the case in Northern Kamerun, some of the voters did indicate, after the plebiscite in 1961, what these propositions meant to them. However, before the present writer takes a look at the meaning of the propositions to the various groups of electorate for which there are sources, he points out certain factors which future researchers might wish to consider.

The geographic location of all the various plebiscite districts (district or districts hereafter) in Nkambe Division was as follows. Nkambe North shared boundaries with Northern Kamerun; it voted with a huge majority for the Nigeria proposition. Nkambe East shared boundaries with Northern Kamerun and with Cameroun Republic; it had about a 2,000 majority in favour of Cameroun. No part of Nkambe had boundaries with Nigeria. Except for a very negligible portion of Nkambe South which shared boundaries with Cameroun, Nkambe Central and Nkambe South had no boundary with any region outside Southern Kamerun. In both districts, the number of votes were substantially in favour of the Nigeria proposition. After the plebiscite, many a-Fon, some groups, and persons in Nkambe Division indicated what the Nigeria or the Cameroun proposition meant to them in general.

It appears that there was some local rivalry in Nkambe East which the political leaders of the district exploited. After the plebiscite, the a-Fon of Mbembe asked the United Nations not to bother about the outcry in Nkambe

against reunification.. They were ready for reunification for which they had  
 X voted.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, some of the a-Fon in the same district, who  
 called themselves 'Nobles,' and who apparently voted for Nigeria, called  
 upon the United Nations to partition the region between those who voted  
 for Nigeria and those who voted for Cameroun. Such a partition was neces-  
 sary "in order to avert a repetition of the tribal and civil disorders  
 which are now taking place in the Congo Republic."<sup>32</sup> Without saying what  
 reunification meant to him, but reacting more against the call for partition,  
 a certain Jabov H. Nkambe felt that any person who did not want reunification  
 should "leave our country and go to Nigeria following the other alternative."<sup>33</sup>  
 Jabov seemed to be concerned more with the land than with its inhabitants.  
 Whether the boundary with Cameroun played an important role in this district  
 or not, there is strong indication that two groups of the a-Fon were involved  
 in some internal rivalry.

Whatever the case, some petitions from Nkambe are very useful in helping  
 the reader to have a clearer knowledge of what the Nigeria or Cameroun pro-  
 position meant in general to the inhabitants of the area. The Women's  
 Association of Nkambe voted en bloc against Cameroun and for Nigeria for  
 several reasons. Without a constitution for reunification, the Republic of  
 Cameroun was "an uncertain destination." Its future was "uncertain," and  
 its "Government very unstable." On the other hand, there was the "Rule of  
 Law, respect for Human Rights and Freedom of practice of Democracy as the  
 true form of Government," in Nigeria. Their kith and kin were in Northern  
 Kamerun and had chosen to remain in Nigeria. They had no wish to lose their  
 kith and kin in Northern Kamerun.<sup>34</sup> Terrorist activities which threatened  
 the stability of the Government of Cameroun, the absence of a constitution

for reunification before the vote, stability and democracy in Nigeria, and the desire to be with their kith and kin whom the British Western Kamerun boundary had put in Northern Kamerun were factors to be reckoned with in understanding the meaning of the vote of the Nkambe Women's Association.

On the other hand, the a-Fon of the area emphasized ethnic identity which the Association had mentioned more than anything else. As they saw it, both in the 1959 general elections and in the plebiscite, they had voted "solidly" for "association" with Nigeria. They had cultural, linguistic, and ethnic affinities and affiliations with Northern Kamerun and with their neighbours in Nigeria.\* If the tearing apart of Southern Kamerun through political strife was to be avoided, Nkambe Division should be separated from Southern Kamerun and made part of Northern Kamerun.<sup>35</sup> The vote of these a-Fon and their subjects would appear to mean a vote for Northern Kamerun, not Nigeria, and specifically a vote for their kith and kin in Northern Kamerun. This is exactly what the political leaders of Nkambe--Ando, Tamfu, Nsame, Nyanjanji--seemed to have said at the same period.<sup>36</sup>

Even the Nkambe people who were at the time living in Wum Division had the same perceptions. As they saw it, Nkambe should be separated from Southern Kamerun and made part of Northern Kamerun "with whom we of Nkambe have everything, culturally and administratively the same." In this, they were merely seeking their national identity; they had no "brotherly,

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\*The mention of Nigeria here is very surprising, because no part of Nkambe had boundaries with Nigeria. However, it might be, since they claim ethnic identity with the area of Northern Kamerun closest to them and which had boundaries with Nigeria, that through that area of Northern Kamerun, they could claim Nigeria as a neighbour.

cultural and administrative links with the Cameroun Republic." Furthermore, there was no stability, progress, and solidarity in Cameroun Republic. Nkambe was part of Southern Kamerun only for administrative convenience.<sup>37</sup> Again the meaning of the votes in this Division points to Northern Kamerun.

However, although not a disinterested party, it was the CPNC of Nkambe which indicated why Nkambe as a whole voted for Nigeria and what the votes in that Division for Cameroun actually meant. As it saw it, Nkambe Division had brothers and cousins in Northern Kamerun whom it would not "miss" and with whom it must "march" to independence in Nigeria. Should Nkambe not be separated from Southern Kamerun and made part of Northern Kamerun the Congo affair would be repeated in Southern Kamerun.

Perhaps it may be worthy to mention at this juncture that up to the moment . . . a substantial majority of the people in the territory [Southern Kamerun] do not understand what they voted for. Most of them think that they voted for an Independent Southern Cameroons State and NOT [re]unification, in the Plebiscite.<sup>38</sup>

Here was the impact of the London November 1960 Talks. Here too was the consequence of the United Nations decision on the two alternatives of the plebiscite.

Unlike Nkambe Division, only a small portion of Wum Division had boundaries with Northern Kamerun. However, while Wum had an extensive boundary with Nigeria, no part of it had any boundary with Cameroun Republic. While a very large but sparsely populated area of Wum had ethnic identity with the Tiv of Nigeria, the largest and heavily populated Fondom (actually empire) in Wum, Kom, had more ethnic links with the Nso of Bamenda and its subjects interacted more with Bamenda than with the rest of Wum. Jua, the deputy leader of the KNDP came from this Kom Fondom. The extensive boundary with Nigeria in this Division was almost exclusively shared by Wum North

which voted overwhelmingly for Cameroun. This Division, as seen in chapter four, was the most confused between 1959 and 1961. It was also one of those Divisions for which there is written evidence that the a-Fon, including the Fon of Kom, asked their subjects a few days before voting to vote for reunification.

Fon John Yai of Bum (Wum Central), who went with Endeley the second time to London in 1958 in place of the Fon of Bali Nyonga, was the first to indicate the situation in Wum. After the plebiscite Yai argued that he and his people voted for "association" with Nigeria "within the British Commonwealth of Nations" (the Commonwealth was thus a condition 'sine qua non' for association with Nigeria). His Fondom had a boundary with Nigeria\* and had "been trading with the Federation long before the advent of the whiteman." His people shared the British educational, legal, and cultural systems with Nigeria. Reunification would only be detrimental and retrogressive in all aspects of life.<sup>39</sup>

Yai's argument was repeated by the Fon of Bu (Wum Central) and ten of his Councillors. This Fon, Chu, argued that his people voted for "continued association with the Federation of Nigeria in the Commonwealth." His Fondom has had the same "culture" with Nigeria for over 45 years," the same "judicial and legal system," and the same land ownership system. All this differed from what obtained in the Cameroun Republic. The difference between the "British and French laws" would lead them into confusion. They could not

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\*Bum had no boundary with Nigeria but it was an important entrepot of the Kolanut trade between Southern Kamerun and Northern Nigeria.



"leave from the British colony system to the French colony system" (sic). The best course was to partition Southern Kamerun between those who favoured association with Nigeria in the Commonwealth and those who voted for reunification.<sup>40</sup> The stress on the Commonwealth and the British tradition and systems by Fon Chu is instructive.

Again, Fon Chu was among a possible combination of the a-Fon of Wum Central and Wum East--Chu of Bu, Tigha Nlua of Naikom, Achonji of Su, and Baunjia of Waindo--who, seven days before Chu wrote singly, opted out of reunification on March 3, 1961, something they had apparently voted for during the plebiscite. These a-Fon argued that the politicians deceived and misled those of them who voted blindly for reunification "without understanding the issues at stake." They abhorred the idea and dreaded "the very thought of uniting with the Cameroun Republic whose customs, way of life and method of government" differed from anything they had known. They wished to continue in their association with Nigeria in the Commonwealth which "has Her Majesty the Queen as the Head." They liked to continue to enjoy the freedom, the system of government and justice which they had received from the British in their "association with the British Throne." Should the idea of reunification be pressed forward, they would secede from Southern Kamerun and join their "kinsmen the Munchis of Tiv tribe of Nigeria." They voted for reunification because they were carried away by the lie that "the White Box stood for the Southern Cameroons as it is without any change in administration."<sup>41</sup> What these a-Fon were arguing for seems to suggest what the integrationists were offering them during the campaign, and, of course, they indicated what reunification for which they voted meant to them: "Southern Kamerun as it is without any change in administration."<sup>42</sup>

Some men and women in these areas, other than the a-Fon, also complained to the United Nations after the plebiscite. On March 12, 1961, a group of women from Su, Aghem, argued against reunification asserting that it would change their peaceful life and freedom, lead them to strife and confusion, and, because of the terrorist activities, lead to the death of their husbands.<sup>43</sup> The men of the same Fondom, on March 17, 1961, argued quite differently from the women. Their vote for reunification was a function of the threat they received from the KNDP Government. They were not ready to be led into reunification by "the blind and tribal votes of the Bamenda people." If the boundary was not adjusted to include them in Northern Kamerun, the United Nations could expect to find itself occupied; they would take things into their own hands.<sup>44</sup>

The a-Fon of Wum West (Beba-Befang-Essimbi) were among those who asked their subjects to vote for reunification about which they themselves had little, if any, knowledge. As they put it themselves, they wished "to make it abundantly clear" that they "were deceived by the KNDP politicians." These politicians told them that voting for reunification meant secession from Nigeria, joining the Republic, "but remaining by ourselves under a similar regime as is obtainable now" (that is, without any influence from the Cameroun Republic or any modifications resulting from reunification). The KNDP deceived them and they held back their subjects from going to listen to the enlightenment lectures. They thus voted for reunification without knowing what it involved. It was now their determination not to be pushed into reunification by the Bamenda people.<sup>45</sup>

This position of these a-Fon was echoed by some of their subjects. Boja, although not an impartial observer, argued that the KNDP deceived

the people that the second alternative was secession without reunification and that the idea of gradual reunification after fifteen years was intended to deceive the OK.<sup>46</sup> The women of Essimbi argued that they voted 97 per cent for the "British Commonwealth," and no matter what happened, they must remain in the Commonwealth where they would enjoy "Freedom, Security, Liberty and Equality." Life in the Republic was "very uncertain" to them, and reunification might result in "Commonism" (sic) and in making them part of the French Community, both ideas they resented down to their marrow. They were happy and satisfied with the British way of life which gave equality to men and women. That the Queen was the present ruler of Britain was indicative of the equality between men and women, something which would never happen in the Republic of Cameroun; a woman would never be head of the Government of the Republic of Cameroun.<sup>47</sup>

Nigerian friendliness, the British tradition, the Commonwealth, and cultural identity might explain the meaning of the votes in Wum North. The a-Fon of Fungom area argued that they wished to be with Nigeria because Nigerians were their "friends," and because that would prevent them from "leaving the British Commonwealth" with which they had been for many years. There was nothing wrong with Nigeria and the Nigerians had not done any wrong thing to them.\* Cameroun Republic was far removed from them and they did not understand the language of the Republic (French). Furthermore, the Nigerians with whom they shared a boundary were their kinsmen.<sup>48</sup> Although the majority of them voted for the "White Box," reunification, (the votes were 1,485 for Nigeria and 7,322 for Cameroun), the votes were

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\*This area was far removed from Ibo influences.

for "Foncha, as a son of the grassland, and not for unification." Their votes for the "Green Box" were votes for "association with Nigeria."<sup>49</sup>

Wum North had thus asked and answered its own questions at the plebiscite:

As one of the four most powerful a-Fon, the Fon of Kom did not bother writing any petition after the plebiscite. He and his loyal subjects voted for the second alternative and he, therefore, had no reason to complain; the votes were 1,518 for Nigeria and 13,133 for Cameroun. It is thus difficult to know what the votes of Wum East stood for. Up to 1960, the Fon of Kom, like his brother the Fon of Nso, was an integrationist.\* During this period, Jua, who was both a Minister and the Deputy Leader of the KNDP, worked hard to influence the Fon of Kom to change his mind. It is obvious that the Fon changed his mind since as Boja reported, and as seen in the preceding chapter, this Lion of Kom asked his subjects to vote for reunification. However, the three-point general offer the KNDP made to Wum as a whole might have had something to do with it. These included the ideas that: a vote for the White Box meant a vote "to regain our land from the Ibo people and not for joining the Republic of Cameroun"; the "White Box represented our Grassland son Mr. Foncha while the Green Box represented Dr. Endeley the Coastal man"; and, any grasslander "voting for the Green Box did so against the tribe."<sup>50</sup>

Bamenda Division, the most populous area of Southern Kamerun, had no boundaries with either Nigeria or Northern Kamerun. On the other hand, it had an extensive boundary with Cameroun Republic. It was the home of

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\*I remember vividly while , as students, in St. Peter's College, Bambui, Lawrence Yen Chia from Kom informed me that the Fon of Kom might be dethroned if he did not change his mind. I also remember warning him that Nso could not be indifferent to the fate of the Fon of Kom.

X two political leaders, Foncha and Ntumazah. It also had a disproportional share of extraneous factors in Southern Kamerun, the Ibo and the Eastern Kamerunians in addition to the Hausa of Northern Nigeria. It was the home of three of the four most powerful a-Fon of Southern Kamerun, the Lion of Nso, the Lion of Bafut, and the Lion of Bali Nyonga. As a result, tradition and respect for it was paramount in this Division. All over Southern Kamerun, the majority of the electorate of each Fondom or ethnic group voted in the same direction. But this situation was more pronounced in this Division than elsewhere except where local politics made it possible for the political leaders to exploit the situation and alter the pattern.

Bamenda Division was in a curious situation. Because of its dominant population size, because of its strong traditional systems and powerful a-Fon, and because it was the home of the Premier, the rest of the Divisions, Mamfe less so than the others, blamed it for everything believed to have gone or going wrong.\* It is not surprising, therefore, that, with no one else to blame, except perhaps itself, Bamenda Division was the area with the least number of complaints after the plebiscite. Consequently, the attempt to find out from the Bamenda people themselves, what reunification, for which they voted so overwhelmingly--12,341 for Nigeria, 108,485 for Cameroun--meant to them has not been very fruitful. A.A. Tamasang,

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\*During the Nigeria-Biafra War, reunification, for the first time, became SINCERELY very popular in Southern Kamerun, then West Cameroon. The popular saying, with some justification, was, "We would have become the battleground." Then, everyone claimed credit for his wisdom in voting for reunification; Bamenda no longer received the credit. This was also the period when the popular myth depicting Foncha as the "Champion of Reunicifaciton" caught the imagination of nearly all West Cameroonians.

who was leading the KNC in Foncha's own Fondom and was, indeed, Foncha's cousin, and Mallam L.T. Sale of Nso, who was the leader of the Muslim Congress, mentioned direct bribery, coercive activities, and the misrepresentation of the questions as discussed in the last chapter.<sup>51</sup> But neither of them nor their supporters voted for reunification anyway.

Nevertheless, since, during the campaign period, the KNDP "concentrated its main efforts in the Bamenda highlands,"<sup>52</sup> in the absence of grass-roots sources, the meaning of the votes of Bamenda must be sought within the general offers of the KNDP. Although these offers had been indicated in the preceding chapter, they must be summarized here, if only for emphasis. These offers included: a plea to the Bamenda peoples to free themselves from the Commonwealth, the French Community, Nigeria, and Ibo domination; a request to the people to regain their land, property, and control of Bamenda from the Ibo; a plea to the people to salvage their traditions from Ibo destruction; an invitation to the Bamenda people to carry forward the development of the area which the Germans initiated but which the British retarded; a request to the Bamenda people to build a Kamerun nation, preserve the identity of that nation, and preserve the identity of Kamerunians within it.<sup>53</sup> Mbile's idea that the plebiscite was a struggle between the "ignorant" people of Bamenda and the forest dwellers, and the idea of Foncha being a Bamenda son were also well publicized.<sup>54</sup> All this would seem to suggest what reunification would give to the 'guilty' Bamenda people.

But, there were other areas in Bamenda, Nso or Bamenda North for instance, where the KNDP exploited the local situation and the votes of the district spoke a different language altogether. No one seemed to have

understood this better than the supreme Fon of Nso, Sehm III, himself. After the plebiscite, this Lion, on March 3, 1961, addressed a lengthy message to the United Nations (part of his empire had become disloyal for the first time) which brought out the following points. He ruled over 60,000 people, about 26,000 of whom had registered and voted at the plebiscite. Nso was "virtually" an "empire with tributary chiefdoms [Fondoms] and lineage head systems." Because of confusion, fanaticism, and organized agitation created by "political careerists, most people mainly the illiterate masses" voted blindly and sentimentally "without due consideration and appreciation for the purpose and implications of the plebiscite." The conduct of the plebiscite was characterized by "Lust for money by the poor, jobs for those disappointed in life, apparent and vain prestige for the disgruntled class," all of which found expression in "organized hooliganism, pressure groups, lying groups, self seeking and other influences of personal and petty group pride and advantages." Lies about continued trusteeship and "separate independence for Southern Cameroons," and the "distortive propaganda" that a vote for Nigeria meant "selling the Southern Cameroons in slavery to the Ibo" dominated the plebiscite campaign. Many of the a-Fon within the Nso empire and some of the a-Talaah (plural of Shufai or any other Fai--lineage heads) in Nso voted for reunification as a means or sign of freedom from the "Over-Lord" (Sehm III, himself) whose "nucleus people" tended to vote for integration. Some of the a-Fon had been regarded as "imperialists." Some politicians had tried to undermine traditional systems "and long established central authorities" in order to win votes. This was "done by fanning old prejudices, creating dissatisfaction and aggravating disgruntlement and pride

among subordinate chiefdoms [Fondoms] and lineage heads." He was very skeptical about the going talk of partitioning the region, but, if the United Nations should proceed with it, Nso should be made part of Northern Nigeria.<sup>55</sup> By requesting that the United Nations make Nso part of Northern Nigeria, in case of the partition of Southern Kamerun, the Fon virtually refused to recognize the results of the plebiscite in Nso. This significant point should not be missed.

The Fon's message was essentially a description of Nso local politics and the exploitation of the situation by the KNDP during the plebiscite. There were (are) at least three ranks of the a-Fon in Nso. The Fon of Nso is the lone supreme authority; he is the Fon of Nso Central, the nucleus people of Nso, and the Fon of every other Fondom within the empire. The a-Fon of Mbiame, Oku, Nkar, and Ntseh\* come next in rank and there is no real distinguishing among them at their own level. Below these, there are numerous minor a-Fon some of whom were Western-educated at the plebiscite period. Nso Central itself is made up of many powerful villages and families (lineages), families whose members number in the thousands. The head, Shufai or Lord, of one of these families is actually a privileged second most powerful person in the Nso empire.

Nso local politics at the time of the plebiscite had at least three characteristics to it. The rest of the Fondoms, Fon Philip of Noni in particular, within the empire were not always too happy with their subordination to the central Fondom although they always obeyed the proclamation

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\*Very often, the Nsungli consider Ntseh part of them but the Fon of Ntseh considers himself and his subjects part of Nso. Nearly every person in Ntseh speaks both Nso and Nsungli languages.



of the Fon of Nso. For some reason, to be seen presently, the Fon of Nso was in an informal alliance with Endeley and the British. This meant he was to influence Nso to vote for whatever Endeley and the British stood. Realising the resentment of some of the a-Fon for their subordinate role in Nso affairs, the local KNDP leaders made it easy for these a-Fon to interpret reunification as a means of gaining independence from, or at least acting independently of the wishes of the Fon of Nso. This was what Sehm III meant when he said the a-Fon in the empire voted for reunification as a sign of freedom from the "Over-Lord" whose nucleus people tended to vote for integration with Nigeria. It was also what he meant when he said politicians were "creating disquiet and pride among subordinate chiefdoms."

Within Nso Central itself, there was a family affair between Sehm III and his second in command, Shufai Ndzendzevf (the Lord or head of the Ndzendzevf family), Njodzeka. The squabble between Sehm III and Njodzeka was too complicated and too involved to be handled here. However, the problem in its most skeletal form was as follows. Nga, the Fon of Nso whom Sehm III succeeded, died at a very old age. During his last years, Shufai Ndzendzevf was virtual ruler of Nso and wielded power no Shufai had ever wielded before in Nso. At the same time Njodzeka began to show a preference for Shufai Gasah as the most likely successor to Nga. When Nga died, Njodzeka and the other Fon-makers clashed over the successor; the majority stood for Mbinglo, while Njodzeka apparently stood alone for Shufai Gasah. Against Njodzeka's opposition, Mbinglo came to the throne as Sehm III. On the most important day for mourning over Nga, Njodzeka came to the Palace well-dressed in disregard of tradition; he had gone too

far too fast with the wrong person--Sehm III was a lion who put his words into immediate action. Njodzeka's act was annoying to many of the Nso subjects, some of whom seized the opportunity to inform Sehm III of Njodzeka's opposition to the former's enthronement, something the Fon was already apprised of through treachery and a desire to gain favours. The Fon and many of his Councillors interpreted Njodzeka's act as a challenge. On top of all this, Njodzeka attempted to play the role he had played during the last years of Nga in ruling Nso. Sehm III was not the man to share authority with any person in the Nso empire; he already had enough power but he wanted more. The stage for a clash had been set. It led to Njodzeka's exile to Baba. When he attempted to come back home, there was a civil war in Nso--a seven hour war in which actual combat lasted for three hours. Njodzeka was next exiled to Mamfe where he took his own life. During all this, the British and Endeley were on the side of Sehm III in an informal alliance: the Fon would ask his subjects to vote for whatever they stood and they would support the Fon over Njodzeka. On the other hand, the local KNDP leaders made the Ndzendzevf family to regard reunification as opposition to the Fon. This was what the Fon meant when he said some political "careerists" were "fanning old prejudices, creating dissatisfaction and aggravating disgruntlement and pride among subordinate . . . lineage heads."

But there was still another lineage head prejudice which these politicians exploited. This involved Shufai Yuwar, originally a princely family but generations, according to tradition, had stripped it of that princeliness. There was also a family affair between Shufai Yuwar and the Fon of Nso. The problem began possibly during the early 1920s if not during the German

period. It was also possibly during the reign of Nga. Whoever was ruling (it might have been Tamanjo, but surely not Mapiri) exiled Shufai Yuwar to Nsungli (later in Nkambe Division) for reasons not readily known. In the late 1920s (about 1926) Shufai Yuwar was asked to return home with his family whose members numbered in the hundreds. But, either his son or his grandson, the present Shufai of Yuwar, never forgave the Fon of Nso for the exile. When he succeeded to the Yuwar headship, he was looking for an opportunity to retaliate. That the contemporary Fon was not responsible for the exile made no difference. Encouraged by politicians, the plebiscite gave Shufai Yuwar the opportunity. Indeed, Yuwar was the headquarters of the KNDP in Nso. Shufai Yuwar was, thus, one of those "lineage heads" whose "old prejudices" had been fanned to whom the Fon referred. The votes of the Yuwar family for reunification were probably votes against its long forgotten exile which lived in the mind of the family head.

Finally, although the list of rivalries in Nso could be multiplied indefinitely, there was a strong rivalry, which had nothing to do with the Fon directly, among the people of Nso Central themselves. Seated at the centre of Nso and in Kimbo,\* (Kumbo) and always having the ears of the Fon first, the Kimbo people became the target of opposition from the various

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\*Originally, the word 'Kimbo,' when pronounced correctly, meant the act of cheating--also called 'mbomi,' cheating. Since no person outside Kimbo could confer with the Fon, except the more powerful a-Talaah, without passing through a Kimbo person, and this involved tipping also, the Kimbo people were soon described as cheaters; so came the name of the capital. But the Kimbo people soon succeeded in distorting the pronunciation of the name and thus made it devoid of any meaning. Kumbo is the British anglicized version.

villages of Nso Central, particularly from the Western-educated and youths of those villages. When the plebiscite came and the Kimbo people indicated they would 'Kpu Fon mbov,' that is, die by the side of the Fon, the Western-educated people and youths from these various villages of Nso Central, especially Meluf and Nkum, saw an opportunity for registering their opposition to Kimbo. These were those the Fon referred to as hoolings, liars, and organized agitators and opposition to Kimbo is what reunification might have meant to them.

The plebiscite had done to Nso what, if the reader were careful enough he should have found out by now, it did to Southern Kamerun as a whole; it undermined Nso unity and threatened tradition just as much as it undermined the unity of Southern Kamerun and threatened tradition all over the region. The KNDP is best remembered in Nso for one notorious phrase which its local leaders coined at the time: "Tiy yi mo-o yo wui a-ning eh yi mo-o kitu-- No stone shall lie on another." What this phrase meant actually was that: no Fon in Nso shall have authority over Nso; no Fon in Nso shall have authority over any other Fon within the Nso empire; the Fon of Nso shall not have authority over Shufai Ndzendzevf and Shufai Yuwar; and, Kimbo shall not dominate the other villages. But it also meant much more than these opportunists would have admitted: no Fon shall have authority over his subjects; no politician shall have authority over his constituents; and, perhaps more importantly, no government in Southern Kamerun or Cameroon shall have authority over the governed. In short, the phrase preached anarchism. It was this that led Sehm III to conclude that the politicians or political careerists were attempting to undermine traditional systems "and long established central authorities." Whatever the case, it appears

that the Nso asked and answered their own questions at the plebiscite, interpreting the United Nations questions to suit their local politics.\* Future and more specific studies would have to find out whether the Nso situation was replicated anywhere in Southern Kamerun. For the moment, this general study would have to proceed with its investigation southwards.

Mamfe Division had the longest boundary with Nigeria and a not insignificant boundary with Cameroun Republic. Although it was significantly larger than Bamenda in geographic terms, it was sparsely populated. It was partly in the grasslands but mainly in the forest zone. Its traditional systems were still relatively intact at the time of the plebiscite. It comes out as the most politically well-organized Division--combining its traditional systems with the British system to produce a cohesive Mamfe system--at the time of the nationalist movement and plebiscite. It was here that the choice was made to live with the devil one knew (Nigeria) than to live with the devil one did not know (Cameroun). It was also Mamfe which destroyed, by refusing to co-operate, the 'ViKuMa Movement'--the

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\*It is significant that when an outside observer, Willard R. Johnson, op. cit., p. 48 suggested casually that the votes in Nso might have spoken a peculiar language, he was immediately contradicted by Thaddius Kinga, who was studying in the U.S. at the time Johnson was writing, and who was a school-mate, in the same St. Theresia's School, Kimbo, of the present writer. "The people remain competitive with the core clans of the original groups; the resulting cleavages can become important in political competition. Such cleavages may have influenced the plebiscite vote in Nsaw [Nso], for example," op. cit., p. 48. Kinga claimed to have his information from Joseph N. Lafon, one of the local KNDP leaders. Johnson has been vindicated by this study. Kinga who came from one of the closest villages to Kimbo, Kikai, and who graduated from the biggest school in Kimbo should have known this without any consultation.

idea, possibly suggested by Mbile, that Victoria, Kumba, and Mamfe Divisions should band together, present a united front to the grasslands, and if possible, and if need be, expel the grasslanders from these Divisions by force of arms. Indeed, at one point in time (late 1950s) there was so much tension between the grasslanders and the indigenous inhabitants of Kumba and Victoria Divisions in these two Divisions that, had Mamfe cooperated, Southern Kamerun would likely have experienced violent conflict. This was what Manga-Williams referred to, as seen in chapter five, when he said the people of the coastal belt had guns and cutlasses\* ready for a civil war and that the solution was either the provision of a third question for the plebiscite or the creation of a Smaller Kamerun State.

Unfortunately, the Mamfe people, who did not seem to blame Bamenda very much for everything that went or was going wrong, did not indicate what reunification meant to them after the plebiscite. The content of their votes for reunification must therefore be sought within the framework of the general KNDP campaign offers. Since these had been indicated above in the section on Bamenda, they need not be repeated here. However, the majority of those who apparently voted for Nigeria in Mamfe Overseide or Mamfe North did indicate why they did so. The a-Fon of Mamfe Overseide argued that the Nigeria-Kamerun boundary split their ethnic group with the greater portion of the group going to Nigeria. The time had come for them, the smaller portion, to be reunited with their kinsmen in Nigeria. That was why the majority of them voted for Nigeria.<sup>56</sup> It should be remembered that

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\*See U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 103, February 1, 1961, pp. 1-4.

it was in this area that the KPP won the only seat in the 1953 general elections while the KNC claimed the rest of the seats in Southern Kamerun. On March 16, 1961, these a-Fon argued that Takamanda, Assumbo, and Mesaga Ekol, their pre-colonial Fondoms had been split by the Nigeria-Kamerun boundary. They had cultural, linguistic, and ethnic affinities with their Nigerian neighbours. They had never benefitted from the taxes they paid to Southern Kamerun and they had "no cultural, linguistic, administrative, political and social relationship with the people of the Cameroun Republic."<sup>57</sup> Essentially, then, the Boki votes of 4,920 for Nigeria and 1,088 for Cameroun<sup>58</sup> had very little consideration, if any, for the whole of Nigeria as a political entity.

Kumba Division, possibly the largest administrative unit in Southern Kamerun in geographic terms, had a significant boundary with Nigeria on the west, and a more extensive boundary with Cameroun Republic on the east. It was the home of Nerus Namaso Mbile, Leader of the KPP after mid-1959, and later, Deputy Leader of the CPNC. It was sparsely populated. About two-thirds of its land was controlled by one ethnic group, the Bakundu. It had a considerable number of non-Kumba indigenous inhabitants mainly from Nigeria, Bamenda Highlands, and Eastern Kamerun. Its over-all votes, contributed mainly by the Bakundu ethnic group, were in favour of Nigeria; it was thus one of the Divisions which voted for Nigeria. Not surprisingly, it was the Division which, according to the available evidence, complained most after the plebiscite. Indeed, nearly all the major Fondoms of the Division complained to the United Nations after the declaration of the results of the plebiscite.

The Bakossi, probably the only ethnic group which does not readily fall

within the Bakundu ethnic group, complained very bitterly. Their complaint was raised by the 'Mwane-Ngoe Union,' a Union of apparently all the Bakossi speaking peoples, on March 4, 1961. The Bakossi argued that "tribal sentiments rather than a clear understanding of the issues at stake had greatly influenced the voting at the recent Southern Cameroon Plebiscite in favour of the second alternative." There were "hazards" in the proposed "vague political experiment of 'UNIFICATION' with the Cameroun Republic." The situation was fraught with "discontent, rancor, bitterness and terrorism." They were calling upon the United Nations "to make all appropriate arrangements whereby the Bakossi people [would] be administered with other kindred tribes who [had] voted solidly for Federation with the independent Federation of Nigeria."<sup>59</sup> Although the Bakossi did not spell out what the discontent, rancor and bitterness were all about, it was , more probable than not, Bakossi-Bamiléké Tombel Land problem which lay behind the Bakossi vote.

The next people in Kumba to raise an alarm were the Bakundu. In February, 1961, the Bakundu People Convention argued that they had voted solidly for integration with Nigeria. A careful analysis of the results of the plebiscite, "from the tribal units to the Divisional basis," would depict nothing "but an enduring relic of mass ignorance, fanaticism and hysteria on one hand and nostalgia, intimidation, deceit and intellectual amnesia on the other." The territory had been placed "on the brink of a paroxysm," and the Congo situation was around the corner. There had never been any Kamerun Nation, and "the rumpus that a Nation had been split [was] sheer chicanery." Reunification could only pass on the score of sentiment. People voted without any information about the implications of the two



questions in the plebiscite. Justice would not be made if some ethnic groups were allowed to decide for others because of their superior numbers. They would never acquiesce in reunification and they were prepared to fight against it to the last man.<sup>60</sup> After all this wasteful exercise in euphuism, threats, and accusations, H.N. Elangwe, President of the Convention, and his countrymen failed to show what, in their own minds, the two plebiscite questions involved. Nevertheless, by asserting that justice would not be done if one ethnic group were to decide for another, and that they would not accept the results of the plebiscite which were based on the votes of the majority, the Bakundu themselves denied that the plebiscite was an all-Southern Kamerun issue.

The Bafaw of Kumba joined in the Bakundu outcry against reunification while the Mbonge of Kumba embraced reunification. The Bafaw Youths Association, on March 21, 1961, argued that Foncha led the slogans: "Ibos must go"; "Kamerun na we country"--Kamerun is our country or Kamerun for the Kamerunians; "voting for the White Box meant retention of Our Cameroon soil for the Cameroons"; and, "a vote for a Green Box meant selling the Cameroon soil to the Ibos."<sup>61</sup> The votes in Kumba North-East where Bafaw was located were 9,466 for Nigeria and 11,991 for Cameroun. It is probable, therefore, that the majority in this district for the Cameroun proposition represented these Foncharian slogans. On March 20, 1961, the a-Fon of Mbonge (Kumba South-East) "solemnly and solidly" declared their "faith" in the cause of their "nation, which voted for unification with the Republic of Cameroun." They had nothing to do with integration with Nigeria and the proposed partitioning of Southern Kamerun. The plebiscite "was not a tribal issue but a national issue," and the "two questions posed at the

plebiscite were intended to achieve this end--of identity."<sup>62</sup> The Mbonge had thus interpreted the questions of the plebiscite in terms of 'national identity.' It is little wonder then that Mbonge was located in the only district in Kumba that voted with an overwhelming majority (6,105 to 12,827) in favour of the Cameroun proposition.

The last group of people to complain from Kumba were the Balondo. On February 27, 1961, the Balondo gave several reasons for voting for Nigeria. They had enjoyed "a peaceful administration for over 50 years [an incorrect number of years] under the British, developed culturally, educationally, politically and linguistically with Nigeria." The plebiscite "was conducted strictly on tribal interests and sentiments." What lay beneath the "superficial entity of the Southern Cameroons" was "a bitter struggle between the grasslands tribes of Bamenda . . . and the tribes of the Coastal area." The "sinister motive" of the grasslanders in voting for reunification was to "drag" the coastal peoples "to a lawless society" where they would then "seize" the Balondo's "fertile lands" which they envied. The next thing to do would be to "enslave" the coastal peoples and their children forever. Neither Ahidjo nor Foncha could provide a stable and peaceful government "judging from their past performance." Independence in the chaotic Cameroun Republic would have no meaning. The solution for the present out-turn of events would be the "PARTITIONING" of Southern Kamerun between those who voted for Cameroun and those who voted for Nigeria.<sup>63</sup>

Vicroria Division was the smallest administrative unit in Southern Kamerun in both population size and in geographic terms. But it contained the headquarters of the region and many economic activities of the country including some of the plantations and all the seaports. It was the home of

Dr. Endeley, Manga-Williams, and Kale. Its Original inhabitants were mainly the Bakweri. While it had a small boundary with Nigeria, it had a more extensive boundary with Cameroun Republic. Indeed, it belonged to the same ethnic group with the Douala of Cameroun Republic. At the time of voting, there were probably more non-Bakweri people in Victoria Division than the Bakweri.

As already indicated or asserted above, the majority of the voters in Victoria Division were probably non-Bakweri. The number of votes in this Division and the proposition for which the majority of the votes stood were probably the most deceptive in all of Southern Kamerun. After the plebiscite, the Bakweri themselves made a very careful study of the voting pattern in their land and came out with a more convincing conclusion. In fifteen villages predominantly inhabited by the Bakweri, a total of 6,546 votes were cast at the plebiscite. 5,706 of these votes were for Nigeria and 840 were for Cameroun. In seven areas--villages, major cities, and towns--of the Division in which there were large Ibo and Bamenda populations, and which were predominantly inhabited by the non-Bakweri, a total of 11,185 votes were cast at the plebiscite. 3,846 of these were for Nigeria and 7,339 were for Cameroun. In nine plantation areas, inhabited mainly by the non-Bakweri workers, a total of 11,280 votes were cast at the plebiscite. 1,888 of these were for Nigeria and 9,392 were for Cameroun.<sup>64</sup> These figures would appear to support the claim of the Bakweri that they did not vote for reunification. At the same time, they question the claim of the Bakweri KNDP who used the total number of votes in the Division for reunification to assert that the Bakweri "voted solidly" for reunification.<sup>65</sup>

Indeed, the Bakweri, as an ethnic group, voted for the Nigeria proposition and that for several reasons. These reasons were clearly spelt out on February 17, 1961, by the Bakweri Molongo, a cultural society embracing all the Bakweri speaking people. As they, the Bakweri, saw it, they had always feared the domination of the Bakweri by the non-Bakweri people living in Victoria Division, their home. These non-Bakweri in the Division, whom the Bakweri called 'native strangers--who shall go home with empty hands as they came,' were attracted to the Division by the fertility of the Bakweri land and the employment opportunities the plantations provided. The "native strangers" had developed a "plot" to "deprive" them of their "land." The "native strangers" voted for reunification in Victoria Division in order to seize the Bakweri lands, and in order "to spite and over-run the Bakweris." The Bakweri had voted for Nigeria because the Nigerian Constitution provided safeguards for the minorities which was what the Bakweri were.<sup>66</sup> It was therefore necessary for the Bakweri to remain a part of Nigeria. The United Nations should take immediate steps to partition Southern Kamerun and allow the Bamenda people to go on with their Cameroun proposition.<sup>67</sup>

Nevertheless, some of the Bakweri were happy losers. These accepted the fact that the plebiscite was an all-Southern Kamerun issue, and that the majority had decided against what they themselves wished to see happen. Eleven a-Fon of the Bakweri and thirteen Bakweri elders denounced the proposed partitioning of the region and Dr. Endeley for advocating such a hideous idea. Any Bakweri man who advocated such an idea, they said, was speaking for himself and not for the Bakweri people. What the Bakweri now wanted was a strong one country, Kamerun, as the majority had decided at

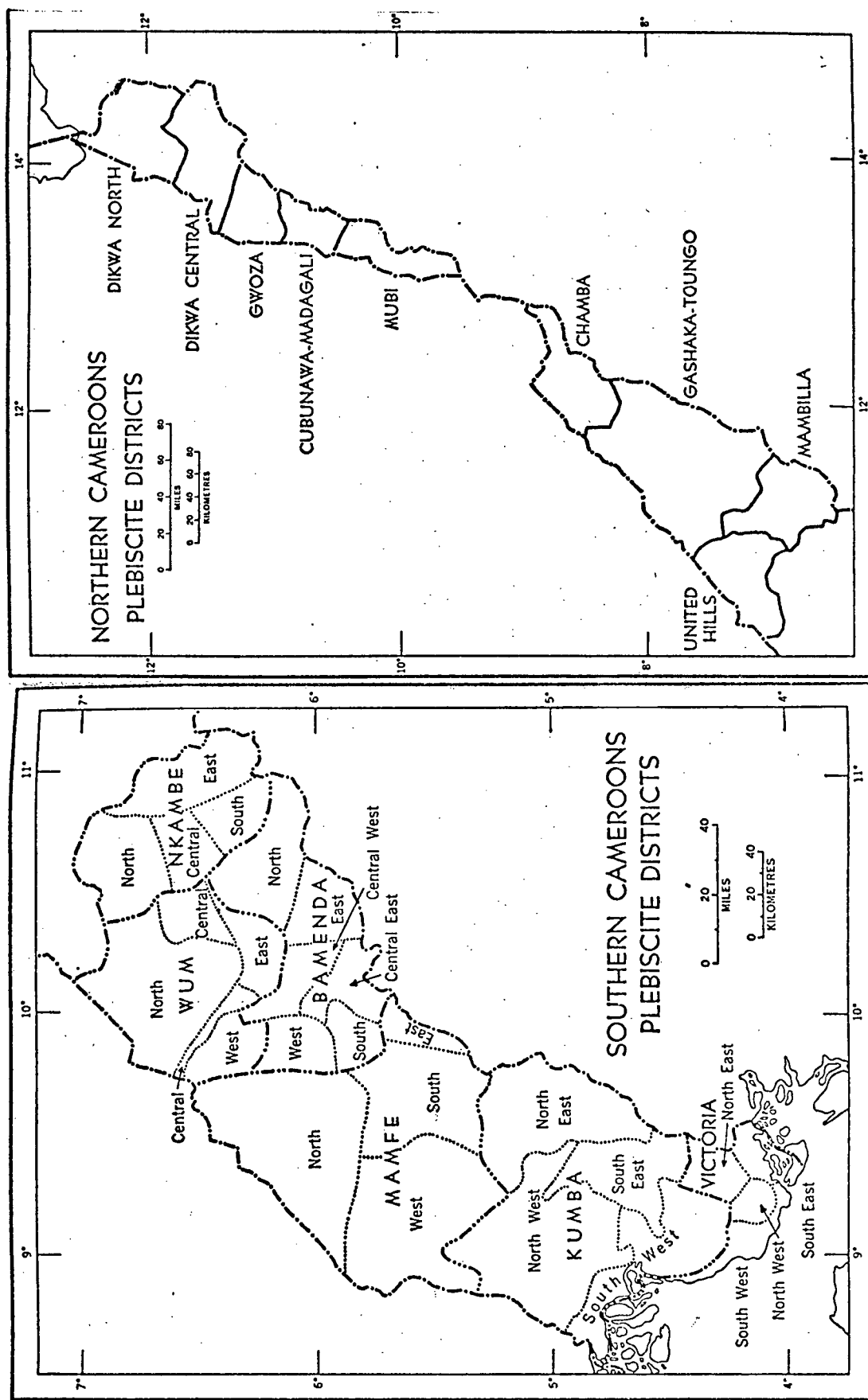
the plebiscite. Foncha now had their confidence and he was speaking for them.<sup>68</sup> It was perhaps the presence of people like these which made the aftermath of the plebiscite end in threats and little else.

On February 11, 1961, the United Nations asked the Southern Kamerunians two questions: "(a) Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Federation of Nigeria? (b) Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Republic of Cameroun?" What the United Nations offered the Southern Kamerunians in the two questions was a choice between Nigerian citizenship and Camerounian citizenship. The United Nations attached no conditions to the two kinds of citizenship it offered the Southern Kamerunians. That meant, for example, once Nigerians, the Southern Kamerunians would have to accept anything Nigeria, as an independent country, decided. Or, if Camerounians the Southern Kamerunians would have to accept anything Cameroun, as an independent country, decided.

Generally, and in the main, the Southern Kamerunians did not interpret the questions this way. Generally, they attached conditions of their own to the questions. In the case of Nigeria, the conditions were, to name only a few: Nigeria must be a member of the Commonwealth; it must retain and maintain the British tradition and systems; it must be a Federation; Southern Kamerun particularism must be retained and maintained in the Nigerian Federal universalism via association; and, Nigeria must never go Communist or Socialist. In the case of Cameroun, the main conditions were: Cameroun must get out of the French Community; the new state must be independent of any foreign influences, specifically of France and Britain; it must not go Communist or Socialist; it would have to be a Federation; and the Anglo-Saxon tradition and systems must co-exist with the Gallic tradition and

systems within the Kamerunian particularism in a Federation. The Southern Kamerunians had thus asked and answered their own questions, interpreting the questions the United Nations asked to suit their local conditions and circumstances.

THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN KAMERUN  
PLEBISCITE DISTRICTS OF 1961.\*



\*Map No. 1188 Rev. 2, March 1961 (Northern Kamerun), and Map No. 1199 Rev. 1, March 1961 (Southern Kamerun) in the United Nations Document T/1556, April 3, 1961.

Footnotes - Chapter Seven

- <sup>1</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1491, November 25, 1959, p. 83.
- <sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 39, 86.
- <sup>3</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, p. 244.
- <sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 172, 246, 249.
- <sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 137-138.
- <sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 96, 140.
- <sup>7</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1491, November 25, 1959, pp. 78, 85.
- <sup>8</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, pp. 176-178.
- <sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 188-190, 246.
- <sup>10</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1491, November 25, 1959, pp. 78-80.
- <sup>11</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, pp. 176-178.
- <sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 190, 246.
- <sup>13</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1491, November 25, 1959, pp. 80-81, 85.
- <sup>14</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, pp. 176-178.
- <sup>15</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, pp. 190-191, 246.
- <sup>16</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1491, November 25, 1959, pp. 82, 85.
- <sup>17</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, pp. 176-178.
- <sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 191-192, 246.
- <sup>19</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1491, November 25, 1959, pp. 82-83, 85.
- <sup>20</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, pp. 176-178.
- <sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 192, 246.
- <sup>22</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1491, November 25, 1959, pp. 83, 85.
- <sup>23</sup>U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, pp. 176-179.
- <sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 192-198, 246.



- <sup>25</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1491, November 25, 1959, p. 89.
- <sup>26</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, p. 249.
- <sup>27</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Federated Parties for Union with Nigeria Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Mubi, 5 April, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 162, April 21, 1961, p. 1. See also T/PET. 4/L. 168, *passim*.
- <sup>28</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Mubi Native Authority Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, 8 April, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 150, April 17, 1961, p. 1.
- <sup>29</sup> Vanghan in American Anthropologist, *op. cit.*, p. 1088.
- <sup>30</sup> Computed from U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, p. 140.
- <sup>31</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Mbembe Natural Rulers Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Mbembe Area, Nkambe Division, 17 March, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 175, June 7, 1961, p. 2.
- <sup>32</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Nobles and Youths of Nkambe East Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Ndu, T/PET. 4/L. 120, March 21, 1961, p. 1.
- <sup>33</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. Jabov H. Nkambe Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Nkambe, 17 March, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 176, June 7, 1961, p. 1.
- <sup>34</sup> U.N. T.C., Petition from the Nkambe Women's Association Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Ndu, T/PET. 4/L. 126, March 28, 1961, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>35</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Wimbun Chiefs Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Tabenken, Nkambe, 17 February, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 116, March 21, 1961, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>36</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 108. illegible date, p. 1.
- <sup>37</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. E.N. Ali on Behalf of Nkambe Aborigines Resident in Wum Division Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Wum, 19 February, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 115, March 21, 1961, pp. 1-3.
- <sup>38</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Cameroons People's National Convention, Nkambe, Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Tabenken, 15 February, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 114, March 9, 1961, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>39</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Fon of Bum Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Lagabum, T/PET. 4/L. 133, April 13, 1961, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Chief Chu and Ten Other Residents of Bu Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Bu, 10 March, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 164, April 25, 1961, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Chiefs of Aghem Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Aghem, 3 March, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 129, March 28, 1961, pp. 1-3.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Mrs. Bi Mbong and Others Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Su-Aghem, 12 March, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 144, April 13, 1961, pp. 2-3.

<sup>44</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. Leng Mbi Chung and Others Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Su, March 17, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 142, April 13, 1961, pp. 1-2.

<sup>45</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Chiefs and People of Wum West (Beba-Befang-Esembe) Clans Plebiscite District Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, 22 February, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 137, April 13, 1961, pp. 1-2.

<sup>46</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 118, March 21, 1961, p. 2.

<sup>47</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Madame Yitu Wambong and Enouru Andum on Behalf of the Esimbi Women Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, T/PET. 4/L. 138, April 13, 1961, pp. 1-2.

<sup>48</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Chiefs of Fungom Palm Area Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Missong, Wum, 2 March, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 135, April 13, 1961, p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Elders of Fungom Area Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, T/PET. 4/L. 134, April 13, 1961, pp. 1-2.

<sup>50</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. Ngaw Iwisi Njeisi and Others Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Wum, 11 March, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 143, April 13, 1961, pp. 1-2.

<sup>51</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 110, March 9, 1961, pp. 1-5; U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 123, March 21, 1959, pp. 1-4.

<sup>52</sup> U.N., T.C., T/1556, April 3, 1961, p. 111.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>54</sup> U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 110, March 9, 1961, *passim*.

- 55 U.N., T.C., Petition from the Fon of Nsaw Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Kumbo, 3 March, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 132, April 13, 1961, pp. 1-3 and passim. See also, U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 123, March 21, 1961. While the Fon's desire to put Nso in Northern Nigeria in case of partition must be understood within the background of the desire to avoid the Ibo, and his tendency towards Islam, it is important to note that he refused to recognize the results of the plebiscite in Nso.
- 56 U.N., T.C., Petition from the Boki Chiefs and Peoples Conference Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Ogoja, 18 May, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 121/Add. 1, June 24, 1961, pp. 1-2; see also, U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 121, 1961, passim.
- 57 U.N., T.C., Petition from Mr. Asa Eno on Behalf of the People of the Western Oversight, Mamfe, Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Mamfe, 16 March, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 166, April 25, 1961, pp. 1-4.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 U.N., T.C., Petition from the Mwane-Ngoe (Bakossi) Tribal Union Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Muambong, Saturday, 4 March, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 140, April 13, 1961, pp. 1-3 and passim.
- 60 U.N., T.C., Petition from the Bakundu People Convention Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Boa Bakundu, February, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 122, March 21, 1961, pp. 1-4.
- 61 U.N., T.C., Petition from the Bafaw Youths Association, Kumba, Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Kumba Town, 21 March, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 173, June 7, 1961, p. 4.
- 62 U.N., T.C., Petition from the Chiefs and People of the Mbonge Clan Community Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Massaka-Bekondo Road Junction, 20 March, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 160, April 25, 1961, pp. 1-2.
- 63 U.N., T.C., Petition from the Balondo Speaking People's Convention Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Kumba, 27 February, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 128, March 28, 1961, pp. 1-3.
- 64 U.N., T.C., Petition from the Bakweri Molongo Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Buea, 17 February, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 117, March 21, 1961, pp. 7-8.
- 65 U.N., T.C., Petition from the Bakweri Wing of the Kamerun National Democratic Party (Vanguard) Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Buea, 6 April, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 174, June 7, 1961, pp. 1-3.
- 66 U.N., T.C., T/PET. 4/L. 117, March 21, 1961, pp. 1-3.

<sup>67</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from the Victoria Divisional Council Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, Victoria, 21 March, 1961, T/PET. 4/L. 163, April 25, 1961, pp. 1-3.

<sup>68</sup> U.N., T.C., Petition from Chief S.M. Efesoa and Others on Behalf of the Bakweri People Concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, T/PET. 4/L. 146, April 13, 1961, pp. 1-5.

### CONCLUSION

Several factors shaped the events connected with the rise of nationalism in Western Kamerun. Some of these factors, the role of the traditional rulers and tradition for example, can be traced back to the pre-colonial period. Others, the German administrative policy for instance, were a product of the German colonial activities in the region. Still others, the British policies for example, came with British activities in the regions during the period of the League of Nations mandate and the United Nations trusteeship. While the totality of these factors shaped the development of the nationalist movement, it was the British presence which fostered the beginnings of national awareness in Southern Kamerun in the early 1940s.

The British perceived Western Kamerun to be closely linked with Nigeria. All their policies in the Territory--administrative, economic, social, educational, political--reflected this perception. But these policies, employment policy for example, operated detrimentally to the welfare of the territory's inhabitants. Consequently, a few Western-educated Southern Kamerunians reacted against British policies. Initially, this reaction took the form of a pacific and constitutional search for a separate identity, and more jobs and education.

By the early 1950s, the westernized elite had made little headway either in its demands of the British or in its efforts to organize an effective nationalist movement. But, in 1953, Southern Kamerunian nationalists brought traditional leaders into their movement. These leaders, the a-Fon, commanding the loyalty or support of most of the region's inhabitants, were

able to influence significantly and strengthen the nationalist movement.

But, that movement, despite the strength the a-Fon brought to it, continued to labour under several difficulties. The political leaders, who were almost to a man Western-educated, began to stress, individually or in groups, a wide range of demands. Some stressed autonomy within Nigeria. Others emphasized secession with reunification but not immediate reunification. Still others stressed immediate reunification pure and simple. The a-Fon, for the most part, advocated secession without reunification. Thus, there were fundamental differences among the political leaders, and between them and the traditional rulers. Between 1953 and 1959, the political leaders both at home and before the United Nations defined and redefined their programmes with an eye on personal or party advantages.

In the case of Northern Kamerun, where the national awareness developed much later, matters were complicated by a split between the local authorities, on the one hand, and some local Fulani and traditional rulers, on the other. Basically, the former wanted Northern Kamerun to remain integrated with Northern Nigeria while the latter did not.

By 1958, it became obvious in the Trusteeship Council that Western Kamerunians would have to be formally consulted to find out what they wanted. The British could point to the recommendations of the United Nations 1958 Mission when they argued that there should be a plebiscite in Southern Kamerun, but that Northern Kamerun should be unilaterally integrated with Northern Nigeria. However, as evidence in the Mission's report clearly showed, there were Northern Kamerunians who demanded a plebiscite or referendum. In Southern Kamerun several forms of consultation were advocated. The integrationists who were in power, in a representative system recently established

by the British, preferred the medium of a general election. The anti-imperialists, who commanded a very small following, demanded unilateral action by the United Nations to bring about reunification. The Foncharians requested the United Nations to conduct opinion polls and make its decision from them. The a-Fon, confident they had the support of most of the electorate, demanded a plebiscite.

When the United Nations reviewed the complicated situation in early 1959, its Trusteeship Council further complicated matters because of differences within it. For example, the Soviet and British representatives disagreed over what should be done in Northern Kamerun. The Soviet member objected to the British position that there should be no plebiscite. Though the Council was able to recommend to the General Assembly that such a plebiscite be held, it provided little guidance on what should be done in Southern Kamerun. The Assembly then asked the Southern Kamerun political leaders, who had come to the United Nations with conflicting demands and recommendations, to return home and resolve their differences.

Once back home, all private attempts by some of the leaders to resolve the difference failed, partly because their differences were deep, partly because of mutual distrust, and partly because most of them had substantial support from some part of the region. When these private attempts had failed, they held a Plebiscite Conference at Mamfe in August 1959.

At Mamfe, the political leaders concentrated less on attempting to reach agreement and more on wooing the a-Fon, who, in any event, did not budge from their secessionist position. The nationalist leaders had to admit to the United Nations that they were too divided, and too interested to provide an agreed solution.

The United Nations then concentrated its efforts, not at finding out what arrangements would be most widely acceptable in Southern Kamerun, but on working out an agreement acceptable to the two most important nationalist leaders, Endeley and Fonch. The net effect of this approach was that the United Nations ignored the hints, which nearly all the Southern Kamerun political leaders threw out occasionally, which indicated what alternative would be the more popular among the electorate. By ignoring or failing to catch these hints, and by accepting a compromise reached between Endeley and Foncha in private talks, the United Nations opted for a set of plebiscite questions which prevent the majority of Southern Kamerunians from registering their preference for secession. The United Nations was thus less than helpful in implementing one of its most important objectives. It denied the majority of the Southern Kamerunians the right of self-determination.

Meanwhile, the conduct of the first plebiscite in Northern Kamerun was underway. The supporters of the alternative which postponed a decision suspected and accused, sometimes justifiably and sometimes not, the local authorities of malpractices. These authorities sometimes abused their power and attempted to hinder campaigners who held opposing views. Nonetheless, the plebiscite appeared to reveal a large majority of the people polled were in favour of postponing a decision on their political future. More significantly, the votes showed widespread dissatisfaction with the existing administrative arrangements.

The next plebiscite was arranged by the United Nations to follow within a short time. During the interval, the British made the region a province of Northern Nigeria, and reformed its local administration. These



reforms, which removed a number of unpopular authorities and introduced more local representation in government, were well received. At the same time, many Northern Kamerunians did not realize that links with Northern Nigeria had been retained at the provincial level. Northern Kamerunian political leaders, aware of this confusion, tried to have the plebiscite postponed. They failed and it was conducted when the majority of Northern Kamerunians still thought the local administrative reforms as separation from Nigeria and Northern Nigeria.

The second Northern Kamerun plebiscite was conducted at the same time as that of Southern Kamerun. In both regions, distrust, allegation, and the abuse of power were features of the plebiscite campaign. But, their scope and frequency differed. They were more extensive and common in Southern Kamerun. However, while in Northern Kamerun the abuse of authority was limited to local government officials, and the distrust and allegations confined to the proponents of the Cameroun proposition, in Southern Kamerun all three elements were evident in the behaviour of parties both in and out of office.

There were also comparable elements in voter response to the questions put. In both regions the electorate asked and answered their own questions, interpreting the questions framed by the United Nations to suit their local conditions, interests, and circumstances. This interpreting process was to be expected. In most plebiscites and elections, electors ask and answer their own questions, often with little reference to the larger issues involved. Nevertheless, the timing of the second ballot in Northern Kamerun and the unfortunate wording of the plebiscite questions in the context of politics in Southern Kamerun contributed not only a good deal of confusion

to the proceedings, but also significantly impeded the process of self-determination.

The trusteeship system had thus ended in Western Kamerun on an uncertain note. In Northern Kamerun, the electorate was denied the opportunity to know the difference between the reformed local administration and their relationship within the context of that administration and Nigeria. In Southern Kamerun, the electorate was denied the opportunity to vote for a Smaller Kamerun which most preferred. In the ensuing confusion, the Northern Kamerunians mistook the reformed local administration for separation from Northern Nigeria and Nigeria as a whole, while the dissatisfaction forced many Southern Kamerunians to chose 'fire' over 'water,' simply because 'milk' was not around; the 'devil' one did not know had prevailed over the 'devil' one knew. Consequently, the principle of self-determination, which was at the hub of the trusteeship system, and which was embedded in the Charter, was not applied to the majority of the Western Kamerunians.

Furthermore, in the case of Southern Kamerun, the plebiscite was divisive. The trust system ended with the rest of Southern Kamerun, except perhaps Mamfe, blaming Bamenda. The grasslands and the forest zone stood at a distance from each other, pointing accusing fingers, and threatening each other. The Concert of the Crowned Princes, the symbol of Southern Kamerun unity, which emerged during the trust period, was inflicted with a malaise between May 1958 and January 1959, broke-down in October 1959, and by the middle of 1960, it had disappeared.\*

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\*After the plebiscite, the West Cameroon Government under Foncha re-established the Concert in form of the "House of Chiefs". With this peace made between Foncha and the a-Fon, the latter continued to lend their support

This has been a study of a specific region, Western Kamerun. But it has looked at themes of broader application. The operation of the trust system, the role of the traditional rulers in the nationalist movements in Africa, South of the Sahara, and the devolution of power in Black Africa are among the major issues this study has touched upon at the micro-cosmic level. Put very simply, the questions are: which did less harm, colonialism pure and simple or colonialism through the trust system? was nationalism in Africa the monopoly of the Western-educated African elite, as a majority of books have asserted, or did another group of leaders play an equally, if not more, important role in that phenomenon? did the colonial powers devolve power in Black Africa to those who actually commanded the respect and loyalty of the populace or did they hand over power to an artificially created class which had to make use of some authorities before expecting to have the respect and loyalty of the governed. The Western Kamerun example would appear to have suggested some tentative answers.

First, the trusteeship system and colonialism pure and simple. It appears that in the case where a trust territory was administered as an integral part of an adjoining colony, colonialism pure and simple fared better than colonialism via the trust system, although both left much to be desired. It is readily accepted as a maxim that, because the international organizations had a restraining effect on the administrators of the trust territories, the trust system fared better than pure colonialism. There are at least three underlying assumptions to this axiom. First, it is

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to Foncha and to play an important part in the affairs of the country. Recently, however, they seem more to be a rubber-stamp of the Government.

assumed that the Administering Authority would no longer pursue its national interests in trust territories vigourously because of the restraints from the international community. Second, and as a corollary, it is assumed that the Administering Authority would respect the opinion and recommendations of the international organizations. Thirdly, it is assumed that the members of the United Nations in their dealings with the Administering Authorities would serve more the interests of the inhabitants of trust territories rather than theirs. This study questions all these assumptions and what they suggest. Where were the League of Nations and the United Nations before the British left Western Kamerun so little developed? How effective was the United Nations in implementing the right to self-determination? Why did the damping down of a Socialist organization in Northern Kamerun in 1953 lead to a clash between the British on the one hand and the Russians on the other in the Trusteeship Council? Why did the New Zealand's representative in the Trusteeship Council wish to use the first Northern Kamerun plebiscite to influence opinion in favour of integration in Southern Kamerun? Why did the British not sever administrative links between Northern Kamerun and Nigeria on October 1, 1960, as the United Nations resolution demanded?

The next question to be considered is that dealing with the role of the traditional rulers in the nationalist movement. The Western Kamerun or, at least, the Southern Kamerun example questions the assertions that have made nationalism in Black Africa a monopoly of the Western-educated African elites. To be sure, these elites might have been responsible for the rise and development of nationalist movements in their early stages all over the continent. But, the Western Kamerun example seems to suggest that at a

certain point in time, the traditional rulers took an important part in the movements. It is true, in the end, the Western-educated elite confused and manipulated the Western Kamerun traditional rulers, but that strengthens rather than detracts from the suggestion. That this group would resort to manipulative activities in order to realize their goals indicated the power which the traditional rulers wielded. Nevertheless, in the end, the results of the plebiscites were a function of tradition embodied in the person of the a-Fon. What all this seems to suggest is that the current trend, although not yet as impressive as it should be, to investigate what role tradition and the traditional rulers played in the events of the colonial period in Black Africa, is in the right direction. But such useful studies must begin from the premise that Africa was politically and otherwise well-organized and highly sophisticated before the advent of the New Imperialism.

The first question touched on deals with the devolution of power. The Southern Kamerun example at least seems to suggest that power was devolved to an unrepresentative group of people. These were the Western-educated political elite who could not, 'ceteris paribus' claim the respect, loyalty, and support of the governed without first making use of the traditional leaders. In other words, they could rule effectively only indirectly. Had the British transferred power to the Council of the Crowned Princes, they would have transferred it to the authorities who could rule directly. Perhaps, political scientists might like to find out the relationship between the traditional rulers and the Western-educated non-traditional rulers of many African countries on the one hand and the stability of some of these states and the instability of others on the other. This study would like to offer the following hypotheses: the greater the rapport between the political leaders\*

and the traditional rulers\* in any African country, the greater the stability of that country; conversely, the greater the friction between the political leaders and the traditional rulers in any African state, the greater the instability of that state.

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\*Some of these political leaders are princes who could have succeeded to the various thrones had it not been for changed circumstances while many of the a-Fon at present are Western-educated. Both these variables can contribute to either friction or accommodation between the political leaders and the contemporary traditional rulers. In either case, however, the independent variables offered in the hypotheses remain the same: the rapport and the friction between the traditional rulers and the political rulers. Likewise, the dependent variables remain the same: the stability and the instability of the states.

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