

Great Britain, with its enormous and tested sea power, was the biggest colonial Power ever. At the zenith of the British Empire, a third of the world was under the British flag. But, since by the nature of things no condition is permanent the British Empire, like all other empires before it, was soon to perish. Beginning with the rebellious American colonies towards the end of the eighteenth century, the British began to retreat from one colonial territory after the other, often following an armed rebellion but sometimes following a hasty consensual arrangement.

A remarkable feature of the collapse of the British Empire is that the British departed from almost every single one of their colonial territories invariably leaving behind a messy situation and an agenda of serious problems that in most cases still haunt those territories to this day. One such territory is the Southern British Cameroons. There the British Government took the official view that the territory and its people were “expendable”, opposed for selfish economic reasons sovereign statehood for the territory in clear violation of the UN Charter and the norm of self-determination, transferred the territory (so it seemed) to a new colonial overlord (again in violation of international law) and hurriedly left the territory on 30 September 1961. The Spanish Government would later enact this same shameful scenario in the Spanish colony of the Western Sahara. Britain’s stewardship in the Southern Cameroons for close to half a century was thus in the end a dismal failure politically, economically, socially and developmentally. “The British had rather negligently administered this little patch of Africa ever since the end of the First World War, but since it was a United Nations Trust Territory there was no profit in it. The result was that the territory was undeveloped, you might say backward, even by contemporary African standards.”¹

This book is thematically divided into three broad parts. The **first part** comprises chapters 1, 2 and 3. It contains material dealing with the emergence of the Southern Cameroons in modern history and as a legal and political expression. Chapter 1 reproduces treaties concluded by Britain with Southern Cameroons coastal Kings and Chiefs. Chapter 2 reproduces

1. J Percival, *The 1961 Cameroon Plebiscite: Choice or Betrayal*, Langaa Publishers, Bamenda, 2008, p. xiii.

the instruments that brought the Southern Cameroons under international tutelage, the Mandates System of the League of Nations and then the Trusteeship System of the United Nations Organisation. Chapter 3 reproduces the boundary treaties of the Southern Cameroons, treaties defining the frontiers with Nigeria to the west and the frontier with Cameroun Republic to the east.

The **second part** runs from chapters 4 to 9, and contains material attesting to the Southern Cameroons as a fully self-governing country, ready for sovereign statehood. The material covers a broad field: legislation establishing courts of justice in the Southern Cameroons; statutory instruments regarding the public service, chiefs, the House of Chiefs, and the plebiscite; debates in the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly; and the Constitutions of the Southern Cameroons.

A little more may be said about the *Debates in the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly* reproduced here from Hansard. The *Debates* vividly bring back to life the voices and the eloquence of Southern Cameroons Members of Parliament. All of them, from both sides of the House, come through as intense, passionate, skilful and great debaters; politicians exuding confidence and feelings of camaraderie, and conducting themselves with mutual respect and democratic decency. The intensity and liveliness with which issues were debated and the great attention paid to detail are amazing, for not even a punctuation mark in a bill tabled for debate escaped these eagle-eyed Members of the House of Assembly. And yet none of them, except for one or two, had the benefit of a university education. They debated seriously, lively and with complete mastery of the subject matter at hand, time and again making jocular comments, no doubt to enliven some dull moment; but every point that was made was done in a spirit of political friendship and gentlemanly conduct. Only once did a Member of the House momentarily forget parliamentary decorum and step out of line. His speech was rightly interrupted and the Government Minister and MP at whom the unbecoming remark was addressed made an emphatic protest for the record, but in very restrained language.

There can be no doubt that the Members of the House of Assembly loved their job and their country the Southern Cameroons and that they thoroughly enjoyed themselves in Parliament. The story is told of how after a hard day's work in the House they would, in spite of their political divide, retire to the Buea Mountain Club (later, the Parliamentarians' Block of Flats) and there, over a cup of tea or a glass of drink, chat away without any inkling of the intensity with which they had just been fighting and

debating issues in the House of Assembly. They never allowed any differences that they sometimes had about official matters to intrude into their personal relations.

Apart from Tamfuh, Effiom and Lainjo who are still alive, all the other Members of the House have since crossed over. It is a fitting tribute to them that this last sitting, in September 1961, of the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly since it opened in 1954, is here reproduced in its entirety, unedited, for the reader to have the full savour of their speeches and combativeness. As one reads through the *Debates* one cannot fail to notice how these MHA took their representative mandate very seriously: the details and seriousness in the business of lawmaking; how Members of the House fought for the interest of their respective constituencies; and the very meticulous manner in which bills and motions before the House were presented, scrutinized and thoroughly debated. Take, for example, the lucid and concise presentation of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill by Hon. ST Muna, first Southern Cameroons Minister of Finance (this office was hitherto that of the Financial Secretary and was held by an Englishman) and on the job for the first time. Members of the House applauded Muna's delivery as "a very brilliant speech for his first effort." Such debate as exists in the Assembly in Cameroun Republic has not, even to this day, attained the standard and quality of debate in the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly achieved way back in the second half of the 1950s.

Honourable Nerius Mbile and Hon. Motomby-Woleta were without question gifted speakers. Both had great oratorical skills, Motomby-Woleta slightly more of it than Mbile. Both were also great parliamentary debaters, being able to think on their feet and to hold the House spellbound, as it were, for hours with their elocution, their command of the Queen's language and their in-depth knowledge of any subject before the House for debate. They had the knack of spicing their speeches with caustic comments and with references to Scripture or some literary work. Their speeches were sometimes delivered in acerbic style. Consider, for example, speeches made by Endeley, Mbile and especially Motomby-Woleta when each of them rose to speak on the motion calling upon the House to approve the action by Southern Cameroons leaders for the part they played in discussions and negotiations with Cameroun Republic for a federal system of government.

No one can fail to be moved by the elocution, passion and content of Motomby-Woleta's speech as he spoke for close to an hour. His fellow MPs acknowledged him as a "brilliant speaker". Ending his speech on that occasion Motomby-Woleta spoke tongue-in-cheek of Cameroun Republic having 'sacrificed' its beloved unitary system for a federal system

all in the name of so-called ‘unification’. He also spoke sarcastically of Ahidjo as being “hospitable to a fault” and that as proof MPs only needed to remember (evidently referring to what happened during the July bipartite meeting at Foumban) “the entertainment, the nice chop, the drinks and everything that [was] within our reach.” At this remark all the MPs laughed conspiratorially. If Motomby-Woleta had not died early at a young age (he died in early 1962 at 39) he might conceivably have played a critical role in the political evolution of the Southern Cameroons either as Prime Minister or Cabinet Minister.

In many ways the House was in advance of its time and very forward-looking. It urged Government to establish a building scheme to enable civil servants to own their own houses rather than depend entirely on Government for housing. It agreed with Government on a water rate payable by the consumer, at his option, at a flat rate or at a metre rate. It passed legislation instituting a ‘check off’ system aimed at enabling trade unions to have a secure source of funding from their members. It urged Government to embark on road building as a top priority for the development of the Southern Cameroons. It also urged Government to adopt, as a matter of policy, the decentralization of community development funds. As a complement to road development the House recommended a Government policy scheme of constructing airstrips in remote areas of the country that were inaccessible by road. The strong case made by Hon Mbile for this scheme remains valid today, half a century later.

The House did not only debate bills tabled before it. It also debated a number of political issues of the day brought to its attention: the presence of Cameroun Republic troops in the Southern Cameroons, a presence Ajebe-Sone and Rev. Ando-Seh rightly characterized as that of a foreign and unwelcome army allowed into the territory by the British; the massacre of 12 Southern Cameroons citizens at Ebubu near Tombel by Cameroun Republic forces, a slaughter that triggered loud expressions of prophetic fear regarding the expected political association with Cameroun Republic; and a motion to approve the action of Southern Cameroons leaders in securing, during negotiations with Cameroun Republic, a two-state federal system.

On this last point the motion was originally moved by the Prime Minister, JN Foncha. The House studiously allowed the motion to lapse “due to unforeseen circumstances”. But a couple of days later the motion was again moved, this time by Muna. The motion called upon the House to approve the action of Southern Cameroons leaders for the part they played in discussions and negotiations with Cameroun Republic for a federal form of political association with Cameroun Republic.

This motion, be it noted, did not call upon the House to approve the domestic law of Cameroun Republic that passed for the so-called ‘Federal Constitution’; nor did it call for a debate on that document. Any such action

would have been an exercise in futility. First, Cameroun Republic had already assumed, illegally, the exercise of sovereignty in the Southern Cameroons in two very significant ways. The document under reference was passed on 1 September 1961 as an amendment law and by the legislature of Cameroun Republic, the document specifically asserting territorial claim to the Southern Cameroons as part of the territory of Cameroun Republic. Legally, the document was therefore in the nature of an annexation law, exactly in the same way Hitler annexed Austria to Germany. Secondly, having passed an annexation law asserting claim to the territory of the Southern Cameroons, in the second half of September 1961 Cameroun Republic ordered its troops to march into the Southern Cameroons (exactly in the same, but less flamboyant, way Nazi Germany ordered its troops into Austria, Morocco its troops into Western Sahara, and Indonesia its troops into East Timor) where they then started creating havoc among the people.

The very limited objective of the motion was simply to get the House to say ‘thank you’ to Southern Cameroons leaders for securing a two-state federal system (so they thought) within which the Southern Cameroons was legitimately expected to carry on with its life pretty much as before subject to proper limitations imposed by a valid federal constitution. But the urge was just too great to take a swipe at the document before them that passed for a so-called ‘federal constitution’ and which the MPs were seeing for the first time. MPs rightly took the view that the Southern Cameroons had been ambushed by this document thrust upon them like a rabbit from a magician’s hat. They mercilessly lampooned aspects of the document. The criticisms of Motomby-Woleta and Ajebe-Sone were particularly bitter and incisive. But even that intellectual exertion was idle. One suspects that the MPs were aware of that fact but wanted to register their anger and disapproval of a document by a foreign legislature imposed by a foreign prince on the Southern Cameroons with the condonation of Britain, the trustee power in the territory. The MPs had before them a translation of the original French text and care had been taken to include within the document itself a clause boldly proclaiming the French version of the document as the authoritative text, thereby pre-emptively invalidating any claim, entitlement, assertion or criticism that might be founded on the English text.

The **third part** of this book reproduces British declassified documents on the Southern Cameroons covering the three critical years from 1959 to 1961, when the territory legitimately expected to accede to independence consistently with Article 76 b of the Charter of the United Nations, but mysteriously did not. The contents of this part of the book attest to the

inglorious stewardship of Great Britain in regard to the Southern Cameroons, a territory over which it voluntarily assumed trusteeship and an international obligation to lead to independence. The British Government's bad faith, duplicity, backstabbing, wheeling and dealing, and contempt for an innocent people is just beyond belief and defies good sense. It is important to highlight and sidelight right from the outset aspects of the British Government's chicanery and betrayal in regard to the Southern British Cameroons.

1. Britain established a so-called administrative union between the Southern Cameroons and Nigeria. But the union did not remain strictly administrative in its nature and its scope. It involved political and constitutional association between the Southern Cameroons and Nigeria. The operation of the union had the effect of creating conditions which obstructed the separate development of the Southern Cameroons in the fields of political, economic, social and educational advancement as a distinct territory. Britain's primary focus was the development of Nigeria. The Southern Cameroons was a mere after-thought. This shabby treatment of the Southern Cameroons was inconsistent with assurances given by Britain to the United Nations. It was moreover contrary to General Assembly Resolution 224 (III) of November 1948 on administrative unions, contrary to the Trusteeship Agreement, and contrary to Articles 76 b of the United Nations Charter.

2. The British Government knew very well that economic self-sufficiency has nothing to do with the issue of independence for a colonial territory. Nevertheless it went ahead to manufacture the fat lie that the Southern Cameroons was not economically viable to be a sovereign independent state and thereby fraudulently induced the UN to impose on the people of the territory a plebiscite with two dead-end alternatives, joinder to independent Nigeria or joinder to independent French Cameroun. And yet it is trite that in the law of self-determination it is the people that determine the destiny of the territory and not the territory that determines the destiny of the people.

3. The Southern Cameroons was not given all the three internationally recognized political status options to choose from. The geographical location of the Southern Cameroons cannot be an excuse for its transfer (disguised as so-called 'independence' so as to make the colonial transfer look palatable) to a successor colonialist. The fact of a dependent territory being sandwiched between two bigger neighbours does not mean that it must remain forever under colonial rule. The right of self-determination

has nothing to do with geography or money. Further, if Britain and her friends nursed fears of a communist take-over of the Southern Cameroons, as some have said, one would have thought there was no basis for that fear as there was no communist or even left-leaning political party in the Southern Cameroons. The threat of a communist take-over was real in and hung over French Cameroun which had a leftist political party determined to achieve its aim by violence if need be. In any event the source of the perceived communist threat in the Southern Cameroons was French Cameroun. One would therefore have expected that the way to protect the Southern Cameroons from that perceived threat was not to push it into the arms of a French Cameroun that was under threat of a communist take-over. The said French Cameroun should have been required to join a communist-threat-free neighbouring francophonic state such as Chad or Central African Republic and so sink itself there, thereby eliminating the communist threat. If there were genuine fears that independent Southern Cameroons was likely to fall prey to one or other of its neighbours the right thing to have done, and for which there are historical precedents, would have been to grant the territory independence with guarantees of protection by the great Powers, especially Britain and America.

4. Having appointed itself promoter and defender of Nigerian interests the British Government was determined to sink the Southern Cameroons into Nigeria at all costs. One would have thought that on this question of joinder the UN would have, unlike Britain hell-bent on acting in what it saw as Nigeria's interest, expanded its horizon beyond Nigeria and French Cameroun. But joining the other neighbour of the Southern Cameroons, the Spanish Island of Fernando Po, demographically and spatially much smaller than the Southern Cameroons, was not even contemplated. Curiously too, the UN did not even apply its mind to the integrity of the British Cameroons Territory and the possibility of its acceding to independence as a unitary territory. The UN having taken the view that the Northern British Cameroons and the Southern British Cameroons though held under a single trusteeship agreement as one trust territory consisted in fact of two disparate and disconnect territories, decided that each of those two territories constituted a distinct and separate unit of self determination. It therefore imposed separate plebiscites on the two territories, computed the results separately, came to different conclusions in Resolution 1608 in respect of the two territories, and terminated the trusteeship agreement on different dates in respect of the two territories. This position was judicially endorsed by the International Court of Justice in the *Northern Cameroons* case in which the Court proceeded on the clear understanding that Northern and Southern British Cameroons were separate and distinct units of self-determination.

5. While the generality of the people of the Southern Cameroons may have known that they were, by their vote, voting not only for independence but also for joinder to Nigeria or Cameroun Republic, as imposed on them by the UN, nevertheless they clearly did not know and were not told the implications or political consequences of joining either country. In fact the UN Plebiscite Commissioner came to the settled conclusion that although the people voted freely they did not appear to appreciate what they were called upon to vote for. In concrete terms this meant the people did not act with full knowledge of the change in their status and therefore did not make a responsible choice.

6. A clear majority of the political stakeholders in the Southern Cameroons definitely did not want 'to join' either Nigeria or Cameroun Republic. That much was clear even from the outcome of the Mamfe Conference in August 1959, clear from the Foncha-Endeley Statement at the UN calling for deferment of the plebiscite to 1962, and clear from statements by at least three political parties opposed to the imposed limited plebiscite and in favour of sovereign statehood for the Southern Cameroons. It was clear from the various views expressed by the generality of the people during the plebiscite 'enlightenment' campaign that the people did not want 'independence' if that meant forced joinder to either French Cameroun to the east or to Nigeria to the west. But the UK Government through tricks, craftiness and duplicity succeeded, with the seeming complicity of the UN, in imposing on the Southern Cameroons death by burning or by drowning; death by the fry pan or by fire.

7. The plebiscite enlightenment material denoted as 'the two alternatives', evidently prepared by the British and available for circulation as the basis of information on the plebiscite, was published literally on the eve of the plebiscite. The document contained two big lies. The first lie was the claim in the document that the Southern Cameroons would become a part of Cameroun Republic by voting to join it. There was no basis whatsoever for this claim maliciously slipped into the document by the British. The terms of the pre-plebiscite agreement between Foncha and Ahidjo did not say and, in fact, never contemplated such an eventuality. The British Government itself, speaking through its colonial Secretary, said that by voting to join Cameroun Republic the Southern Cameroons would form a two-state federal union with that country, in other words, a constitutive federation. UN Resolution 1608, adopted after the plebiscite, did not, unlike in the case of the Northern Cameroons, resolve that the Southern Cameroons would, upon joining Cameroun Republic become a part of that country. The Southern Cameroons could never have negotiated and voted to become extinct as a legal and political expression! There was nothing to gain by such action.

The second lie was the distinct impression conveyed by the very title of the document itself. The title, 'the two alternatives', was deceptive. The word 'alternative' means two or more possibilities. So why speak, pleonastically, of *two alternatives*? In their struggle to throw off colonial yoke two alternative political status options are always open to colonial countries and peoples: (i) emergence as an independent sovereign state, or, and this was quite exceptional, (ii) joinder to another country in the form either of a free association, a federal union, or integration. In the case of the Southern Cameroons, however, there were in fact no alternative political status options at all. The UN withheld the political status alternative of independence and imposed on the Southern Cameroons joinder to either Nigerian or French Cameroun; and, to further confound matters the UN did not even bother to explain what it meant by the term 'to join', that is, the form of joinder it had in contemplation. The Southern Cameroons was thus required, willy-nilly, to join, albeit with a choice as between two neighbouring countries.

What was presented to the people was a choice between two countries and not an option as between alternative political status as required by the law on decolonization. It would be recalled that the Southern Cameroons had fought for and secured in 1954 the status of a separate unit within Nigeria, and in 1960 seceded from that country. What sense did it make for the UK or the UN to require the Southern Cameroons to return to a country from which it had just escaped? French Cameroun was a land awash with blood and terror and over the head of which a serious communist threat hung like the sword of Damocles. What sense did it make for the UN to require the Southern Cameroons to join that country? Either way it was death. Given these facts how can it be said that the UK Government and the UN meant well for or acted in the best interest of the people of the Southern Cameroons?

8. The UK and the UN have always peddled the myth that the people of the Southern Cameroons reached a decision on their own future. The fact of the matter is that they did not. The UN and the UK decided, God-like, that the future of the people of the Southern Cameroons must be that of an eternally colonized people, provided that the new colonial authority in the territory is Nigerian or Cameroun Republic. That decision was then imposed on the Southern Cameroons, the people being invited, perniciously, to choose between either of those two willing would-be colonial authorities.

9. Even assuming that the people of the Southern Cameroons did decide positively to join Cameroun Republic, it was the responsibility of the UN and the UK to oversee the proper and smooth process of joining so as to

ensure that the relationship between the two parties did not then or subsequently degenerate into that of master and servant. They failed to do so. In fact, the UK Government employed its possible best to ensure that the Southern Cameroons was crippled; and it proceeded to hand over the territory to independent French Cameroun exactly as a slave master hands over a slave to a slave buyer. This was utterly disgraceful, to say the least.

10. Right to the very end the Southern Cameroons and independent French Cameroun had diametrically opposed understanding of what UN Resolution 1608 actually meant: the Southern Cameroons understood it to mean both countries were to come together in a free political association that would take an enduring federal form and character; independent French Cameroun claimed the resolution authorized it to grab the Southern Cameroons as part and parcel of its territory (which is why it voted against UN Resolution 1608 endorsing Southern Cameroons' affirmative vote at the plebiscite for independence). The UK Government and the UN maintained a studied silence on the meaning of that resolution.

11. During the trusteeship the exercise of colonial sovereignty was vested in Britain as the trustee power, subject, of course, to supervision by and the concomitant obligation of accountability to the United Nations in which the residuary colonial sovereignty was considered to be vested. As the UN's scheduled date of termination of trusteeship approached the Southern Cameroons stated its opposition to any move by Britain to vest in Cameroun Republic the exercise of any act of sovereignty in the Southern Cameroons. The Southern Cameroons pointed to the terms of the agreement on a federal form of association reached between the two countries and in terms of which sovereignty over both countries was to vest in an organization representing the nascent Federation. But Britain went behind the back of the Southern Cameroons and in the words of Hon. Hugh Frazer, Under Secretary of State for the Colonies "the Southern Cameroons was transferred to Mr Ahidjo" of Cameroun Republic. Further, the Southern Cameroons was also opposed to Cameroun Republic troops moving into the Southern Cameroons, describing such an eventuality as tantamount to "a foreign army of occupation taking control of the territory." By mid-September 1961, however, the British, who were still responsible for the defence of and security in the territory, allowed those Cameroun Republic troops with their incurable bad habits to march into and occupy the Southern Cameroons.

12. What was the role of the UK Government during, immediately before and after the plebiscite? Since the UK Government declined to assist the Southern Cameroons in its negotiations with Cameroun Republic one would

have thought that it would leave the Southern Cameroons to proceed with the negotiations and to act as it saw fit, consistently with the right of self-determination and having regard to its interests and future. The UK Government was still responsible for matters relating to the territory's foreign affairs. Strangely, not only did it refuse to assist the Southern Cameroons in its negotiations with Cameroun Republic that was assisted throughout by the French Government; the UK Government actually went out of its way to obstruct every negotiation effort by the Southern Cameroons.

13. The UK Government was more of an obstructionist than a helper in the Southern Cameroons' quest for freedom. Had the UK not always put obstacles in the way of the Southern Cameroons there can be no doubt that the territory would have emerged into sovereign statehood.

14. The UK Government tied Foncha's hands and consistently punched him like a boxer his punching bag. As if it was not enough to tie a man's two hands and then to proceed to rain blows on him, the UK Government acted on France's admonition that Foncha should be further tightly gagged. And then the two Governments rained blows on him.

15. Throughout the Southern Cameroons independence saga the UK Government proved itself to be master at crafty evasions, duplicity, obfuscation, prevarication and political manoeuvring in relation to the Southern Cameroons question. After the UN vote in April 1961, Sir Andrew Cohen, UK's Representative at the UN, and Mr Johnston, UK's Ambassador to Cameroun Republic, both disappeared from the scene and were never heard of again. Cohen must have left satisfied he had accomplished the '*dirty job*' he was assigned in regard to the Southern Cameroons. One also hopes he died satisfied with his contribution to inflicting enormous pain and suffering on others.

16. After the plebiscite the conduct of the UK, France and Cameroun Republic regarding the Southern Cameroons was as though after the vote on 11 February 1961 the Southern Cameroons came under the joint colonial administration of those countries. For example, France freely meddled in the affairs of the Southern Cameroons, even insisting to the British that Foncha, the Southern Cameroons Prime Minister, should not be given much rein. Cameroun Republic performed acts of sovereignty in the Southern Cameroons: it enacted on 1 September 1961 what was in effect an annexation law but disguised as a 'federal constitution'; it moved its army into and occupied the Southern Cameroons in mid-September; it purported to tell the Government of the Southern Cameroons what it

should or should not do, as when it said it was not going to authorize the Government of the Southern Cameroons sending Muna and Jua abroad in August/September 1961 to seek economic assistance and security arrangements to help maintain law and order in the Southern Cameroons.

17. The UK Government's whole design, towards which she moved ruthlessly and relentlessly, was to so cripple the Southern Cameroons Government as to make sure it submits to annexation and colonial take over and in a most humiliating and dehumanizing fashion: the sudden massive pull out of British expatriate staff so as to make sure the territory was deprived of the much-needed experienced staff to help run a viable government in the Southern Cameroons at least for a couple of years; denial of any form of security arrangement, not even a police force, to ensure public safety and protection of life and property; denial of money assistance to help run a government at least in the first year or so of 'decolonisation'.

It is well to remember that the British did not discharge themselves creditably as far as the human resource and infrastructural development of the Southern Cameroons was concerned. Even the development of political institutions had been tardy and haphazard (the Southern Cameroons being administered as part of Nigeria right up to 30 September 1960). "A parsimonious British administration," observed one author, "had chosen to run the Southern Cameroons as part of eastern Nigeria, using existing traditional rulers to run local government, but reserving real power in the hands of a very small number of British and Nigerian officials."² Moreover, "All the real problems for local politicians derived from the fact that there were simply not enough of them with sufficient experience to do the job properly. And that in turn was a direct result of a niggardly British administration, which had failed to provide the educational and political opportunities that were much more readily available in wealthier countries, such as Ghana and Nigeria. A small United Nations Trust Territory with few resources had just not been worth the expense of development."³

18. Right to the very end the British Government failed to act in good faith in regard to the Southern Cameroons independence question as required by the Trusteeship Agreement and the UN Charter.

2. J Percival, *op. cit.* p.42.

3. *Ibid.*, p.78.

19. Much has been said of the draft constitution presented by Foncha at the Bamenda Conference in 1961 after the plebiscite. It is often forgotten that the draft corresponded to what Foncha campaigned on during the plebiscite and which gave him victory. The draft was also consistent with the outline of the proposed federal constitution to which Ahidjo committed his government and country. The vote of the people of the Southern Cameroons for political association with Cameroon Republic was on the basis of that outline of the proposed draft federal constitution. Politically, Foncha could not therefore have been expected to table at Bamenda a different draft constitution as that would have meant a betrayal of or fraud on the vote. Ahidjo and his government were contractually bound to go along with that draft. Ahidjo could not, after the vote, impose a 'constitution' completely out of character from what the people of the Southern Cameroons had voted for at the plebiscite on 11 February 1961.

20. The attitude of Cameroun Republic, the UK and France in pressurizing Foncha to accept Ahidjo's *diktat* was perfidy of the highest order. Ahidjo and his French sponsors were the ones who should have been called upon to conduct themselves in good faith by sticking to the pre-plebiscite constitutional terms voluntarily subscribed to by Cameroun Republic.

The material in this volume consists of official documents from British colonial files in the Public Records Office and United Nations material from UN websites or publications. The British colonial documents were of course type-written using the ribbon type-writer of those days. Some passages and even entire pages have therefore succumbed to the passage of time, becoming blurred and therefore readable only with a magnifying glass or undecipherable or lost altogether. Since the documents could not be reproduced in scanned form they have had to be retyped on computer. The exercise proved tedious but exciting. Here and there I have commented on the contents of a number of documents by way of a 'note' or an 'observation' appended at the foot of each such document.

The material in this volume proves conclusively that the people of the Southern Cameroons were cheated out of their birth right, the right to sovereign statehood. For, the documents attest to the political status of the Southern Cameroons as a state in *statu nascendi* and thus entitled to sovereign statehood. The declassified documents also prove conclusively that the UK Government breached its international obligation to act in good faith and in the best interest of the people of the Southern Cameroons over whom it had voluntarily assumed a trust to lead to

independence. This volume puts to rest any Thomas-like doubt as to the legitimacy, lawfulness and righteousness of the Southern Cameroons' entitlement to sovereign statehood.

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