

**TEACHERS ASSOCIATION OF CAMEROON
(TAC)**

c/o Mr AZONG-WARA ANDREW
CCAST BAMBILI
5th AUGUST, 1992

THROUGH THE DELEGATE,
DELEDOC BAMENDA,
N.W. PROVINCE

TO THE HON. MINISTER
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION
YAOUNDE

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

MEMO: THE NECESSITY FOR A G.C.E. EXAMINATION BOARD

Following the meeting of 17th July 1992 in Yaounde presided over by the Hon. Minister of National Education to break the deadlock on the marking of the 1992 G.C.E;

Following the meeting of 31st July 1992 with Examiners from the three marking centres, the Provincial Delegate of National Education for North West and TAC at which the minutes of the above meeting were extensively discussed;

In spite of the meeting of 3rd August 1992 with the Secretary General of the Governor's Office N.W. at which the Secretary General ordered examiners with threats to mark;

We have the honour to present to you the following memorandum which is the result of the work of a committee set up by the July 31st meeting in which the examiners resolved not to mark:-

A. ADMINISTRATION OF THE G.C.E.

Before 1977 Your Excellency, G.C.E. Examinations were entirely administered by the University of London Schools Examination Board. Fees were paid to the London Board while the Ministry of National Education acted merely as a liaison between the University of London Examination Board and the candidates.

From 1977 to 1989, the Ministry of National Education partially controlled the examination while being scrupulously supervised by the London Board with the provision of Chief Examiners and Moderators. Later on, questions were prepared by Cameroonian Chief Examiners and Moderated by London, printed and parcelled by them to the Ministry of National Education.

Between 1977 and 1984 things moved smoothly. But from 1984 onwards, the G.C.E started experiencing irregularities as a result of the fact that the London officials started withdrawing. These irregularities could be found in :-

- i) Appointment of Chief Examiners, Assistant Chief Examiners and other officials in the Department of Examinations in the Ministry of National Education was done arbitrarily, without due regards to qualification and experience;

- ii) There were rampant changes of Deputy Directors of Exams in charge of the G.C.E. This ushered in instability thereby affecting the smooth running of the G.C.E. Examinations. This frequent turnover of staff has affected the stability, validity, and reliability of the G.C.E. and is gradually eroding its international credibility.

From 1990, when the London University Schools Examination Board relegated its former role on the Cameroon G.C.E., the irregularities even became more alarming:

- a) Some G.C.E. questions reserved for future sessions were sold to other Examination Bodies such as E.N.S. for their Entrance Examination in 1990, as a result of which Chief Examiners had to be re-invited to hurriedly set other questions,
- b) In 1991, the format of the G.C.E. Examination was changed without prior notice to candidates. This had an adverse psychological effect on candidates who confronted the change only in the Examination Room,
- c) In 1992, the Cameroon G.C.E. was a complete disaster in the following respects:-
- i) The instructions on the registration forms for both "O" and "A" Levels were mixed up.
 - ii) Congested and unpedagogic G.C.E. Examination Time-table.
 - iii) Poor conduct of G.C.E. Examinations, poor printing, wrong pagination, wrong spellings, and wrong instructions on G.C.E. Examination papers, shortage of questions and material,
 - iv) Late arrival of question papers and postponement of some papers.
 - v) Leakages originating regrettably from the Examination Department itself and confirmed by the Hon. Minister of National Education in his TV interview on the programme "Actualité Hebdo".

B FINANCES OF THE G.C.E.

Your Excellency, the committee was also empowered to let you know that the financial management of the G.C.E. had followed the same trend as its administration. In the pre- 1977 period, all subject fees were paid to the University of London Schools Examination Board. A fee was charged to take care of local supervision. This was promptly paid when due and only to those directly involved with the exercise.

From 1977 upward, a global registration fee was charged and made payable to the Government Treasury. On the other hand, Government budgeted for the financial management of examinations.

Up to 1983, dues to examiners and other officials were prompt and regular. From 1984, payments became irregular, arbitrary and completely absent in some years.

Between 1984 and 1987, Cameroon was in her period of economic boom, yet, neither the marking fees nor out-of-station claims were regularly paid to the Examiners. The non-payment of examiners now cannot therefore only be attributed to the Economic Crisis.

In 1988, the Presidency of the Republic gave a special grant of over eighty million (80.000.000) F.CFA for the settlement of 1987 out-of-station claims for examiners but the Minister of National Education pocketed this cash with impunity. When Examiners sought for redress from the Presidency, many of them were dismissed from their functions in the Examinations by the Minister of National Education.

These administrative and financial irregularities notwithstanding, Examiners had always been prevailed upon to mark the G.C.E.

C THE G.C.E. EXAMINATION BOARD

In the light of the above observations it would be noticed that during both the pre- Cameroon G.C.E. (London G.C.E.) Examinations and earlier Cameroon G.C.E. Examinations period, the G.C.E. was efficiently and smoothly administered. This is because it was carried out by a relatively independent, specialised, and competent organisation, that is the University of London Schools Examination Board.

The Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC) strongly believes that a G.C.E. Examination Board should be created by the Ministry of National Education to take over the role hitherto played by the University of London Schools Examination Board. This will lessen the responsibility of the Department of Examinations which is already overburdened with the conduct of so many examinations.

The question of an Examination Board for the G.C.E. should not pose any problem for the Ministry of National Education. All that is required is a firm text declaring that an Examination Board for the G.C.E. has been created. The details of its operations can be worked out by a technical committee to be set up for that purpose. Such a committee should include representatives of TAC, Moderators, Chief Examiners, University and Parents' representatives.

D ON THE "DUTIES OF THE TEACHER"

Your Excellency, it was also deemed necessary that you be made to note this point on the duties of a teacher when it comes to examinations. Teachers have been doing their duties of teaching and evaluating consistently from the first to the last day of the school year. All schools break up for holidays after the publication of the end-of-year examination results. Each school (teacher) sets, administers, marks and publishes results of examinations on their own internal principles. So, their work at that level ends.

At this juncture it should be made clear that Certificate Examinations, such as the G.C.E., are External Examinations and therefore do not constitute part and parcel of the teachers routine work.

First of all not all teachers are G.C.E. Examiners. Secondly, the G.C.E. Examinations are not run by the schools, that is, the setting, marking and publication of the results are not done by the schools. Therefore, to select a few teachers of Cameroon from the huge lot, on account of their proven competence and experience, to mark the G.C.E., only to turn round to coerce and threaten them with dismissal from service (while their colleagues are quietly enjoying their holidays) is a most unjust and unhealthy thing to do by any Government authority. TAC vehemently frowns on such practices.

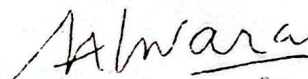
E CONCLUSION

In conclusion we are humbly requesting the Hon. Minister of National Education to proceed with the creation of this most desired BOARD as a matter of urgency. In like manner TAC would be very grateful if the Hon. Minister takes steps to ensure that payments of 1991 out-of-station claims and marking fees are effected while scheduling the payments of the accrued debts.

Examiners hold that marking of the G.C.E. 1992 Examinations would start as soon as these requests are met with.

Accept Honourable Minister, our most profound regards for both your person and Office.

Yours faithfully,



AZONG-WARA ANDREW
(PRESIDENT OF TAC)

For and on behalf of Cameroon G.C.E. Examiners

CC

- PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC,
- PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY,
- PRIME MINISTER AND HEAD OF GOVERNMENT,
- GOVERNORS NW, SW & CENTRE PROVINCES,
- PROVINCIAL DELEGATES OF NATIONAL EDUCATION, NW, SW, CENTRE PROVINCES,
- S.D.O. MEZAM (for Information),
- PARENTS,
- PRESS.