

**Volume 5**

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**Cameroon at the Crossroads - I**

**Lead: At the crossroads of African commerce and social struggles lies the Republic of Cameroon.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: The broad sweep of the West African coastline run south from Gibraltar, turns eastward at Cape Palmas in Liberia and runs a generally straight course until it turns back to the south along the Sanaga River delta in the Republic of Cameroon. For centuries Cameroon**

**has been a racial crossroads. More than 200 different ethnic groups inhabit its broad savannas and dense jungles. Archeological evidence indicates human habitation in the region for more 50,000 years, although the dominant tribal groups may have immigrated into the area only within the last five centuries.**

**Europeans first arrived in Cameroon in the 1470s. The Portuguese established prosperous plantations and a thriving slave trading system. Portugal was soon supplanted by the Dutch in 1600s, the British in the early 1800s and the newly united Germans in the 1880s as part of their ambitious but much too**

**late attempt at securing a colonial empire. During World War I Britain and France forced the Germans out and divided the colony into two autonomous spheres of influence which the two great powers held until independence in 1961.**

**Cameroon has a developing market economy rooted in a diversified foundation of agriculture. Coffee, cocoa, cotton and bananas are grown for export which are bolstered by a steady supply of off-shore crude oil. A liberal investment policy has attracted much foreign capital, primarily from France, and money has poured in to build dams, roads, and a small but growing mining and**

**industrial base. As a result Cameroon has the largest per capita gross national product of any West African country. This development has been helped by a slow but steady progress to democratic institutions. Next time: Independence comes to Cameroon.**

**At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

## Resources

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