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SCYL

## A LETTER TO ALL ANGLOPHONES (SOUTHERN CAMEROONIANS)



THE SOUTHERN CAMEROONS YOUTH LEAGUE | SCYL

# A LETTER TO ALL ANGLOPHONES (SOUTHERN CAMEROONIANS)

In

NORWAY



## **MAINTAINING OPPRESSION**

"...there are the self-fulfilling prophecies in which the behavior of the oppressed, resulting from their oppression is used by the oppressor to justify the oppression; and the distorted relation between the oppressor and the oppressed". (Morton Deutsch)

## **SCYL STATEMENT ON CELEBRATING THE 20TH OF MAY**

*Fellow Southern Cameroonians,*

*Fellow compatriots of Norway:*

I will refer in this letter to Southern Cameroonians as “Anglophones” and to those who have occupied our land and treated us as slaves from La Republique du Cameroun as “francophones”. These appellations have nothing to do with re-enforcing colonial stereotypes; rather for the purpose of clarity.

The purpose of this letter is neither some lecture in political philosophy nor some historical lessons about the Southern Cameroons. It is neither some human rights discourse nor some evaluation of the impunity with which our people have been treated. It is neither meant to convince you nor to persuade you from your course of action. This is a letter rooted in the truth about the veil covering our sight and that has kept us in servitude for more than half a century. You, who hold this letter in your hands, as you sit comfortably in a soft armchair or crammed on a bus on your way to your daily chores, I know you will show the same insensitivity as you say to yourself; perhaps this is that same piece of political junk I admonished. Or you may say, perhaps this is worth reading to take away the boredom of the day. But at the end I hope you do not blame your callousness and insensitivity on the authors, their design and their persistence on this very issue, accusing them of exaggeration. But mark this well: this piece is neither fiction nor some boring piece of political jargon. This is a letter of quintessential importance that speaks to the very notion of slavery and freedom. We are almost alone up against a large number of people: the enemy because we do not fraternize with their laziness, their lack of empathy and their bad fate; other adversaries because they have accepted ready made ideas, concocted tales and coercive demands without reflection and no longer have the courage of a conversion; the mass, the disinterested, but prepared, conditioned by the Yaoundé regime between 1972 and 2010, curious and disturbed rather than sympathetic but with all the fluidity of the moment prefers to stick with status quo, even one that

enforces their inhumanity



Fellow Anglophones:

On May 18, 1972, after a secret, complicated and confused question on the ballot box in which the People of the former British Southern Cameroons were tricked into answering either “**Oui**” or “**Yes**”, both being a positive nod for a Champs D’Elyse organized referendum in faulty “Federal Republic of Cameroon” of 1961, citizens of the former British Southern Cameroons with virtually no knowledge of the French language and with no possibility of the instruments of State to best explained the intricacies that goes with Ahidjo’s Palace Coup, overwhelmingly voted “No” to the “Unitary System” of absolute dictatorship by choosing the “Oui” ballot paper thinking it signifies rejection of France’s direct intervention in Ahmadou Babatoura Ahidjo’s 11-years rule of a brutal tyranny – yet they were deceived. Just as the United Nations had played into the hands of the Cold War politics by knowingly abrogating its own Charter and norms as regards full-fledge independence for the Mandated Territory of the Southern Cameroons in the

Plebiscite of Saturday, the 11th of February, 1961, so too did Ahmadou Babatoura Ahidjo ably aided and abated by Gaullist France took our people one step further, closer and chained into the abyss of an annexation which history would even be afraid to record in its truism. The 20<sup>th</sup> of May 1972 went down in history as the day the Francophones abolished the federal constitution that had bonded the two nations. The United Republic of Cameroun was born in which the Anglophone became a slave, second class citizen and a virtual prisoner of the francophones.

So, year after year, it has not just been us, our parents, our great grand parents in some instances, our children, our children's children who have been called up to rise each morning at 4:30 am in most places where they have to trek for kilometers to the "May 20th Zone". Our people have been coerced to sweat under the excruciating heat while the proconsuls of the annexationist in the persons of DO's and SDO's sit under roofs constructed by our parents taxes forcibly collected through the dehumanizing, degrading and depersonalizing "Kale-Kale". They have watched with great amusement as we salute and celebrate our enslavement. They have laughed at our ignorance and sheer stupidity as we betray the brave ones who stood up in opposition to this deceit and daylight robbery. Yet, thirty-eight years after, fully being aware of these degrading treatment and constant humiliation, fully being cognizant of the emptiness of the 20th of May as a "national day", not forgetting that because of its fakeness, successive Yaoundé cannibalistic regimes have not been able to truly explain why there can never be a historic national day celebration like July 4 in the United States, July 1 in barbaric France, October 1 in neighbouring Nigeria, just to name a few. Yet they keep on asking us to march, to sing, to celebrate, to rejoice – to rejoice that we are slaves, worst than slaves and would always be slaves! They want us to go out there as we have been deceived in instances to do, but most often, compel by our fear-drenched school administrators to do – to go out and lick our wounds, accept that it is normal for us to sit idly-by and watch the raping of our mothers, aunts cousins, sisters and daughters; to thank them with our often white-chalked canvasses, khaki-shorts and shirts with assorted buttons stinking with the best rubbing oil our parents were compel to know, appreciate and buy for us when they are lucky – the famous seven-year course; yes they want us to thank them for thingifying us, for making

us something less than humans. Norwegians celebrate 17 May as a day of pride and patriotism. The celebration of this day of honour began spontaneously in 1814 by students. Even though at this time Norway was under Swedish rule; despite the fact that the Swedish King actually banned these celebrations, the Norwegians never gave up.

Today, as a free country, it takes pride in its history and most of you share in this pride with great admiration. On the other hand, a band of poorly educated, ruthless and arrogant francophones can compel in the same Norway for Anglophones to join them in the 'celebration' of their day of enslavement. You have joined them each year in Oslo to dance Makossa, proclaiming a cultural and national day imposed by Francophones, controlled by francophones and for the benefit of Francophones. In your country, francophones treat you like second class citizens, "les anglofools; les enemie dans la maison". They treat you like a captured people whose only worth is the resources buried deep in your soil. They have occupied and ruled you for sixty years, dominated the realm of power and transform your cities and Hamlets into mass graves driven by poverty. The only people in this world who will not revolt under these circumstances do not exist. The only people whose land will be taken away from them, their villages bought over, their cities taken over, their potentials robbed, their educational system hijacked and they can still join the thieves in celebrating with their bounties are Anglophones. The only people who will be denied good football pitches, technically barred from the national team and yet they still join the racist discriminator in celebrating their victory and mourn more than them when they are defeated are you the Anglophones. Where is your pride? Where is your manhood? Where is your humanity? Do you think these francophone murderers will entertain any discussion about the discrimination you suffer in your own land? Do you think they will even listen to you when you evoke any discussion about October 1? Ok, just give a try. Ask the francophones with whom you dance Makossa and celebrate your so-called culture if you could (1) invite Amumba to play for your so-called national day celebration (2) change the day of this so-called national day celebration from May 20, to October 1. On the first question, the francophone will tell you, no problem...Amumba can play for the cultural part of the celebration because Amumba is like Njang, bottle dance or Malee. The real gala evening should be Petit Pays and some crap call Makossa

because its modern and a piece of rambling about avocet de femme, nyocksee and je suis hausa. It is not because Makossa is not sung in Bassa or Bikutsi in Ewondo. It is simply because you have been forced to listen to Makossa until you can sing it in Bassa, dance it in Bassa and even believe it in Bassa. This is what we call in political science, cultural imperialism. At the same time you feel shame to dance bottle dance. It is not because bottle dance is some mystery music. It is because Francophones have demonized and undermined your own culture to the extent that you believe them. But isn't it shameful that if our uneducated parents are forced to dance with the enemy, march with the enemy and celebrate their enslavement just to survive, you who is far away from home, having nothing to loose when you rebel, have the education to differentiate between manipulation and facts, is still dancing and celebrating the day you were enslaved? On the second issue, the francophone will tell you CAMASON is apolitical and so should not get involved in October 1. Rubbish. And what about 20<sup>th</sup> May? Is this day not the most political day we know? The slave driver francophone will tell you it is a national day. And the ignorant slave Anglophone will say, oh yes. But what is National in this day? This is the question I want you to answer as you drown yourself in some Makossa. This is an answer you should tell your child, when asked why you are going out today. Do not give the answer Ahidjo told you. Do not give the convenient one some francophone slave driver has driven into your psyche using CRTV or in some Censored books and doctored civic lessons. Give an answer base on research and truth. This is what will empower your child. If you are too ashamed to tell the truth, just tell the child, you are apolitical and that you just want to enjoy yourself. But never forget that, that child will lecture you tomorrow on the meaning of May 17

I write to you today as the National Public Relations Officer of the People's Movement, the Southern Cameroons Youth League, the SCYL to say that the scarlet's that once covered our eyes and which we have long removed since 1995 would never again be allowed to return to its old place – our eyes, consciences and hearts. Not even in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, England or the United States should passivity be allowed to replace reality in our beleaguered history. We did not

make who we are! We did not choose where we were to be born! We did not select our dads and mums, our tribes, ethnic groups and languages; we did not select even our colonial masters – most especially we did not and had never chosen to be other people’s slaves! We have never accorded that our lives, our living standard, our culture, our whole being deserves nothing more than a second fiddle! Not now are we to back down from being who we are – a people under international law, a people as we were created and have been since creation. And even if we were given the possibility of making the choice, none of you reading this statement today would have preferred a brutal and demonic gendarmerie force akin to human blood, humiliation and gross abuse of fundamental human rights to the well-guided, well-behaved, well-disciplined and better mannered mobile wing police force! Even if the choice to be who we are today was within our own making, none of you would choose an academic philosophy which rewards charlatans and misfits to the detriment of the poor but very intelligent children! Therefore, I would say don’t celebrate the 20th of May because by doing so, you would be recognizing your status as a slave and thus legitimizing my own inability to be human. You may argue that it is your right to choose being a slave or a free person, however since it is rather unfortunate that your fate is tied to mine, it is in your own interest not mine that you don’t push the button of legitimate frustration and anger to turn to bitterness because the later has the difficulties of knowing who is and who is not. It is in your own hands at least to decide whether “makossa” is far better than “malée”, and whether “bikutsi” is best for our children than “njang or moninki.”

To undertake anything with the fidelity of a conviction is very rare these days. To take a stance in the face of confusion and uncertainty does not suffice: letters are read but not heeded. Hardly anybody may give admittance to, but merely take notice of this letter. Nevertheless if I am not mistaken on the spirit of the age, people will become accustomed to it. For history buried will face the unrelenting effort of a generation which refuses to surrender to the pleasantries of those who have occupied their country, raped their sisters and turned their fathers into boys.

We are a distinct people, with an identity; a voice and a personal trait. We are not just the

product of some cosmic assembly or colonial quest gone wrong. This distinctiveness, we intend to maintain under a state that treats us like humans, with a dream and a life worth protecting. Francophones are devils. Treat them like night stalkers and never forget that in your country, they don't recognize your existence. Their pretence out here is to use your genius, your devotion and your knowhow to help them cement your slave status for ever. Even when their immorally-plagued musicians sing for history, it is the Charles Atangana, Reuben Um Nyobe, Felix Roland Moumie – the heroes they were taught of, asked to admire and appreciate, compel to memorize as their patriots. They know nothing and even those amongst them who have the least of ideas of our rich history do not see the greatness of our Emmanuel Mbella Lifafe Endeley, our S.A.George, our Bobe Augustin Ngom Jua, our Motomby-Woleta, and our Peter M. Kale! They do not know about the legendary bravery of our own Kuva Likenye, the People's Field Marshal who brought the white man on their knees as they attempt to conquer our heartland! Even when they know they would never appreciate! After all who are we to them than a means to an end?

The francophones have become synonymous to Lucifer, and when they are not plotting against us, they are using us against ourselves! They have distorted our history, disenfranchised our people, mortgaged our being, but worst of all these long-time scrupulous bed-mates have transformed themselves from the cancer of corruption to the instruments of death for our people! And as they murder our humanity, they compel us to sing in their old neo-colonial diatribe, "We were one and the white man came with a big sense and divide the Cameroon!" "You say you are being marginalized, being maltreated. What about the pigmies, the people of the East province? What about the people of Makenene?" Just hear them! Just listen to their insult, their provocation, their refusal to recognize that we are not a tribe, a town or an ethnic group! They have knowingly and collectively agree to reject us as a people fit enough under international law to be what we are to be – a nation under God! The francophones are a cult of evil! Avoid them! And when you can't avoid their instances of provocation, then face them headlong, crushed them in every aspect – an academic debate, a concise understanding of our history, a physical scuffle if need be! Beat them to their game of hatred and naked violence! And

when you face them, take with you the legitimate anger of one yearning for freedom!  
Beat them to their game and let them know that never again!

Do I really expect you to respect the premise of this letter? No. As long as there are no consequences for your continuous flirting with those who have murdered our people; as long as there are no recriminations for celebrating with the conqueror the day of your enslavement. As long as you still have the veil of ignorance over your face, I expect you to join these francophones and dance Makossa. But I am conscious that once you return home, the secret court embedded in our chest will be at work. Your conscious is like a court chamber. It has a prosecutor, a judge and some lawyers. Let the procedure remain in that Chamber but we all await the verdict some day. The Norwegians had theirs on a certain May 17. The Americans on a certain July 4. The Nigerians on a certain October 1. Even Mandela termed yesterday an overzealous fanatic had his on a certain February 11. The 20<sup>th</sup> of May was not ours. It was a day we were conquered and one we should fight against, reject and viewed with scorn and disdain. And even if you refuse today to flow with the tide there is a tomorrow, when a Tsunami spares no one in its wake. That day approaches with all certainty.

Take your Chance. Thanks for reading

*Paraphrased from Woody Guthrie*

**This land is your land, this land is my land  
From Bimbia, to the Ndop Plain  
From the Korup forest, to the gulf stream waters  
This land was made for you and me**

**As I was walking a ribbon of highway  
I saw above me an endless skyway  
I saw below me a golden valley  
This land was made for you and me**

**I've roamed and rambled and I've followed my footsteps**

To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts  
And all around me a voice was sounding  
This land was made for you and me

The sun comes shining as I was strolling  
The corn fields waving and the dust clouds rolling  
The fog was lifting a voice come chanting  
This land was made for you and me

As I was walking - I saw a sign there  
And that sign said - Pour le francophone'  
But on the other side ... it didn't say anything  
Now that side was made for you and me!

In the squares of the Bamenda - In the shadow of Mutengene  
Near the CDC offices - I see my people  
And some are grumbling and some are wondering  
If this land is still made for you and me.  
A voice whispers silently. Yes.  
BUT NOT FOR THE FRANCOPHONES