

Rethinking Cameroon's National Anthem and the Challenges to Internal Cohesion: A Historical Review, Fifty Years after Independence and Reunification

Willibroad Dze-Ngwa, PhD

Department of History
University of Yaoundé I

Email: dzewing@yahoo.com/dzengwa@rocketmail.com

Abstract

This paper reflects on the historical musicology and lexicology of the national anthem of Cameroon and argues that there is a sharp dichotomy in the country's national anthem(s) as a veritable rallying song for all Cameroonians. Considering the quest for greater internal cohesion in the country, such a dichotomy challenges the very foundation of the country's internal policy options of national unity and national integration. In order to give meaning to our reflections, we revisited the history and the dynamics of the country's national anthem(s). To do this, the qualitative research approach was adopted. Both primary and secondary sources were consulted. After careful analyses of facts and figures, the paper concludes that: Cameroon has two completely different national anthems which were composed in two different territories by two different groups of people under two different historical contexts and influenced by two diametrically opposed colonial legacies. Paradoxically, the entire citizenry of the country continue to, consciously or unknowingly, consider it as "a rallying song," fifty years after the country's independence and reunification, even though the anthem is supposed to have been composed in 1928. The paper also concludes that, unlike other national symbols, the country's anthem rather breeds discord instead of promoting concord and harmony among a people who had been torn apart by colonial masters and reunited with different inherited British-French colonial legacies. The paper suggests that there is dire need to rethink and harmonize or craft a completely new and a much more involving, patriotic and a truly "Rallying song" for all Cameroonians. This of course needs the political will of politicians, rulers and leaders.

Keywords: Cameroon, National Anthem, National Unity, National Integration

Résumé

Cet article se penche sur la musicologie historique et la lexicologie de l'hymne national du Cameroun et fait valoir qu'il existe une forte dichotomie dans l'hymne national du pays comme une chanson de ralliement pour tous les Camerounais. Compte tenu de la quête d'une plus grande cohésion interne dans le pays, une telle dichotomie conteste le fondement même de la notion de l'unité nationale et l'intégration nationale. Afin de donner un sens à nos réflexions, nous avons revisité l'histoire du Cameroun et l'évolution de l'hymne national du pays. Pour ce faire, la démarche de recherche qualitative a été adoptée et les sources primaires

et secondaires ont été consultées. Après de minutieuses analyses des faits et des chiffres, le document conclut que: le Cameroun a deux hymnes nationaux totalement différents, qui ont été composés dans deux territoires différents par deux groupes de personnes différents ; dans deux contextes historiques différents et influencés par deux héritages coloniaux opposés. Paradoxalement, l'ensemble des citoyens du pays continuent, consciemment ou inconsciemment, le considérer l'hymne comme "une chanson de ralliement, cinquante ans après l'indépendance et de la réunification du pays. L'étude conclut également que, contrairement à d'autres symboles nationaux, l'hymne du pays races plutôt la discorde au lieu de promouvoir la concorde et l'harmonie entre les gens qui avaient été déchirés par des puissances coloniales et réunis avec différents héritages coloniaux britanniques-françaises. Le document suggère qu'il existe un besoin urgent de repenser et d'harmoniser ou élaborer un tout nouveau l'hymne beaucoup plus impliquant, patriotique et une véritable "chanson de ralliement" pour tous les Camerounais. Bien sûr, cela a besoin de la volonté politique des politiciens, des dirigeants et des leaders du pays.

Mots-clés: Cameroun, l'hymne national, l'unité nationale, l'intégration nationale

I- Introduction

On the occasion of the commencement of the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the reunification of the Cameroons, the Commission of Studies, Conferences and Televised Debates under the distinguished auspices of Cameroon's Minister of Higher Education, Prof. Jacques Fame Ndong, met at *Ecole Normale de Foulassi*, near Sangmelima, on Wednesday April 17, 2013, the supposed birth place of the country's anthem, to reflect on the determinants of the choice, that is, the lexicology, song type and musicology of the country's national anthem. Was this Foulassi come-together prompted by the increasing awareness of the dichotomies in the country's national anthem? Was it just an academic conference to stimulate and promote academic debates or was it to pay homage to Foulassi and the composers of the "national anthem?" Papa Anatole Ebongo,¹ even suggested that the country's national anthem should be renamed *la Foulassien*, in honour of the town where the anthem was composed, just like the French call their anthem *La Marseillaise*. To our humble opinion, it was all of these and a celebration of oneness: *Cameroonianess*. These reflections were presented by and in front of people with the responsibility to shape and reshape the destiny of the country. I was humbled to be part of that reflection team on Cameroon's national anthem.

The April 17, 2013 Foulassi conference opened with prayers followed by the national anthem sung in English, French and Bulu (a national language of the Beti Fang people of Cameroon). As usual, the anthem was followed by deafening applause, a manifestation of pride of belonging to the Cameroon nation. How nice it was to be in Foulassi, the birth place of the "national" anthem, several decades after, to talk about that *Rallying song-cum-Anthem*. Then I remembered how on March 1st 2013, the University of Yaoundé I choir, thrilled the audience with the same anthem during the opening ceremony of the first AFRICE International Conference on Comparative Education at the amphitheatre 700 of the University. The chorus was sung in a beautiful *mélange* of English and French, surely a reminder of the country's linguistic colonial legacies. At the end of the anthem, and with a sense of pride, one varsity don remarked, **"We have the most beautiful anthem in the world"**. And those around him nodded in approval. The most beautiful Anthem? Was this not just a sheer show of love of country? Did Cameroonians realize that the English and French versions of the anthem were completely different in context and content? This paper brings more light to these questions.

¹ Papa Anatole Ebongo (about 100 years old) was a special guest at the Foulassi Meeting and was among the first group of students of the Ecole normale de Foulassi.

Though not being a Lexicologist or a Musicologist, permit me delve into a strange ground and reflect on the Musicology, particularly on the Historical Musicology or Music History of the National Anthem of Cameroon. Historical Musicology “studies the composition, performance, reception, and criticism of music over time”.² We are also going to consider Ethnomusicology or Comparative musicology which is the “study of music in its cultural context.”³ In doing this, an attempt will be made to answer the following five questions: What is (are) the origin (s) of the Cameroon National Anthem (s)? What circumstances surrounded the writing of the Anthem (s)? What are the differences between the English and French versions of the Anthem? Do the wordings of the anthems instill a spirit of patriotism, duty, hope and collective aspiration in its singers? What are the conclusions and way forward for a much more inclusive and uniform “Rallying song” for all Cameroonians?

II- Conceptual Framework

For a better appreciation of the paper, it will be appropriate to re-identify Cameroon, define National Anthem, National Unity and National Integration as used in the paper, before showing the dichotomies in the anthem (s).

Cameroon is a rainbow country with much diversity in terms of language, geography, religion, ethnic and colonial experiences. In terms of language, English and French are the official languages, but the country has about 268 different national languages⁴ alongside Arabic, *Fulfulde*, Latin and German, which are also spoken.⁵ The country has either been named or spelt differently at different periods of her history as the “Chariots of the gods,” “*Rio dos Cameroes*,” “*Camerones*,” “*Kamerun*,” “*Cameroons*” and “*Cameroon*.”⁶ Writers even differ as to the real geographical location of the country. Some locate Cameroon in West Africa, while others place the country in Central Africa. It is clear that Cameroon is strategically located between West Africa and Central Africa.⁷ The country is a German creation, which was seized and partitioned by the combined Anglo-French forces in 1916 during the First World War. The British and French spheres became League of Nations Mandated Territories, and later, United Nations (UN) Trust Territories, which achieved independence separately. French Cameroon achieved independence on January 1st 1960, while British Southern Cameroons achieved independence through reunification with French Cameroon on October 1st 1961. In terms of religion, Cameroon’s numerous belief systems range from the Traditional African Religion to foreign religions like Christianity and Islam. Could Cameroon’s rich diversity be any reason why the country has two different National Anthems?

Meanwhile, **National Anthem** according to Merriam Webster dictionary, could either be defined as “a patriotic song or hymn; especially: one adopted officially and played or sung on formal occasions as a mark of loyalty to the nation;” “a psalm or hymn sung antiphonally or responsively;” “a sacred vocal composition with words usually from the Scriptures;” “a song or hymn of praise or gladness;” or “a usually rousing popular song that typifies or is identified with a particular subculture, movement, or point of view”. In this paper, national anthem should be understood to mean a common rallying song, which ignites patriotism and promotes national unity and internal cohesion.

² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musicology>, 22/06/2014 at 9.30 am

³ *ibid*

⁴ Barbara F. Grimes, *Ethnologue: Languages of the World 13th Edition* (Dallas, Texas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1996), pp.185-215.

⁵ Beban Sammy Chumbow, “Language and Language policy in Cameroon” in *An African Experiment in Nation Building: The Bilingual Cameroon Republic since Reunification* Edited, Kofele-Kale (Boulder, Colorado: WestView Press, 1980), p. 281.

⁶ T. Eyongetah and R. Brain, *A History of the Cameroon* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1978), pp. 53-54.

⁷ Sean Moroney, Ed., *Handbooks to the Modern World Africa, Volume 1*, New York: Facts and File Publications, 1989, p.67.

In the Cameroon context, “National Unity means that in the workyard of national construction there is neither Ewondo nor Douala, Bamileke nor Boulou, Foulbe nor Bassa; we are one and all, simply Cameroonian”.⁸ This concept was promoted by Cameroon’s first president, Ahmadou Ahidjo, who noted in 1962 that:

... We want a Nation, a real united nation, a nation in which all citizens have the same rights and the same duties, a nation in which every citizen, wherever he may be, feels at home and is considered as a brother and a fellow countryman by the other citizens of Cameroon.

We want to build a strong and united nation. To do so, we must strengthen the union of brotherhood between all Cameroonian men and all Cameroonian women, whatever their origin.⁹

The notion of national unity in Cameroon centered on Ahidjo’s political proposals.

However, according to Paul Biya who succeeded Ahidjo in 1982, effective national unity could only be achieved through **National Integration** which to him was “the ultimate step towards national unity... [and] the cardinal, historic task of the highest priority...” for all Cameroonians.¹⁰ Biya intimated that progress in national unity needed to be speeded up through National Integration¹¹. He argued that:

...this unity is still fragile; therefore it is time to switch from a mere national union to real national integration, from the present mere co-existence of ethnic groups to their transformation into a New Ethnic Group suited to our country [Cameroon]. Furthermore, we should steadfastly seek to achieve the highest degree of solidarity among our people to build a perfect nation.¹²

Biya noted that, Cameroon could become a “perfect nation” if all the ethnic cleavages in the country were integrated into a “New Ethnic Group” where Cameroonians would manifest more national than ethnic loyalties. He noted that it was “necessary to inculcate in every Cameroonian a deep-seated national awareness which cannot be shaken by a primary and instinctive attachment to tribal and religious values and interests”.¹³ Biya promised to “... do everything to make profound social changes capable of giving birth to a new community that is more homogenous, more united and more aware of its uniqueness *vis-à-vis* other people; in short, a real Cameroonian Nation.”¹⁴

English-French bilingualism was one of Cameroon’s fundamental policies and part of her national history, which the government encouraged in order to promote internal cohesion. This was enshrined in the Federal Constitution which legitimized the union between the French Republic of Cameroon and the Southern Cameroons. However, Article 59 of the Constitution stated in part the “...The [Federal] ... constitution shall be published in French and in English, **the French text being authentic.**”¹⁵ No reason was given why the French text had to be authentic. When the Federal Constitution was revised in 1972, 1984 and 1996, English and French were maintained as co-official languages in the country, this time with equal status. To effectively implement this bilingual policy, the Federal University was founded in 1962 with a bilingual status, although the English language was not much felt because of the domination of programmes in French. By 1963, a bilingual secondary school was opened at Man-O-War Bay (Victoria) and another in

⁸ Political Bureau of the Cameroon National Union, *As Told By Ahmadou Ahidjo, 1958-1968* (Monaco: Paul Bory Publishers, 1968), p. 38.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ Paul Biya, *Communal Liberalism*, (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Publishers Ltd, 1987), p. 28.

¹¹ *ibid.* p. 30. See Cameroon National Union, *Bamenda: The Congress of the New Deal, 1985* (Cameroon National Union, 1985), pp.13-21.

¹² Biya, *Communal Liberalism*, p. 28.

¹³ *Ibid.* pp. 30-31.

¹⁴ *ibid.* p. 31.

¹⁵ Emphasis is mine

Yaoundé in 1965. A bilingual degree programme was introduced in the Federal University and, much later, in other state Universities. Bilingual training programmes were also introduced in all the university departments to enable students acquire some knowledge in any of the two languages.¹⁶ Linguistic centers were opened and scholarships were awarded to encourage ordinary citizens to learn English or French. Cameroon's bilingualism as a vehicle to promote internal cohesion was very plausible, yet little was done to employ bilingualism in the country's rallying song.

The concept of bilingualism was beautifully worded and heralded as internal policy guidelines to ensure cohesion among a Cameroonian people, so diverse, but its practical implementation was a paradox. A careful reading and analyses of the wordings and a review of facts and figures reveal that: Cameroon has two completely different national anthems; composed in two different territories by two different groups of people with two different historical contexts and influenced by two opposing colonial legacies-English and French. Fifty years after independence and reunification, this has not been corrected and there are no signs that it will be corrected any soon. This dichotomy in the country's national anthem is a threat to the very foundation of the countries unity. According to Christopher Nsahlai, the country's concepts of national unity and national integration were "so much talked about yet, so much neglected."¹⁷ A vivid look at the origins and evolution of the Cameroon national anthem(s) is worthwhile here.

III- Origin (s) and History of Cameroon's National Anthem(s)

The National Anthem of Cameroon first started as a "Rallying Song" among young school students of *Ecole Normale de Foullassi*, near Sangmelima in today's South Region of the country. The song was composed by Rene Djam Afame while the lyrics were done by fellow classmates, Samuel Minky Mbamba, Moise Nyatte Nko'o and Rene Djam Afame himself in 1928.¹⁸ The song was later adopted as anthem on November 5, 1957 by the Legislative Assembly of the UN Trust Territory of French Cameroon. A Constitutional Consultative Committee adopted it as a national anthem for the new *La Republique du Cameroun*, which achieved independence on January 1, 1960.¹⁹

When on February 11 1961, the former British Southern Cameroons voted in a UN organized Plebiscite to officially steer clear from Nigerian politics, negotiations started immediately between the authorities in British Southern Cameroon and those of the already independent Republic of Cameroon, on what form reunification should take. These negotiations were concretized at the Foumban Conference of July 1961. At the close of the conference, the modified anthem composed in French Cameroon in 1928 was sung. The twenty-five man Southern Cameroon's delegation to Foumban could not sing an anthem they may have been hearing for the first time, and more so, in a language foreign to them. No complaints were raised either as to why such a thing should happen without keen negotiations. V.J. Ngoh argues that:

At the end of Ahidjo's closing remark [in Foumban], all the delegates rose in unison and started singing the Cameroon national anthem. Except for Dr. Bernard Fonlon, one of the official translators, none of the other Southern Cameroons delegate knew the national anthem since it was only in

¹⁶Paul Nkad Mbangwana, "Cameroon Nationhood and Official Bilingualism: A Linguistics Juxtaposition?" in *Revue Internationale des Arts, Lettres et Sciences Sociale (RIALSS)*, Volume 1, No. 1, 2004, edited, Edmond Biloa (Yaoundé : Presse Universitaires de Yaoundé Août, 2004), p. 17.

¹⁷ Christopher Nsahlai, *Look up To the Mountain Top: Beyond Party Politics*, Yaoundé: Imprimerie Adventist, nd.

¹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O_Cameroon, Cradle of Our Forefathers/ 4/11/2013 at 11:32 AM. Also see Gervais Mendo Ze, *En Relisant l'hymne national, O Cameroun berceau de nos ancêtres : Approche Historique et Linguistique*, (Paris : O.E.I.L., 2004), pp. 24-25.

¹⁹ Ibid.

French. One wonders what the Southern Cameroons delegates sang when their French-speaking colleagues were singing “their” national anthem.²⁰

The English version of the anthem, which was formulated in 1961 by Dr. Bernard Fonlon, and wrongly considered as a translation, was completely different from the original French version. Understandably after Founban, the West Cameroon Government wrongly spread the Fonlon version of the anthem all over West Cameroon, (as Southern Cameroons was now known), especially in schools and colleges; and the people in this part of the new federation thought they were singing the English version of the anthem sung in East Cameroon (as the Republic of Cameroon was now known).

On May 20 1970, the French Cameroon anthem was slightly modified to remove some of the content like “barbarism” and “savagery” to give it a more humane touch.²¹ Fonlon’s version in English was largely ignored. For over fifty years since the independence and reunification, Dr. Benard Fonlon’s (English) version of the anthem has been sung in Anglophone Cameroon.²² The reunified Cameroon needed an English version to accommodate the peoples of Southern Cameroon who through a United Nations organized plebiscite opted to join French Cameroon, with whom they had lived separately for about forty-five years under two different colonial masters, the English and the French.

The two versions of the national Anthem co-existed unofficially from 1961 to 1978 due to reluctance to translate the French version into English. In this confusion, Cameroonians sang two anthems thinking it was one and the same anthem in the other official language. On July 12 1978, the National Assembly officially rejected any direct translation of the French version into the English language, thereby, officially recognizing the second anthem written by Dr. Bernard Fonlon to co-exist with the French version. The members of Parliament unanimously voted for the co-existence of the two anthems following an argument that, “it was impossible to harmonise the two versions literally because the French and the English texts could not be translated literally, given that the National Anthem is poetry interpreted into music.”²³

By officially rejecting the translation of the French version of the national anthem into English, the National Assembly was simply upholding duality and autonomy of each of the two anthems which were composed differently in the former French-administered Cameroon and the former British Southern Cameroons respectively. It is therefore evident that the present-day “Republic of Cameroon has two national anthems, [as] the English version of the anthem is not a direct translation of the French version.”²⁴ Dze-Ngwa argues that, “both the English and French versions of the national anthem should be the exact translation of one version. Failure to do that, a new anthem should be coined for Cameroon, which will take into consideration the various “inseparable” diversities in the country.”²⁵

This argument is backed by the fact that other national symbols like the country’s flag and country’s national day celebrations were modified more than once to accommodate all the reunified peoples of Cameroon from both linguistic divides. The Cameroon flag of Green, Red and Yellow, with three vertical bands of equal size was adopted in 1957, just like the national anthem. The 1957 flag was later modified in

²⁰ Victor Julius Ngoh, *Southern Cameroons, 1922-1961: A Constitutional History* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2001), p. 159.

²¹ Thomas Theophile Nug Bissohong, *L’hymne national du Cameroun, Un poème-chant à décoloniser et réécrire: Relectures critiques et perspectives* (Yaoundé : Edition Clé, 2010), pp.16-24.

²² Anglophone Cameroon refers to the former West Cameroon, or the present North West and South West Regions of today’s Republic of Cameroon. This appellation became relevant after 1972 following the abolition of the Federal status quo in Cameroon.

²³ Oswald Baboke, *La Lettre de la Reunification au Peuples Camerounais : Historique du Cinquantenaire 1961*, Yaoundé : D. BYJCAM Production, nd), p. 75.

²⁴ Willibroad Dze-Ngwa, “National Unity and National Integration in Cameroon, 1961-2000: Dreams and Realities”, (Unpublished PhD Thesis at the Department of History, University of Yaoundé I, 2006), p. 263.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.264-265.

1961 with two gold stars added on the green colour to symbolize the reunification of the British Southern Cameroons and *La République du Cameroun*. This was the flag of the new Federal Republic of Cameroon. But when the Federation was dissolved in favour of a unitary option, the flag was again modified. This time around, a gold was affixed in the middle of the red band to symbolize a unitary state.²⁶ In the same manner, date of the celebration of the country's national had equally been modified from May 10th, to January 1st and now to May 20th each year.²⁷ The flag and the National Day are all national symbols and were modified to accommodate the reunified peoples of Cameroon. It therefore, makes total sense to modify the national anthem to ignite a common sense of belonging and oneness when the song is being sung.

IV- Comparing the English and French versions of the Anthem

The French and English versions of the national anthem were composed under different circumstances. The French version was composed in 1928 by students of the American Protestant Teacher Training College, Foulassi. With the influence of the American Missionaries, the students at Foulassi were imbibed with the spirit of liberty and nationalism. This probably explains why the students from Foulassi, like Reuben Um Nyobe, etc were at the forefront of nationalist movements in French Cameroon. So the rallying song was within the context of nationalist struggles against the French. Meanwhile, the English version was composed in 1961 by Dr. Bernard Fonlon under a much more relaxed background. Southern Cameroons had already gone through the pressure of nationalist struggles against Britain and Nigeria and had already opted out of Nigeria following the February 1961 UN-organized Plebiscite. Negotiations towards effective reunification with *La République du Cameroun* were already in progress. This probably explains why the anthems were different in context and content as shown below.

Lyrics of the Cameroon National Anthem

English lyrics	French lyrics	English translation of French lyrics
<p>O Cameroon, Thou Cradle of our Fathers, Holy Shrine where in our midst they now repose, Their tears and blood and sweat thy soil did water, On thy hills and valleys once their tillage rose. Dear Fatherland, thy worth no tongue can tell! How can we ever pay thy due? Thy welfare we will win in toil and love and peace, Will be to thy name ever true!</p>	<p>Ô Cameroun berceau de nos ancêtres, Va debout et jaloux de ta liberté, Comme un soleil ton drapeau fier doit être, Un symbole ardent de foi et d'unité. Que tous tes enfants du Nord au Sud, De l'Est à l'Ouest soient tout amour, Te servir que ce soit le seul but,</p>	<p>O Cameroon cradle of our ancestors, Go, upright and jealous of your freedom. As the sun, let your flag be proud, A symbol of ardent faith and unity, May all your children, from North to South From East to West, live in love! May serving you be their sole purpose</p>
<p><i>Chorus:</i> Land of Promise, land of Glory!</p>	<p>Pour remplir leur devoir toujours. <i>Chorus:</i></p>	<p>To fulfill their duty forever. <i>Chorus:</i> Dear Fatherland, dear land,</p>

²⁶ Baboke, *La Lettre de la Réunification au Peuples Camerounais*. p. 79.

²⁷²⁷ Ibid. p. 48.

Thou, of life and joy, our only store!

Thine be honour, thine devotion,

And deep endearment, for evermore.

From Shari, from where the Mungo meanders

From along the banks of lowly Boumba Stream,

Muster thy sons in union close around thee,

Mighty as the Buea Mountain be their team;

Instil in them the love of gentle ways,

Regret for errors of the past;

Foster, for Mother Africa, a loyalty

That true shall remain to the last.

Chorus

Chère Patrie, Terre chérie,

Tu es notre seul et vrai bonheur,

Notre joie, notre vie,

En toi l'amour et le grand honneur.

Tu es la tombe où dorment nos pères,

Le jardin que nos aïeux ont cultivé.

Nous travaillons pour te rendre prospère,

Un beau jour enfin nous serons arrivés.

De l'Afrique sois fidèle enfant

Et progresse toujours en paix,

Espérant que tes jeunes enfants

T'aimeront sans bornes à jamais.

Chorus

You are our only true happiness.

Our joy, our life

To you, love and the greatest honor.

Thou art the grave where our fathers sleep,

The garden that our ancestors have cultivated.

We work to make you prosperous

One good day we will finally get there.

Be Africa's faithful child

And always advance peace

Hoping that your children

Love you without limit forever.

Chorus

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O_Cameroon,_Cradle_of_Our_Forefathers4/11/2013 at 11:32 AM.
Also see: <http://www.lyricsondemand.com/>

With a closer look at the lyrics of the two versions of the national anthem, it is clear that they are completely different Anthems as one notices that:

	English Version	French Version
1	The English version is not a translation of the French version	The French version is not a translation of the English version
2	“O Cameroon, Thou Cradle of our Fathers” Mean same in French	« Ô Cameroun berceau de nos ancêtres » Mean same in English.
3	Same rhythm	Same rhythm
4	God has no place in the Anthem though composed by a religious person (Fonlon)	God has no place in the Anthem though composed by students of <i>Ecole Normal de Foulassi</i> under the auspices of the American Presbyterian Missionaries.
5	Both Anthems are not song to the last stanzas	
6	Composed during the context of reunification	Composed within the context of colonialism and not as a National Anthem
7	Void of Cameroon’s historical, socio-cultural	Void of Cameroon’s historical, socio-

	and political realities	cultural and political realities
8	Different collective engagements or aspirations: “Thy welfare we will win in toil and love and peace”.	« Que tous tes enfants du Nord au Sud, De l'Est à l'Ouest soient tout amour, Te servir que ce soit le seul but, Pour remplir leur devoir toujours ».
9	Omit more patriotic stanzas: “From along the banks of lowly Boumba Stream, <i>Muster thy sons in union close around thee, Mighty as the Buea Mountain be their team; Instil in them the love of gentle ways, Regret for errors of the past; Foster, for Mother Africa, a loyalty That true shall remain to the last”.</i>	Omit more patriotic stanzas: Tu es la tombe où dorment nos pères, Le jardin que nos aïeux ont cultivé. <i>Nous travaillons pour te rendre prospère, Un beau jour enfin nous serons arrivés. De l'Afrique sois fidèle enfant Et progresse toujours en paix, Espérant que tes jeunes enfants T'aimeront sans bornes à jamais.</i>
10	Both pay more tribute to the land than its people. See Chorus: Land of Promise, land of Glory! Thou, of life and joy, our only store! Thine be honour, thine devotion, And deep endearment, for evermore.	Pays tribute to land than people Chère Patrie, Terre chérie, Tu es notre seul et vrai bonheur, Notre joie, notre vie, En toi l'amour et le grand honneur

V- Conclusion and Way forward

Following the above observations and analyses, it can be concluded that: the present Republic of Cameroon has two different “National” Anthems. One composed by Rene Djam Afame and friends in 1928 and later adopted and modified as the anthem of French-administered Cameroon. Meanwhile, the second anthem was composed by Dr. Bernard Fonlon in 1961 and adopted by the country’s National Assembly as a separate anthem on July 12, 1978. Since then, the two Anthems have officially co-existed, but largely unknown to the majority of Cameroonians.

More so, the existence of two anthems in one country, fifty years after independence and reunification puts to question the desire to effectively unite a people who had been torn apart by colonial masters and reunited with different inherited colonial legacies. The two anthems in one country is divisive and contradicts the Constitution which talks of “One and Indivisible Cameroon”.

Each of the two anthems lacks a national character since they were composed under different circumstances. The French version was composed under the French colonial administration and only modified to suit the context of the independence of French-administered Cameroon. Meanwhile, the English version was composed under the context of reunification.

These notwithstanding, the Anthems are void of the actual socio-cultural, historical and political realities of Cameroon’s present dispensations and do not project the aspirations of the people such as liberty, peace, progress, social justice, freedom, unity, honour, patriotism and love.

Again, unlike many other countries, Cameroon’s national anthem has little or nothing to do with God, be it the African or Western religion. Paradoxically, the anthems were either written by a strongly religious person or under the auspices of Christian set-ups.

Way Forward

With the above conclusions in mind, it becomes evident that to move the country forward towards greater progress, concord, harmony and sustainable internal cohesion, the country's National Anthem should truly be a "rallying song" which ignites patriotism in Cameroonians no matter where they find themselves: in schools, stadia, in the military, in the various ministerial departments among other places. Each and every Cameroonian should be able to proudly sing and identify with the country's national anthem without any polemics and controversies. In this light, Cameroon's National Anthem should be re-written completely to accommodate the local realities of the country. This will be in line with Prime Ministerial Order No. 005/CAB/PM of 10th January 2007, putting in place of an Inter-Ministerial Committee charged with the normalization and Harmonization of Official State Symbols.

Re-writing the country's National Anthem requires great patriotism and political will among Cameroonians, most preferably, dispassionate, creative and level-headed intellectuals, religious personalities, Musicologists and Lexicologists with proven records. Such persons should bear in mind the history, culture and aspiration of Cameroonians and their collective identity.

In all, the sense of oneness and pride amongst Cameroonians should be willingly shared after keen considerations, without any impositions, taking into consideration the realities and common aspirations of the people of Cameroon for a more sustainable internal cohesion. The country needs a single rallying song just like its one flag, one code of arms.

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