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President Paul Biya and the “Anglophone Problem” in Cameroon

PIET KONINGS AND FRANCIS B. NYAMNJOH

Introduction

The elevation of Prime Minister Paul Biya to President of Cameroon on November 6, 1982 roused high expectations of political change in the country. The English-speaking population in particular expected him to “solve” the so-called anglophone problem he inherited from his predecessor Ahmadou Ahidjo. However, nationwide euphoria was soon to give way to popular disenchantment that has only grown worse ever since. Commenting on Biya’s presidency in 1993, Napoleon Viban of Cameroon Radio Television (CRTV) expressed the sentiments of most analysts when he said that it was difficult to reconcile the disillusionment in Cameroonians in 1993 “with the nationwide euphoria that greeted President Biya’s accession to power in November 1982. His attractive blueprint held a lot of promise for the restricted political landscape, and he started off with great charisma as it dawned on Cameroonians that a change to a new order was in the horizon. Eleven years later, what cuts across the Cameroonian society today is social stress. The specter is one of broken dreams” (cf. Nyamnjo, 1996b, p. 27). If this was and remains the situation with Cameroonians in general, it was and still is even

more the case with anglophone Cameroonians in particular, the plight of whom has come to be known as the anglophone problem.

There is a growing body of literature on the anglophone problem (cf. Konings, 1996c; Nkoum-Me-Ntseny, 1996; Konings and Nyamnjoh, 1997; Eyoh, 1998b), and we shall try to summarize here the explanations offered in this literature for the emergence and development of this problem. There is general agreement that its roots may be traced back to the partitioning of the erstwhile German Kamerun Protectorate after World War I into British and French mandate/trust territories. The subsequent development of territorial differences in language and cultural legacy laid the historical foundation for the construction of anglophone and francophone identities. An even more important factor was the form of state which the francophone majority more or less imposed upon the anglophone minority during the constitutional negotiations for a reunified Cameroon. The political elite of the anglophone territory, the Southern Cameroons, led by Prime Minister John Ngu Foncha, had proposed a "loose" form of federation, which they considered to be a safe guarantee for the equal partnership of both parties and for the preservation of the cultural heritage and identity of each. Contrary to anglophone expectations, the political elite of the francophone territory, the already independent Republic of Cameroon, led by President Ahmadou Ahidjo, opted for a highly centralized form of federation, which, moreover, they considered to be merely a transitory phase to the establishment of a unitary state. The most decisive factor, however, was the nation-state project after reunification. For the anglophone population, nation-building has been driven by the firm determination of the francophone political elite to dominate the anglophone minority in the post-colonial state and to erase the cultural and institutional foundation of anglophone identity (cf. Eyoh, 1998b, p. 262). Gradually, this created an anglophone consciousness: the feeling of being recolonized and marginalized in all spheres of public life, thus becoming second-class citizens in their own country. Anglophone grievances are numerous in the political, economic and cultural domains.

In the political domain, Anglophones complain of their exclusion from key government and party positions and their inferior role in the decision-making councils and organs. Anglophones have never headed the most important and sensitive ministries, such as the Ministries of Defense, Foreign Affairs, Territorial Administration and National Education. They are usually appointed as vice-ministers or to head the ministries of inferior status, such as the Ministries of

Transport and Mines, which thus have become stigmatized as "anglophone ministries." It is also rare to find an anglophone director in the civil service. A general complaint of Anglophones is that they are assumed to be only fit to play "deputy" or "assistant" to Francophones.

In the economic domain, Anglophones complain of the dismantlement or neglect of their region's infrastructure, the lack of public investment in their region, and the rape and drain of their region's economic resources. They claim in particular that their region has failed to benefit from its rich oil resources, the latter allegedly being used by the francophone-dominated state to "feed the bellies" of its allies (Bayart, 1989). They also strongly resent that the *Société nationale de raffinage* (Sonara), the oil refinery near Victoria (Limbe), continues to be headed and predominantly staffed by Francophones. They complain that discrimination at home has pushed many talented Anglophones into the Diaspora in North America and Europe in quest for jobs and recognition.

In the cultural domain, Anglophones complain of the continuous attempts at "frenchification" or what Kofele-Kale (1987) has called "the gallicising of public life," that is the pre-eminence of French as the special language, and of inherited French institutions and bureaucratic practices in all aspects of state administration and public life, not least in the anglophone territory itself.

While there is a widespread tendency among Anglophones to make the francophone elite, and even the francophone population as a whole, fully responsible for the anglophone problem, it cannot be denied that the anglophone political leaders bear an important share of responsibility for the anglophone predicament. Generally speaking, in 1972, the latter did not resist the abolition of the federation, which they initially embraced as the embodiment of the highest ideals of reunification. Apparently, as soon as they came to realize that their influence within the federated state of West Cameroon (the former Southern Cameroons) began to be whittled down, the federal arrangements no longer suited their designs. They started competing for Ahidjo's favors, aspiring for power positions first within the single party and the federal government and eventually within the unitary state, and thus blatantly neglecting the defense of West Cameroon's autonomy and interests (Kofele-Kale, 1987).

The co-optation of the anglophone political elite into the hegemonic alliance" (Bayart, 1979) and the autocratic nature of the Ahidjo regime largely explain why the Anglophones failed to openly

protest against francophone domination and recolonization during the Ahidjo era. Immediately after succeeding Ahidjo in power, Paul Biya promised a "New Deal" to the Cameroonian people. Many Anglophones came to believe that Biya's reform program would put an end to their allegedly subordinate position in the unitary state. They used the limited degree of political freedom during the first years of Biya's presidency to voice their long-standing grievances. Unfortunately, anglophone optimism soon turned into despair, as they began to realize that the much-trumpeted New Deal slogans were nothing but lip-service and that the hegemonic and assimilationist tendencies of the francophone-dominated state continued unabated under Biya's rule. It was not until the political liberalization process in the early 1990s that Anglophones started organizing openly in defense of their interests. The hitherto underground and newly created associations and pressure groups were able to place the anglophone problem on the national and even international agenda, laying claims for self-determination and autonomy, in the form of either "federalism" or "secession." Since the anglophone organizations posed a serious threat to the unitary state, the Biya government felt obliged to design various strategies to deconstruct anglophone identity and solidarity.

In this chapter we want to describe in some detail how President Biya dealt with the anglophone problem during two distinct periods of his regime: (i) the one-party state era (1982-1990), which was basically a transition period between the Ahidjo regime and the political liberalization process starting in the early 1990s, and (ii) the multi-party era (1990-2000), the focus of our study, in which we may observe an aggravation of the anglophone problem. In the conclusion we will provide some guidelines on how the anglophone problem could be solved.

Paul Biya and the "Anglophone Problem" during the one-party state era, (1982-1990)

When Prime Minister Paul Biya succeeded Ahmadou Ahidjo as president on November 6, 1982, he initially roused high expectations among the majority of the population. In his Inaugural Speech he promised to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor, while at the same time proposing a "New Deal" to the Cameroonian people. The New Deal policy guidelines were "political liberalization," "rigor and moralization," and "national integration." These guidelines were

intended to bring about a state characterized by a larger degree of individual liberty and freer exchange of ideas, judicious and stringent management of public affairs, transparency and public accountability by government officials, as well as total absence of ethno-regional particularism and favoritism (Takougang, 1993; Biya, 1987).

Anglophone expectations were particularly high as there were some hopeful signs that the new president might end anglophone marginalization and "second class" status in the unitary state. In his maiden visit to the anglophone region Biya tried to dispel the deep seated feelings of apprehension amongst the Anglophones. He addressed them in English. This was actually the first time the anglophone population heard their president address them in English. On this occasion, Biya raised some issues, which were close to the hearts of Anglophones, including the large measure of centralization in the unitary state and the lack of infrastructural facilities in the anglophone region. He then promised to tackle these issues immediately. A promise which little was to be heard of upon his return to Yaoundé.

While the "first class" fons (chiefs) of the North West Province still bestowed the title of "Fon of Fons" on Biya in January 1985, making him the superior fon of the North West Province, many Anglophones soon came to realize that the "New Deal" policy guidelines were mere slogans, probably used by Biya to extricate himself from Ahidjo's shadow (Konings, 1996a, p. 250; Takougang and Krieger, 1998). Political liberalization proved to be quite limited. Biya maintained many of Ahidjo's repressive laws and institutions, and tolerated only critics of Ahidjo's legacy. Corruption and mismanagement in public life rapidly reached unprecedented levels. "National integration" soon turned out to be an ideological justification for effacing and assimilating the anglophone cultural legacy. The majority of the anglophone elite increasingly regarded the Biya regime as another exponent of the francophone-dominated state's hegemonic and assimilationist policies after reunification. They used the limited degree of political liberalization that Biya had introduced after his take-over of power to voice their long-standing grievances and to lay claims for self-autonomy, in the form of either a return to a federal system or even outright secession. Anglophone students were the first to express anglophone disenchantment with the Biya regime. They strongly protested against the launching of some educational reforms during Biya's first year of office, which, in their view, were aimed at undermining the anglophone educational system.

In September 1983, the Minister of National Education promulgated an order modifying the anglophone General Certificate of Education (GCE) examination by making it rather similar to the baccalaureate. Apparently, the order was intended to facilitate the entry of anglophone students in the professional and technical institutes in Cameroon, which were exclusively based on the French system. Anglophone students, however, interpreted the proposed reform as a subtle attempt by the francophone-dominated state to assimilate the anglophone educational system. They maintained that the problem of anglophone exclusion from the professional and technical institutes in the country could not be solved by assimilation but rather by the creation of institutes based on the English system. Ensuing demonstrations and boycott of classes by anglophone students at the University of Yaoundé and in the anglophone urban centers met with extreme police brutality (Nyamnjoh, 1996a). English-speaking students at the University of Yaoundé used this protest action to voice some other grievances, including the recent dismissal of Dr Bisong, an anglophone lecturer in the Faculty of Law and Economics, allegedly for offering one of the few courses in English in the officially bilingual university.¹ The situation did not calm down until 11 days later when President Biya issued a statement calling on the students to return to classes and announcing the setting up of a commission composed of highly qualified and experienced Anglophones and Francophones to look into the students' grievances.

Even Solomon Tandeng Muna, the then Speaker of the National Assembly and constitutionally second in command in the unitary state, highlighted the failure of "national integration" in a memorandum addressed to the Head of State in January 1984. It is noteworthy that Muna had previously been Prime Minister of West Cameroon and Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, and had closely collaborated with Ahidjo in dismantling the federal institutions. In his memorandum, he appears to identify with the general feeling of frustration amongst Anglophones with their second class citizenship:

Virtually every Anglo-Saxon qualification is inferior to French ones, and so Anglo-Saxon standards are supposed to be inferior to French ones. This gives an idea of the frustrations which English-speaking citizens face virtually at all levels in the university, in the public service and in state corporations with regard to their progress.²

One month later, in February 1984, the Biya regime, without warning and without popular consultation, changed the official name of the country from United Republic of Cameroon to simply Republic of Cameroon—despite vehement anglophone protests that this was the name of independent francophone Cameroon prior to reunification. The new name appeared to deny that the Cameroonian state was composed of two distinct entities. Biya argued that the change of name reflected the political maturity of the Cameroonian people after almost twenty-five years of independence, having finally overcome divisions caused by seventy years of European colonization (Biya, 1987, p. 6). In anglophone circles, however, Biya's unilateral name change seems to have given rise to two different interpretations.

Some Anglophones consider this action as the boldest step yet taken toward their assimilation. For them, the new name was clear evidence that, as far as Biya was concerned, the anglophone territory and people had lost their identity and had become an indistinguishable part of the former Republic of Cameroon, thus carrying out to its intended conclusion Ahidjo's designs to absorb and assimilate the anglophone minority into the francophone-dominated state. Other Anglophones argued that by this action *La République du Cameroun*³ had unilaterally seceded from the union and thus lacks a constitutional base to continue ruling the former Southern Cameroons. They are often inclined to appeal to the United Nations to assist its former Trust Territory in peacefully separating from francophone Cameroon. This view was first expressed by the eminent anglophone lawyer and first president of the Cameroon Bar Association, Fon Gorji Dinka. On March 20, 1985, Dinka addressed a memorandum to Paul Biya titled *The New Social Order*. In this memorandum, he declared the Biya government to be unconstitutional and called for the Southern Cameroons to become independent and to be rebaptized as the Republic of Ambazonia.⁴ Dinka was arrested and imprisoned without trial until January 1986, which placed him on the path to martyrdom in the anglophone community.

The Bamenda congress of the ruling party in the same year (1985) not only changed the name of the ruling party from Cameroon National Union (CNU) to Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), but was also the forum of unprecedented debate compared with previous party congresses. However, this new relative freedom of expression also led to the unmasking of themes less welcome to the regime. Two memoranda submitted to the

Congress by anglophone elite groups resident in Douala expressed anglophone resentment about their region's loss of autonomy and illustrated with a multitude of examples the recolonization of their region by the francophone-dominated state.⁵

In August 1985, anglophone students took action again. They wrote an open letter to their parents in which they listed a series of grievances endured by the anglophone population since reunification in 1961. They called upon their parents to speak out and act so as to ensure a return to the federal system.⁶

From 1985 onwards, anglophone frustration with the Biya regime even intensified for several reasons. A first reason was the increasing resort by Biya to repression so as to consolidate his power position and "contain" any opposition. Anglophone journalists and political activists who were considered a threat to the regime were severely punished. Several anglophone journalists were arrested for criticizing government policies, making derogatory remarks about government officials, or reporting cases of large-scale embezzlement and corruption. Popular anglophone radio programs such as *Cameroon Report* and *Minute by Minute*, which often examined critical issues facing the nation, were taken off the air because they were considered irresponsible in their criticisms of the administration (Takougang and Krieger, 1998, p. 91). The case of Albert Mukong is a clear example of the fate of anglophone political activists in the increasing repressive climate. Mukong is a veteran anglophone politician and a prominent human rights defender who spent several years in jail during the Ahidjo regime. His book *Prisoner Without a Crime* (1985), which is an account of his confrontations with the terror-striking secret services and his incarceration in the country's most notorious prisons during the Ahidjo era, was slammed with a ban by the Biya government. Like most Anglophones, Mukong believed that despite earlier promises of reforms, the Biya regime was as bad as, if not worse than, that of Ahidjo. Unlike most Anglophones, he was not afraid to express this view. Little wonder that he became a target of Biya's secret services too. He was first detained in June 1988 following a radio interview with a BBC reporter, in which he criticized Biya for his constant manipulation of the constitution and attributed the country's deepening economic crisis to lack of accountability and large-scale embezzlement by government officials (Mukong, 1992, p. 6-7). He was subsequently charged with using subversive language detrimental to the government and Head of State. After his release in May 1989, Mukong joined a group of Cameroonians which came to be known as

the "Douala ten" and was led by Yondo Black, a lawyer and former president of the Cameroon Bar Association. This group aimed at creating a non-partisan movement for the establishment of a multi-party system in Cameroon (Takougang and Krieger, 1998, pp. 103-104). Mukong and the others were arrested in February 1990 and subsequently tried by a Military Tribunal in Yaoundé, being charged with abusing the president and destabilizing the state. Being finally acquitted, Mukong became one of the leading anglophone advocates for a restoration of the federal system, regularly petitioning the United Nations on behalf of the anglophone minority (Mukong, 1990).

A second reason for the intensified anglophone frustration was the unprecedented economic crisis, which befell Cameroon in the mid-1980s, leading to a serious deterioration in employment opportunities, incomes and living standards. Undoubtedly, this crisis was mainly due to a sharp fall in the prices of agricultural commodities and oil as well as the 40 percent depreciation of the US dollar relative to the CFA franc. Anglophones, however, were inclined to attribute the severe economic crisis first and foremost to the corruption and mismanagement of the Biya regime (Jua, 1991; Konings, 1996a). During the economic crisis and subsequent IMF-mandated structural adjustment program, one could observe a great anxiety in anglophone Cameroon that its major agro-industrial enterprises, particularly the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) and Plantations Pamol du Cameroun Limited (Pamol), would be either liquidated or sold to francophone or French interests (Konings, 1996b, 1997, and 1998).

A third reason for the intensified anglophone frustration was the apparent encouragement of ethno-regional favoritism by the Biya regime in spite of its earlier promise to create a society where national concerns transcended ethno-regional interests. Anglophones strongly resented the increasing monopolization of key government posts by members of the President's ethnic group which is loosely classified as Beti. As of August 1991, according to Takougang and Krieger (1998, pp. 94-95), 37 of the 47 senior district officers were Beti, as were three-quarters of the directors and general managers of the parastatals or state-owned enterprises, and 22 of the 38 high-ranking bureaucrats who had been appointed in the newly created office of the Prime Minister.

Biya and the "Anglophone Problem" during the multiparty state era (1990–2000)

Given the intense anglophone frustration with the Biya regime, it is not surprising that Anglophones have played a leading role in the accomplishment of political liberalization in Cameroon. Moreover, they have used the liberalization of political space to create several organizations for the representation and defense of their interests. These organizations soon came to form a major challenge to the francophone-dominated unitary state, insisting that the government should place federalism on the constitutional reform agenda. Faced with the government's persistent refusal to enter into negotiations about a return to the federal state, they gradually adopted an even more radical stand, striving for secession and independence of the anglophone territory. Little wonder that the Biya government became quite keen to neutralize the anglophone danger and to deconstruct anglophone identity and solidarity. It will be shown that it has been quite successful in this endeavor, employing several strategies.

In this section we shall first describe the growth of anglophone organization during the process of political liberalization and then analyze the Biya government's response to the anglophone challenge.

Political liberalization and Anglophone organization

In May 1990, the first opposition party in the country since multiparty competition was abolished in 1966, the Social Democratic Front (SDF), was formed in Bamenda, the capital of the North West Province. There is general agreement that its formation has made a significant contribution to the modification of the political landscape in Cameroon and to the activation of anglophone consciousness, organization and action. Its chairman was John Fru Ndi, a bookshop owner by profession, who was to achieve great popularity among the urban masses because of his courage and populist style of leadership (Gwellem, 1996; Takougang and Krieger, 1998; Konings, 1999c). After the massive rally to launch the SDF on May 26, 1990 had ended in the deaths of six young Anglophones, the state-controlled media tried to deny the government's responsibility for this bloody event and to distort the facts (Nyamnjoh, 1996b, pp. 26–27). Anglophone students at the University of Yaoundé, who demonstrated the same day in support of the SDF and political liberalization, were falsely accused by the regime of having marched in favor of the re-

integration of anglophone Cameroon into Nigeria and having sung the Nigerian national anthem and hoisted the Nigerian flag. Leading members of the CPDM strongly condemned the Anglophones for this "treacherous action" and what they considered as the premature birth of multi-partyism in the post-colonial state, and their reaction to these peaceful demonstrations shocked many in the country. Anglophone Cameroonians were termed "Biafrans," referred to as "les ennemies dans la maison," and asked by the then Minister of Territorial Administration, Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya, "to go elsewhere" if they were dissatisfied with "national unity." Upset by his own party's behavior, Foncha, the anglophone architect of the federal state, resigned as First Vice-President of the CPDM in June 1990.

As Foncha explained:

The Anglophone Cameroonians whom I brought into the union have been ridiculed and referred to as "les Biafrais," "les ennemies dans la maison," "les traîtres" etc., and the constitutional provisions which protected this anglophone minority have been suppressed, their voice drowned while the rule of the gun replaced the dialogue which the Anglophones cherish very much.⁷

Under considerable internal and external pressures (Konings, 1996a), the Biya government was eventually obliged to introduce a larger measure of political liberalization. In December 1990, it announced the advent of multipartyism, as well as a certain degree of freedom of mass communication and association, including the holding of public meetings and demonstrations.⁸ As a result, several political parties, pressure groups, and private newspapers were established in anglophone Cameroon, which began to express and represent anglophone interests (Nyamnjoh, 1996b, pp. 38–49).

Subsequently, the SDF spread its influence to the South West Province and soon became the major opposition party in anglophone Cameroon. Nevertheless, the South West elite continued to be suspicious of the aspirations of the SDF leaders for fear of North West domination. With the exception of the Liberal Democratic Alliance (LDA), which has attempted, with marginal success only, to become a serious political formation, the South West has failed to produce a strong and credible party, mainly because of personal animosities. Indeed, the subsequent leadership struggle in the LDA

between Mola Njoh Litumbe and Lydia Belle Effimba is but a further indication that the elite in the South West has yet to come up with an effective alternative to the SDF.⁹

The leaders of the SDF helped to turn the anglophone region into a veritable hot-bed of rebellion, organizing several fierce confrontations with the regime in power, especially during the 1991–1992 “ghost town” campaign which was essentially a prolonged demonstration of civil disobedience organized by the SDF and the allied opposition parties to force the Biya government to hold a Sovereign National Conference (Mbu, 1993). The impact of this on the anglophone community was particularly visible during the ensuing presidential elections, when Fru Ndi received respectively 86.3 and 51.6 per cent of the votes cast in the North West and South West Provinces. It is hardly surprising that the declared victory of Biya in October 1992 was a traumatic experience in anglophone Cameroon, with violent protests against his “theft of Fru Ndi’s victory” throughout the North West. The President then imposed a state of emergency on this province for three months, and Fru Ndi was kept under surveillance in his house in Bamenda.

Paradoxically, although the SDF and Fru Ndi have contributed immensely to anglophone consciousness and action, the party increasingly presented itself as a national rather than an anglophone party. It thus tried to deny persistent government charges that it was championing regional rather than national interests and to attract a francophone membership. The party actually proved to be so successful in its recruitment efforts in francophone Cameroon, notably in the neighboring West and Littoral Provinces, that Francophones soon outnumbered Anglophones in the originally anglophone party. Most of the party’s approximately 60 per cent francophone membership are Bamiléké, an ethnic group residing in the francophone part of the Grassfields and closely related to ethnic groups in the North West Province (Warnier, 1993; Tabapssi, 1999).

Presenting itself more and more as a national party, the SDF tended to adopt a rather ambivalent attitude towards calls from newly emerging anglophone pressure groups for a return to the federal state (see below). The leadership tried to avoid alienating either the anglophone or francophone members from the party. This was not an easy task. Anglophone members tended to be simultaneously supporters of the anglophone pressure groups. They were therefore inclined to bring pressures to bear upon the leadership to insert federalism in the party program. Such pressures were usually opposed by the party’s francophone members who, like

most Francophones, tended to adhere to the preservation of the unitary state, often equating federalism with secession. They rightly pointed out that some of the party’s basic documents, like the 1990 SDF Manifesto and the 1991 SDF Proposals on Devolution of Power, stressed the importance of “national unity,” allowing only for a large measure of decentralization within the unitary state. The francophone position was even upheld by some of the party’s anglophone leaders, notably by Dr. Siga Asanga, the party’s secretary-general from inception in 1990 to 1996, when he broke away to create the controversial Social Democratic Forum. On some occasions, Asanga publicly stated that the party’s embracement of the anglophone cause and federalism would endanger its social-democratic ideology and national appeal.¹⁰

The party chairman, John Fru Ndi, was under pressure of both sides to clarify his position on the growing anglophone-francophone divide in the party. Eventually, he appeared to yield to anglophone pressures. He openly declared to be opposed to francophone domination of the party, which owed its existence to the courageous initiative and sacrifices of Anglophones. Fru Ndi’s clarification reinforced anglophone influence in the party’s decision-making process. At its Bafoussam Convention in July 1993, the SDF already endorsed in principle the idea of a federal form of government. To appease the Francophones, the party refused to adopt the two-state federation as advocated by the anglophone pressure groups, leaving it instead to “the people” themselves to decide on the form of federation during a future sovereign national conference. Only one year later, on August 22, 1994, the SDF National Executive Committee modified the Bafoussam declaration on federalism. It now clearly opted for a four-state federation (one anglophone state and three francophone states) and Fru Ndi himself became a member of the Southern Cameroons Advisory Council (see below).

Since the SDF adopted a half-hearted stand as regards the “anglophone problem,” anglophone interests came to be foremost represented and defended by several associations and pressure groups that were created or reactivated by the anglophone elite upon the introduction of political liberalization in 1990. Some, notably the Free West Cameroon Movement (FWCM) and the Ambazonian Movement (AM) of Fon Gorji Dinka, advanced the liberation of the former West Cameroon state from annexation by *La République du Cameroun* and the creation of an independent West Cameroon or Ambazonian state, but most initially championed a return to the federal state, especially the Cameroon Anglophone Movement

(CAM)." CAM became by far the most important anglophone pressure group. It is the only all embracing anglophone association that is operating legally in the country, having been registered as a socio-cultural, non-partisan association under law No. 90/053 of December 19, 1990. Its roots are traceable to the South West-North West Elites Association in Douala which submitted in 1985 some memoranda to the Biya regime about the anglophone predicament (see above). Following the introduction of a larger measure of political liberalization in December 1990, this association revamped its activities and changed its name into CAM in response to its increasing expansion outside Douala. On July 4, 1992, CAM held its first conference at Buea, the ex-capital of Southern and West Cameroon. On that occasion, its first chairman, Dr. H.N.O. Enonchong, a prominent anglophone lawyer in Douala, was forced to resign, accused of trying to use the organization for the advancement of his own political career. A new executive was elected, headed by retired Ambassador Martin Epie (chairman), Dr. Arnold Yongbang (vice-chairman) and Albert Mukong (secretary-general).

Besides these associations, which aimed at representing more general anglophone interests, a large number of other associations emerged which aimed at representing specific anglophone interests. These included the Teachers' Association of Cameroon (TAC), the Confederation of Anglophone Parents-Teachers' Association of Cameroon (CAPTAC), the Cameroon Anglophone Students' Association (CANSAs), the Anglophone Common Law Association, the Association of Anglophone Journalists, the Cameroon Anglophone Public Servants' Union (CAPSU), the Anglophone Youth Council, and the Anglophone Women's League. Some of these associations scored significant successes in their struggle against the francophone-dominated state. For example, the TAC and the CAPTAC forced the government in 1993 to create a General Certificate of Education (GCE) Board, and this signified an important victory for the Anglophones in their ten-year-old struggle against determined government efforts to destroy the GCE (Nyamnjoh, 1996a).

The anglophone associations and pressure groups, and most particularly CAM, have been regularly engaged in various forms of protest actions against the francophone-dominated state, including demonstrations, strikes and boycotts, and the participation of various strata of the population demonstrates that the "anglophone problem" is no longer to be perceived as simply and solely an elitist concern (Konings, 1996b). Interestingly, these actions are partly directed

against the myths and symbols of the unitary state. Anglophone movements have regularly boycotted the celebration of the national feast day on May 20, the "day of the 1972 glorious revolution," declaring it a "day of mourning" and a "day of shame." They have instead called upon Anglophones to celebrate the "day of independence" on October 1 and the "day of the plebiscite" on February 11. On these feast days during 1992-1993, attempts by CAM activists to hoist the federation flag were reportedly answered by the security forces with "extreme brutality" (Sindjoun, 1995).

A major anglophone challenge to the francophone-dominated state occurred in the wake of the "Tripartite Conference" convened by President Biya from October 30 to November 18, 1991 to "solve" the severe political and economic crisis caused by the radical opposition's protracted "ghost town" campaign (see above). The conference was attended by representatives of government, opposition parties and civil society. Although the conference was largely controlled by the government (Takougang and Krieger, 1998; Eboussi Boulaga, 1997), the non-governmental representatives nevertheless succeeded in forcing constitutional reforms on the agenda. During subsequent deliberations, there was a clear divide between Anglophones and Francophones about the institutional configuration of a reformed state. Contrary to the majority of francophone participants who proposed some measure of decentralization within a unitary state, anglophone participants advocated the dismantling of the unitary state and a return to a federal state. The conference established a Technical Committee on Constitutional Matters consisting of seven Francophones and four Anglophones to determine the outlines of a new constitution. The committee was to be chaired by Professor Joseph Owona, who at the time, was Secretary-General at the Presidency.

The four anglophone committee members belonged to variegated socio-political backgrounds. Mr. Benjamin Itoe was then a Minister and a CPDM militant; Dr Simon Munzu was then a member of the CPDM (he later left the party to become secretary-general of the Buea-based LDA); Barrister Sam Ekontang Elad was an executive member of the LDA; and Dr. Carlson Anyangwe had been nominated as an independent candidate even though it was soon to be revealed that he was a founding father of the SDF. The first three originated from the South West Province, Carlson Anyangwe being the only North Westerner. What united them was their anglophoneness, sharing anglophone grievances about francophone hegemony. They presented a draft proposal on a new federal

structure that has come to be called and known as the EMIA document (acronym for Elad, Munzu, Itoe and Anyangwe). Itoe, though, did not sign the document—ostensibly in a bid to keep his post of Minister (it did not take long, however, for Itoe to be sacked from the cabinet). The work of the committee was suspended on February 14, 1992 because of the approaching parliamentary elections scheduled for March.

Shortly after the October 1992 presidential elections, President Biya announced that he intended to organize a national forum (*un "grand" ou "large" débat*) on constitutional reform. This announcement, which probably aimed at mitigating the people's anger, especially in anglophone Cameroon, over the controversial elections, was reiterated in his New Year Message to the Nation on December 31, 1992. It was not until March 23, 1993 that Professor Augustin Kontchou Kouomegni, Minister of State in charge of Communication and Government Spokesman, informed the Cameroonian people that the national forum on constitutional reform would be held in the period April-June 1993. In response to this announcement, the anglophone members of the Technical Committee convened an All Anglophone Conference (AAC) from April 2-3, 1993 at Buea, the ex-capital of the Southern Cameroons, "for the purpose of adopting a common anglophone stand on constitutional reform and of examining several other matters relating to the welfare of ourselves, our posterity, our territory and the entire Cameroon nation."¹²

The AAC turned out to be a landmark in the history of anglophone Cameroon. It brought together over 5,000 members of the anglophone elite. All the anglophone associations and organizations were represented. CAM in particular played a leading role in the organization of this conference. After two days of deliberations, the conference issued the Buea Declaration (All Anglophone Conference, 1993). This document listed the multiple anglophone grievances about francophone domination and called for a return to the federal state. Strikingly, it tended to blame the "wicked" Francophones as a whole for the plight of the "poor" Anglophones, and compared both in rather idealized terms: the former like oppression and violence, while the latter, by their very nature, are peace-loving, open to dialogue, and committed to freedom (Sindjoun, 1995, pp. 93-94; Fardon, 1996, p. 93). Of course, this demagogic approach, which is commonplace in ethno-regional discourse, serves to emphasize the "insurmountable" dichotomy between Francophones and Anglophones that justifies the AAC call

for autonomy and return to the federal state. This approach may be efficient in mobilizing Anglophones, but has hardly helped the struggle against their "real" enemy, the francophone-dominated unitary state which has allies and opponents in all parts of the country. In addition, it denies the existence of various ethnic links between Francophones and Anglophones, and creates serious obstacles to any francophone sympathy for the anglophone cause.¹³

Henceforth, the AAC became the main anglophone organization and mouthpiece, responsible for the defense and representation of general anglophone interests. All the existing and newly emerging anglophone associations became "auxiliary" organizations of the AAC. Under the umbrella of the AAC they continued to carry out their own specific responsibilities. They were represented in the 65-member Anglophone Standing Committee created by the AAC. Being the most important "auxiliary" association, CAM was well represented in the Anglophone Standing Committee, thus exerting an enormous influence on AAC policies. The three conveners of AAC occupied leading positions in the Anglophone Standing Committee: Elad was its chairman, Anyangwe was its secretary-general, and Munzu was its spokesman.

One of the major tasks assigned by the AAC to the Anglophone Standing Committee was the drafting of a federal constitution as the anglophone contribution to the national forum on constitutional reform. The latter eventually produced a draft constitution, which recommended a "loose" form of federation providing for a large measure of autonomy for the two federated states. This was the form of federation originally proposed by the anglophone elite in the period preceding reunification (Johnson, 1970; Ngoh, 1990). What was new in the federal draft constitution was that it also proposed a large measure of political, economic, financial, and fiscal autonomy for the provinces inside the two federated states, and even for the municipalities inside each province. The federal draft constitution also displayed remarkable similarities with the United States federal system (e.g., proposals for a Federal House and Senate, a presidential system, and procedures for impeachment) as well as with the 1994 Nigerian federal draft constitution (proposals for several power-sharing devices, such as a system of a rotating presidency amongst the federal states, and the development of criteria for the sharing of federal revenues).¹⁴

On May 26, 1993, the Anglophone Standing Committee submitted the federal draft constitution to the Technical Committee, which had been enlarged by a recent presidential decree

from the original 11 members to 29 members, but still chaired by Professor Owona. Owona's refusal to give an undertaking that the Technical Committee would examine and report on the anglophone federal draft constitution, which he described as a copy of the Nigerian constitution, provoked Elad, Munzu and Anyangwe, the three conveners of the AAC, to suspend their participation in the work of that committee. On June 23, 1993, Owona dishonestly stated on television that the Technical Committee had not been able to examine the federal draft constitution since the conveners of the AAC had not been present during the committee's deliberations to defend their draft. The Anglophone Standing Committee then decided to publish the draft in English and French so as to enlighten the general public on the "anglophone problem" and federalism.

Confronted with the government's persistent refusal to discuss the AAC constitutional proposals, CAM, the most influential anglophone association affiliated to the AAC, increasingly shifted to a more radical position. Having once been a major champion of a return to the federal state, it became more and more inclined to advocate secession. CAM, supported by other anglophone associations with a secessionist agenda, such as the Free West Cameroon Movement (FWCM), then tried to convert the Anglophone Standing Committee to a secessionist stand. This gave rise to regular conflicts within the Anglophone Standing Committee between "moderates," who continued to adhere to a federalist program and strategy, and "radicals" who strove for a secessionist program and strategy. The moderates proved capable of keeping control over the Anglophone Standing Committee's activities for some time. Given this situation, CAM officially declared itself in favor of "zero option" on December 3, 1993, i.e., total independence for the Southern Cameroons, though emphasizing that it was determined to pursue this objective through peaceful negotiations rather than through armed struggle. It thus remained faithful to the motto of the AAC: "the force of argument and not the argument of force." On February 9, 1994, the National Executive of CAM unanimously agreed upon the Buea Peace Initiative (BPI), a blueprint for a peaceful and negotiated separation between Southern Cameroons and *La République du Cameroun*, which it wanted to table at the next AAC Conference (AAC II). Interestingly, the BPI was inspired by the Czechoslovakian experience: Czechoslovakian leaders agreed in June 20, 1992 to amicably dissolve their federation, which had been established after the First World War, into two separate

and independent states and to engage in negotiations about any possible domains of fruitful co-operation.¹⁵

The two major anglophone options emerging in the process of constitutional reform—the choice between the demand for a return to the federal state and a (negotiated) separation—were also lively discussed during the Second All Anglophone Conference (AAC II) held at Bamenda from April 29 to May 1, 1994. The conference reviewed all the futile attempts of the Anglophone Standing Committee to enter into negotiations with the Biya regime about a return to the federal state. It then decided to dissolve the Anglophone Standing Committee and replace it by an Anglophone Council. The tasks and strategy assigned to the new Anglophone Council were outlined in the Bamenda Proclamation adopted by the conference.¹⁶

The Bamenda Proclamation reflected the compromise reached between moderates and radicals. It insisted that the Anglophone Council should first "seek and secure constitutional talks between anglophone and francophone Cameroon on the basis of the federal draft constitution which was submitted by the Anglophone Standing Committee in May 1993." It cautioned the Anglophone Council against accepting in its negotiations with francophone Cameroon any arrangement, which did not envisage the restoration of an anglophone federated state within a Federal Republic of Cameroon. But "should the government either persist in its refusal to engage in meaningful constitutional talks or fail to engage in such talks *within a reasonable time*," the Anglophone Council should "proclaim the revival of the independence and sovereignty of the anglophone territory and take all measures necessary to secure, defend and preserve the independence, sovereignty and integrity of the said territory." The Bamenda Proclamation added that upon the declaration of independence, the Anglophone Council should "without having to convene another session of the All Anglophone Conference, transform itself into the Southern Cameroons Constituent Assembly for the purpose of drafting, debating and adopting a constitution for the independent and sovereign state of Southern Cameroons." Subsequently, the independent Southern Cameroons should enter into negotiations with *La République du Cameroun* about "their peaceful separation on the basis of the Buea Peace Initiative and on such other terms as shall be mutually beneficial."

Shortly after the Bamenda conference, on August 6, 1994, the Anglophone Council decided to change the names of the AAC, the Anglophone Council and the newly created Anglophone Advisory

Committee composed of traditional rulers, elder statesmen, senior citizens, leading politicians and religious authorities: the AAC was renamed Southern Cameroons People's Conference (SCPC), the Anglophone Council was renamed Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC), and the Anglophone Advisory Committee was renamed Southern Cameroons Advisory Council (SCAC). There were at least three reasons for the provocative use of the name Southern Cameroons.

First, the reintroduction of this terminology has the advantage of reminding the local population about the spatial and historical foundation of their anglophone identity. Sindjoun (1995) has rightly observed that Southern Cameroonian citizenship can actually only be claimed by inhabitants belonging to one of the territory's "autochthonous" ethnic groups—a distinction which tends to exclude even second and third generation francophone immigrants from Southern Cameroonian citizenship. Hence the references made to the imagined "eleventh province" for those who are seen and treated as "Francophones of anglophone culture."¹⁷ It should, however, be added that the anglophone leadership has later tried to bridge the gap between "pure" Southern Cameroonians and "eleventh province" members. Any of the latter whose commitment to the anglophone cause was beyond any doubt was considered to be a Southern Cameroonian citizen with the same rights and obligations. The Bamenda Proclamation declared that "the notion of eleventh province is inconsistent with the restoration of the autonomy of anglophone Cameroon and the governance of society within a distinct entity of anglophone Cameroon" and affirmed "the necessity of all Anglophones to behave, act and be treated as sons and daughters of provinces comprised within the territory of anglophone Cameroon."

Second, the anglophone leaders alleged (1) that the proper procedures for the enactment and amendment of the federal constitution had not been followed by Ahidjo (Olinga, 1994), and (2) that francophone Cameroon had seceded from the union in 1984 when the Biya government unilaterally changed the country's name from United Republic of Cameroon to Republic of Cameroon. From this perspective, they often claimed that the Trust Territory of Southern Cameroons either had continued to exist or had been revived. The flag of the United Nations has therefore been often hoisted during rallies and demonstrations of the anglophone movements as a symbol of anglophone belief in the continuing responsibility of the United Nations for the Southern Cameroons.

Third, according to a SCNC press release, "the change of name makes it clear that the struggle led by the former AAC is neither of an essentially linguistic character nor in defense of an alien colonial culture, as has often been alleged, in bad faith, by some misguided critics of the AAC." It stressed that the adoption of the name Southern Cameroons shows that the aim of the struggle has always been and remains "to restore, within a newly restructured Federal Republic of Cameroon, the autonomy of a territory—Southern Cameroons, and of a people—Southern Cameroonians, and to put an end to their annexation by *La République du Cameroun*."¹⁸

Renewed attempts by the SCNC to enter into negotiations with the Biya government failed. President Biya issued a decree on December 14, 1994 creating a Consultative Committee on Constitutional Reform and summoning the said committee to begin work in camera at Yaoundé on December 15, 1994 and to submit to the president its non-binding advice on constitutional reform by December 22, 1994. The committee would be chaired by the anglophone prime minister, Mr Simon Achidi Achu. In all, 58 persons were invited of whom 44 belonged to the CPDM or its allied parties. Fourteen were Anglophones, having been nominated on an individual basis. Biya thus simply ignored the list of Southern Cameroons' delegates mandated by the SCNC in accordance with AACI and AACII resolutions and sent to him in November 1994. On December 18, 1994, the SCNC strongly condemned this exercise as falling short of the expectations of Cameroonians in general and Southern Cameroonians in particular for a meaningful constitutional reform. It declared that Southern Cameroonians would not be bound by any decision taken by the Constitutional Consultative Committee since the anglophone delegation had not been mandated by the SCNC. Seven out of the 14 anglophone participants, including Foncha and Muna, the anglophone architects of reunification, soon withdrew from the committee's deliberations, due to the failure of the government constitutional proposals to address the Southern Cameroons question and the committee's unrepresentative nature.

In reaction to growing pressures from several auxiliary organizations, especially CAM, claiming that the "reasonable time" as prescribed by the May 1994 Bamenda Proclamation for engagement in meaningful constitutional talks on the restoration of federalism had expired, the SCNC sent in May 1995 a nine-man delegation to the United Nations. This delegation was led by Barrister Sam Ekontang Elad, chairman of the SCNC, and included Foncha and Muna. The purpose of this mission was to file a petition against "the

annexation of the Southern Cameroons by *La République du Cameroun* and to commit the international community to the Southern Cameroons' search for a peaceful solution in order to head off the dangerous conflict which was brewing between *La République du Cameroun* and the Southern Cameroons.¹⁹ After that historic mission to the United Nations, the delegation issued the "London Communiqué" which was said "to mark the beginning of an irrevocable and irreversible process of the implementation of 'zero option': total and unconditional independence of the Southern Cameroons." Any future negotiations for independence should take place under the auspices of the United Nations and the BPI would form the only basis for any such negotiations.²⁰

At its return home on June 28, 1995, the delegation was given a heroic welcome at the international airport of Douala. On the way back to Buea, the delegation stopped at the Mungo river, the natural border between francophone and anglophone Cameroon. Led by Foncha and Muna, it ceremoniously crossed the Mungo bridge to celebrate its return home, it sung the movement's hymn, and it hoisted the UN flag on Southern Cameroons territory as a sign of its current Trust Territory status and future full independence.²¹ In July and August, the SCNC organized a "sensitization tour" throughout the anglophone territory. Large crowds attended the SCNC rallies, commending the delegation for its historic mission to the United Nations and pledging their support for the SCNC's new strive for total independence of the Southern Cameroons. When security forces tried to prevent the SCNC delegation from entering Kumba in the South West Province, thousands of people chased them away, thus securing a triumphant entry of the delegation into the town.²²

On October 7, 1995 the SCNC executive unanimously adopted the Independence Program for the Southern Cameroons drawn up by CAM on October 1, 1995. This program scheduled the following main activities:

- September-October 1995: signature referendum in the Southern Cameroons on independence. The target was 1.35 million signatures of Southern Cameroonian citizens.
- November 1995: creation of a Constituent Assembly charged with the drafting of a constitution for the Southern Cameroons.
- February-March 1996: mission to the United Nations to file an application for independence and membership of the organization.

- June-July 1996: negotiations with *La République du Cameroun* on the basis of the Buea Peace Initiative and in the presence of representatives of the United Nations and the United Kingdom.

The first phase of the Independence Program, the signature referendum, was duly organized in spite of the usual intimidation, harassment and brutalities by security forces. This referendum aimed at testing the support of Southern Cameroonian citizens for the independence course taken by the SCNC, thus providing legitimacy for SCNC activities against the government. In April 1996, the SCNC released the results of the signature referendum. In all, 315,000 signatures were collected. Comparing this figure with the 472,316 voters who took part in the 1996 municipal elections in the territory, this signified a voter participation of 75 percent. Not less than 99.97 percent was reported to have voted in favor of independence. A closer look at the participants throws some doubts on the representativeness of the referendum. The vast majority of the participants appear to be older people, either retired or peasants. No reasons are given for the remarkably low participation of both young people and civil servants in the referendum. In addition, there also appears to be a regional bias: the rate of participation in the Ngokitungia, Bui and Mezam Divisions is much higher than in other administrative divisions of the anglophone territory.²³

Despite repeated declarations on the part of the SCNC that the other phases of the Independence Program, notably the creation of a Constituent Assembly, the drafting of a new constitution and the official proclamation of independence, were about to be implemented, nothing actually happened. For example, October 1, 1996 was one of the dates set by the SCNC for the declaration of independence for the Southern Cameroons. The date came and passed with nothing but an "Independence day" address by the new SCNC chairman, Henry Fossung. On that occasion, he called upon Southern Cameroonians to use their "national day" as a "day of prayers," asking God "to save us from political bondage," and reiterating that independence was "irreversible and non-negotiable."²⁴ This is not altogether surprising. Since 1996, one may observe an apparent loss of momentum of the anglophone struggles. Besides the undoubtedly successful government attempts to "contain" the anglophone danger (see below), there are also internal factors explaining this unfortunate development.

One of the most important internal factors has been the resignation of the founding fathers, Elad, Munzu, and Anyangwe,

from the SCNC leadership.²⁵ The new leadership chaired by the more moderate Henry Fossung, a former ambassador, appeared incapable of devising an adequate strategy to counteract government's divisive and repressive tactics. Apart from declarations and proclamations, the new leadership had little to offer to the restive anglophone population to remain committed to the struggle. Despite the promise that "1997 would mark a turning point in our strategy" and that "we are determined to culminate the process of our total restoration to its logical conclusion" in the 1997 SCNC New Year Message,²⁶ many Southern Cameroonians have lost confidence in the SCNC leadership. Given the leadership problem and the government's persistent refusal to enter into any negotiations, a vehement conflict developed within the anglophone movements between the "doves," who continue to adhere to a negotiated separation from *La République du Cameroun*, and the "hawks," who want to achieve the independence of Southern Cameroons even through armed struggle. The Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL) in particular has opted for the latter strategy.

The SCYL was founded as one of the auxiliary organizations of the SCNC after the SCNC historic mission to the United Nations in May-June 1995. Being composed of "young people who do not see any future for themselves and who would prefer to die fighting than continue to submit to the fate imposed on Southern Cameroons by *La République du Cameroun*,"²⁷ the SCYL aimed at becoming the militant wing of the SCNC. Its original leadership was largely made up of anglophone members of the former University of Yaoundé students' union, the so-called Parliament, which was engaged in several violent confrontations with the university authorities and the Biya government during the period 1990-1996.²⁸ The SCYL soon became dissatisfied with the SCNC whose leadership continued to cling to a strategy of peaceful dialogue with the francophone-dominated state. It cut its relationship with the SCNC in November 1996 and placed itself under the umbrella of a newly established Southern Cameroons Independence Restoration Council (SCIRC). It now aimed at creating an independent Southern Cameroons state through armed rebellion, manifested in its motto: "the argument of force." Still in the process of preparing for action in both anglophone provinces, it was unexpectedly faced with the detention of its chairman, Mr Akwanga Ebenezer Mbongo, by security forces following his attempted theft of explosives from the Razel Company at Jakiri in the night March 23-24, 1997. It immediately reacted by attacking some military and civil establishments in the Bui and

Mezam Divisions of the North West Province on March 27-28, 1997. According to official reports, three gendarmes and seven unidentified assailants were killed in these operations. Government repression of this ill-planned revolt was out of proportion. It mobilized soldiers who ruthlessly killed, tortured, raped and arrested several local men and women, forcing even more of them to go into exile. Above all, it seized the opportunity to clamp down on the SDF and SCNC, accusing both organizations of being responsible for the uprising. A considerable number of SCNC members were arrested and imprisoned in Yaoundé.²⁹ A few weeks later the SCNC chairman, Henry Fossung, who had gone into hiding after the revolt, publicly denied any SCNC involvement in the revolt, insisting "that the SCNC motto 'the force of argument and not the argument of force' remained today as valid as yesterday." He instead claimed that the "incident" had been orchestrated by a "desperate" government, in an attempt to frustrate the legitimate struggles of the Southern Cameroonian people to recover their independence. Strikingly, following this revolt, the SCNC leadership appeared to be even less inclined to mobilize the anglophone population. Since the uprising, the government has regularly accused the SCNC of importing weapons and inciting its members to armed rebellion. On December 29, 1999, Southern Cameroonian "independence fighters" captured the radio station at Buea and broadcast a recorded message, read by Justice Fred Ebong, who has been closely connected with the SCYL, proclaiming the independence of the Southern Cameroons. On January 7, 2000 they hoisted the United Nations and Federation flags in Victoria (Limbe). Justice Ebong and other "suspects" were subsequently detained and political activities were proscribed in the South West Province. In March 2000, Justice Ebong, still languishing in prison, was elected chairman of the SCNC.

The francophone-dominated state may be succeeding eloquently in stifling anglophone movements and identity locally, but the Internet has offered Anglophones based mostly in the Diaspora, the space and opportunity to articulate their desires, forge new solidarity, liaise with their embittered and beleaguered community back home, pressure the Biya regime out of its traditional insensitivity and dismissiveness, place the concerns of anglophone Cameroonians on the agenda of international organizations, NGOs and other multinational players in the domain of human rights and identity politics, and even fulfil their ambitions of secession and declaration of independence, even if in virtual terms only. With discussion groups such as the SCNC Forum and Camnet, Anglophones (mostly

the educated, youthful, diasporic, North America and Western Europe based) have seized the initiative from the repressive Biya regime, thereby sending the regime and its supporters in the ranks of anglophone politicians and intellectuals to join the discussion groups in a damage limitation exercise. This is a clear sign that the state can no longer afford to assume it has effective control over channels of communication and their content, and by extension over knowledge and truth. With the advent of the Internet, and as more and more Cameroonians discover and explore its potentials, the state has lost the privilege of refereeing its own matches, or of acting as a workman whose only tool is the hammer and to whom every problem is a nail.

Containing anglophone identity and organization

The Biya government has employed several strategies to deconstruct anglophone identity and solidarity. The 1994 Bamenda Proclamation mentions the following strategies. It says that "rather than address the issue," the Biya government has preferred "to feign ignorance of the anglophone problem . . . to seek by diverse maneuvers to create division within the anglophone nation with the aim of giving the false impression that there is no general consensus within it on constitutional reform . . . and to accuse the All Anglophone Congress and its affiliated organizations unjustly and falsely of having adopted secession of anglophone Cameroon as their goal." The strategies outlined in the Bamenda Proclamation are by no means exhaustive. In this section we shall discuss the most important strategies of the Biya government under the following headings: trivialization and demonization of the anglophone problem; divide-and-rule; and repression.

Trivialization and demonization of the anglophone problem

The Biya government has often tried to minimize the anglophone-francophone divide by highlighting the existence of a common identity under German colonial rule, and the official recognition in all the post-colonial constitutions of the bilingual and multi-cultural nature of the Cameroonian nation. The latter is said to provide a safe guarantee for the preservation of the differential linguistic and cultural heritage of the post-German colonial era. For example, in a speech delivered in Bamenda on December 13, 1991, Biya stressed:

Let us not oppose Anglophones and Francophones. . . . The language barrier is not and should not be a political problem in our country. Mind you, at the start of this century Cameroonians were neither Anglophones nor Francophones. Why should the wars of others and the culture of others divide Cameroonians at the dawn of the third millennium?³⁰

Meaningful though this argument would be to any country with a clear sense of vision, it fails, in the Cameroonian context, to convince the anglophone minority in the absence of any institutionalizing mechanisms for weakening the strong grip on the state by Francophones and the superiority accorded the French language and francophone cultural values over everything anglophone or English.

The Biya government has also often argued that the unitary state is a more suitable form of state in the Cameroonian multi-ethnic context than a federal state and, moreover, corresponds to the wish of the vast majority of the population. Contrary to anglophone claims that the unitary state came into existence in 1972 as a result of Ahidjo's illegal, unconstitutional and repressive manipulation, Biya has constantly insisted that the unitary state was the outcome of the massive vote of the Cameroonian people as voluntarily expressed in the 1972 referendum. In reply to the anglophone demand for a return to the federal state, Biya has claimed, like Ahidjo, that this tends to be costly, weakening to state power, and divisive, provoking ethnic and regional sentiments rather than national consciousness. Apparently, he overlooks that the unitary state's patrimonial tendencies may be even more costly and divisive (Chabal and Daloz, 1999; Gabriel, 1999). While constantly declining to discuss the federal or so-called "two-state option," he was eventually willing to concede a certain degree of decentralization within the unitary state based on the present ten provinces in Cameroon, the so-called "ten-state/region option." Biya's preferential option of a "decentralized unitary state" was eventually reflected in the 1996 constitution.

From the very start, the Biya government has also tried to demonize the anglophone call for federalism by equating federalism with secession. The government's persistent suspicion that secession was the "hidden agenda" of the anglophone determined pursuit of federalism, led to brutal repression of some anglophone demonstrations, such as their celebration of "independence day" and attendant hoisting of the federation flag on October 1, 1993. The Biya government was also in the habit of portraying the generally moderate anglophone leaders, who continued advocating peaceful

negotiations rather than armed rebellion, as "extremists" and "radicals."

Divide-and-rule

Like his predecessor, Biya has attempted, with significant success, to divide the Anglophones, often capitalizing on existing ethno-regional tensions between the coastal/forest (South West Province) and Grassfields (North West Province) people in the anglophone territory. A number of factors are responsible for these tensions. First, the massive labor migration from the North West to the South West where a plantation economy was created during German colonial rule (Konings, 1993). After the termination of their labor contracts, many North Westerners settled in the South West. They acquired land from the local population for agricultural production and started engaging in other economic activities. They proved their reputation as entrepreneurs (Rowlands, 1993), achieving, along with Nigerians of Igbo descent, a dominant position in the south-western economy. Second, the transfer of political power from the South West to the North West in 1959, when Foncha's North West-based Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) defeated Endeley's South West-based Kamerun National Convention (KNC) (Johnson, 1970; Ebune, 1992). Subsequently, the North West elite have dominated the political scene in anglophone Cameroon and ministerial appointments until September 1996. Third, the voting behavior in the 1961 United Nations organized plebiscite in the Southern Cameroons. Contrary to the North West, the South West voted predominantly for integration of the anglophone territory into Nigeria, probably influenced by Endeley's sympathies with his country of studies and marriage.

In response to South West complaints about North West domination, Biya appointed some members of the South West elite to key positions in their province (Konings and Nyamnjoh, 1997 and 2000; Eyoh, 1998a, 1998b). For example, Peter Mafany Musonge replaced John Niba Ngu as general manager of the Cameroon Development Corporation (Konings, 1993), Dorothy Njeuma was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the newly created anglophone University of Buea and Becky Ndiva was transferred from Yaoundé to head the Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) station in the South West. In addition, Biya has also sought to use his allies among the anglophone "traditional" and "modern" elite for the defense of the unitary state, in exchange for rewards in the form of

appointments, sinecures and a blind eye to corruption and/or embezzlement by those in high office. His allies, in turn, have tended to blame the leaders of the various anglophone movements for their "demagogic and irresponsible" calls for federalism or secession and to dispute their claims of being "spokesmen" of the anglophone community, blaming them, as did Prime Minister Peter Mafany Musonge in November 1996, for leading "hostile campaigns at home and abroad to foster division and hatred among Cameroonians."³¹ They equally challenge claims of anglophone marginalization, preferring to talk instead of "self-marginalization," and they invite Anglophones to consider themselves as fully fledged Cameroonians with the same rights and responsibilities as Francophones (Nyamnjoh and Rowlands, 1998, p. 335). This has often led to severe confrontations between the two camps and to mutual accusations of betrayal (cf. Ewumbue-Monono, 2000).

Following the organization of the AACI in April 1993, there were attempts by certain members of the South West Chiefs Conference (SWCC) and the South West Elite Association (SWELA),³² who were known to be closely allied with the regime in power, to dissociate the South West Province from the deliberations and resolutions of AACI and from the Buea Declaration. There was also a meeting of a previously little-known North West Cultural and Development Association (NOCUDA) at Bamenda on May 14, 1993 to dissociate the North West Province from AACI by branding the latter as a South West affair. This meeting seems to have been organized by north-western members of the CPDM, who again, in 1994, would actively work against the holding of AACII in Bamenda, in a bid "to kill the anglophone dream."³³

In September 1993, nine representatives of the SWCC undertook a mission to Yaoundé to pledge their unalloyed allegiance to President Biya. They told him that "they were alarmed at the numerous demonstrations, blackmail, civil disobedience, rebellious attitudes and recurrent activities designed to destabilize the state and the government," and strongly condemned any attempt to partition Cameroon on the basis of anglophone and francophone cultures. They asked the Head of State to transform the present ten provinces into ten autonomous provinces, and drew his attention to the fact that after reunification the South West Province had been discriminated against in the distribution of "strategic posts," such as prime minister, vice-president and speaker of the national assembly which had constantly been occupied by North Westerners.³⁴

Following the military brutalities in the South West during the 1993 government anti-smuggling campaign, a split occurred in SWELA, founded in 1991 to promote the socio-economic and cultural development of the province and combat its domination by the North West. The split gave birth to a pro-CPDM faction keen on maintaining close links with the Biya regime and on showing strong anti-North West sentiments. The members of this group include older and younger CPDM barons, like Emmanuel Tabi Egbe, Peter Agbor Tabi, John Ebong Ngolle, Ephraim Inoni and Caven Nnoko Mbele (Secretary-General), as well as such important South West chiefs as Samuel Endeley and Victor Mukete. They are opposed to a return to the federal state and champion the ten-state option, which would retain the present separation between the South West and North West Provinces, and thus safeguard the former's autonomy. By way of contrast, another faction of SWELA, with Martin Nkemngu of Lebialem Division as Secretary-General, was more critical of government policies and often allied to opposition parties, notably the SDF, an "active member" of which Martin Nkemngu declared he was.³⁵ It advocated closer co-operation between the South West and North West elites as a necessary precondition for an effective representation of anglophone interests. It strongly supported the anglophone demand for a return to the federal state—a stance heavily criticized by the pro-CPDM faction which saw Nkemngu and the entire Lebialem Division as Grassfielders and therefore North Westerners in disguise.

Since 1994, a number of south-western and north-western chiefs and members of the CPDM have repeatedly condemned the call for an independent Southern Cameroons state, appealing to the Head of State to employ every available means to defend the unitary state. (Konings, 1999b).

Paradoxically, the "anglophone problem" has enhanced the chances of such Biya loyalists being appointed to government posts, which used to be reserved for Francophones only. Obviously, the decision to enhance the position of Anglophones in the state apparatus is designed to belie charges that they only play second fiddle in the francophone-dominated unitary state, and simultaneously to attract new members of the anglophone elite into the "hegemonic alliance" (Bayart, 1979). Yet, as Ewumbue-Monono argues, such co-optation of the anglophone elite can only have a positive impact on the anglophone community if these "anglophone appointees understand their roles in helping . . . [Biya] to solve the anglophone problem within a national context." But, regrettably,

"most of Biya's anglophone appointees perceive their positions as rewards for their technocratic or managerial 'competence,' 'skills,' and 'hard work,' or as marks of 'personal confidence' from the Head of State," seldom seeing "themselves as political agents of the President to help him redress the anglophone problem within a national context." They tend to perceive their appointments not as a means to an end, but as an end in itself. Hence, if Biya had any anglophonization strategy, which Ewumbue-Monono believes he does, this "strategy is being frustrated by the anglophone political elites themselves who spend their time fighting each other, and resort to political cannibalism to destroy younger elites from rising to 'crowd the top'" (Ewumbue-Monono, 2000).

In 1992, Simon Achidi Achu, a North Westerner, and Ephraim Inoni, a South Westerner, were appointed respectively as Prime Minister and Deputy Secretary-General in the Presidency of the Republic. Other highly placed Anglophones, including Peter Abety, John Ebong Ngolle, John Niba Ngu, Francis Chongwain Nkwain, Peter Agbor Tabi, and Samuel Ngeh Tamfu, were members of the delegations which were regularly sent from Yaoundé to contest the claims of the leadership of the anglophone movements and to defend the unitary state. It should, however, be noted that Biya's policy of allocating prestigious positions within the state apparatus to Anglophones has also encouraged competition among these privileged allies (Nyamnjoh, 1999). In fact, until 1996, South Westerners still felt that they are underrepresented in the highest government offices and constantly requested that a politician from their province should succeed Achidi Achu, appointed Prime Minister following the controversial 1992 presidential elections. So when a South Westerner, Peter Mafany Musonge, was appointed in September 1996 to take over from Achidi Achu as Prime Minister and more South Westerners were maintained in key cabinet positions than North Westerners, the South West people reportedly "went wild with excitement and jubilation and loudly praised the Head of State" for having at last listened to the cry of despair of South Westerners who for over 36 years were "confined to the periphery of national politics and socio-economic development."³⁶ These developments were interpreted by the North West CPDM barons as evidence that they were indicted by the Head of State for their failure to contain the SDF and radical Anglophones amongst them. The subsequent creation of a North West Development Association (NOWEDA) by Peter Abety, Minister for Special Duties at the Presidency, and of two chiefs' organizations, the North West

Fons' Union (NOWEFA) and North West Fons' Conference (NOWEFCO), may be seen as attempts by these barons to retrieve lost advantages.

South West ascendancy in the state apparatus followed in the wake of the January 1996 constitution. This constitution, which promised state protection for "autochthonous" minorities, boosted South West identity.³⁷ In the ongoing struggles for economic and political power, the south-western allies of the Biya regime started demanding state protection for the "autochthonous" South Westerners against the "dominant" and "exploitative" grassfields "settlers," "strangers" or—to use the Pidgin-English expression—"come-no-goes" in their region.³⁸ The South West pro-CPDM elite got alarmed when the North West-based SDF won most key urban constituencies in their region during the municipal elections which—by no means accidentally—were held only a few days after the adoption of the new constitution. The South West governor, Oben Peter Ashu, blamed the "settler" population, which outnumbered the indigenes in most urban areas of the province, for the poor performance of the CPDM. Immediately after the elections, the government provided the requested protection by appointing "indigenous" CPDM leaders as urban delegates in the municipalities won by the SDF. Undoubtedly, the regime also rendered assistance after the municipal elections to the emergence of the Grand SAWA movement—an alignment of the ethnic-related coastal elite in the South West Province and neighboring francophone Littoral Province on the basis of common feelings of exploitation and domination by grassfields "settlers" (Tatah Mentan, 1996; Wang Sonné, 1997; Yenshu, 1998; Nyamnjoh and Rowlands, 1998). This alignment was established after the indigenous SAWA elite in Douala had staged government-condoned demonstrations against the francophone grassfielders, the Bamiléké, who alone accounted for 70 percent of the Douala population, and who had provided for only one indigenous mayor out of the five councils in which the SDF had won the municipal elections. The emergence of the Grand SAWA movement signified an important victory for the government in its persistent efforts to tempt the South West elite away from anglophone solidarity. Evidently, this new movement had a devastating effect on the anglophone identity, the francophone-anglophone divide becoming cross-cut by alliances that oppose the coastal people, the Grand SAWA, to the grassfields people, the so-called Grand West—the alliance between the francophone and

anglophone grassfielders constituting the backbone of the major opposition party, the SDF.

To those who sought protection as minorities, the price to pay would increasingly be stated in no uncertain terms: "Vote the CPDM." That is exactly what the SAWA elite has been telling the local population. In return, they have been highly rewarded for their efforts, getting access to key positions in the state apparatus, which were previously occupied by North Westerners. The South West governor, Oben Peter Ashu, was reported to be issuing residence permits to "settlers" before they could vote during the 1997 parliamentary elections. "Settlers" felt disenfranchised by this move which, they held, was intended to favor the party in power (Yenshu, 1998). Following the "overwhelming" South West support for his candidacy during the 1997 presidential elections, Biya re-appointed Musonge as Prime Minister after these elections, notwithstanding the fact that the latter had become "cut off from the anglophone grassroots community and opinion leaders" for various reasons, including "trading off all the strategic appointments made by Achidi Achu in favor of francophones" (Ewumbue-Monono, 2000).

Repression

Most of the strategies employed by the government to deconstruct anglophone identity tended to be accompanied by ruthless repression of the anglophone population and anglophone activities. The South West provincial governor, Oben Peter Ashu, a South Westerner hailing from the Manyu Division, became so unpopular over the decision in 1993 to brutalize the population with the military in a bid to forcibly recover unpaid taxes and to stop smuggling that his name was corrupted to "Obey Peter Shoot." The North West provincial governor, Bell Luc René, a Francophone hailing from the Littoral Province, became nicknamed "Bend Look Grenade" for the "excessive" use by security forces in the North West of tear gas grenades to disperse opposition rallies and demonstrations during the 1991 "ghost town" campaign and the 1992 state of emergency in Bamenda in the aftermath of "Biya's theft of Fru Ndi's victory" in the presidential elections (Nyamnjoh, 1996c, p. 110).

Major anglophone opposition parties, like the North West-based SDF and the South West-based LDA, continued to be exposed to state intimidation and violence. As mentioned above, the launching of the SDF in May 1990 led to the killing by security forces of six demonstrators, the so-called Bamenda martyrs. The launching of the

LDA at Buea on September 19, 1993 prompted security forces to launch a tear gas attack on the approximately 400 party sympathizers gathered in the private premises of the party chairman, Njoh Litumbe. This horrible act may probably be explained by the fact that the LDA executive was composed of some of the principal leaders of the anglophone cause, notably Sam Ekontang Elad, Simon Munzu, Henry Fossung and Njoh Litumbe. The government regularly prohibited the anglophone opposition parties from holding rallies. Rallies that did take place were often disturbed or disrupted by security forces.

The anglophone movements were also frequent victims of government repression. In 1993, the government did not allow the conveners to hold AACI in public premises at Buea (such as the University of Buea), which were most appropriate for the occasion. This government refusal did not achieve the intended effect of canceling the AACI, since the Catholic Church authorities eventually gave their accord for the use of a hall in the Mount Mary Clinic at Buea. In 1994, the government attempted to obstruct the organization of AACII at Bamenda using the idea that "Anglophones had come together in Bamenda to declare secession" as an excuse for repression. On that occasion, chairman Sam Ekontang Elad had to be smuggled out of Mondial Hotel disguised as a steward, the hotel being surrounded by government troops. Demonstrations and strikes organized by the various anglophone associations and pressure groups were most likely to be quelled by government troops. For example, the celebration of "independence day" on October 1, 1993 was brutally disturbed by security forces, the government again suspecting that on that day secession and independence would be declared. Leaders of anglophone movements tended to be harassed by security forces, threatened with arrest, and subjected to travel restrictions, forcing some of them to go into exile. Repression increased with mounting threats of the proclamation of an independent Southern Cameroons state. SCNC rallies and demonstrations then became officially banned in the anglophone provinces. Repression became even more severe in the aftermath of the SCYL attack on some military and civil establishments in the North West Province in March 1997.

The government also intensified its crackdown on any event organized by scholars and activists to celebrate anglophone identity. A scheduled launching of Nyamnjoh's book *The Cameroon GCE Crisis: A Test of Anglophone Solidarity* (1996b) was banned at the last minute, and the author, Asong Ware (organizer) and Christian Cardinal Tumi

(chief launcher) threatened with detention, 15 days renewable, should they proceed despite the ban. Subsequent bannings were brought to bear on the launching of Taku's booklet *For Dame Lynda Chalker and Other Anglophone Cameroonian Notes* (1996), and of Nsalai's book *Up to the Mountain Top: Beyond Party Politics* (1996). Press censorship by administrative authorities, the seizure of newspapers, intimidation and imprisonment of anglophone journalists have continued unabated (Nyamnjoh, 1996a). While CRTV has been used for repressive purposes and the state has continued to clamp down on the critical private press, Anglophones have had to resort to alternative channels such as *njangis*, churches, meetings, and most recently the Internet.

Conclusion

In this study, we have shown that the anglophone problem, which had been simmering during Ahidjo's repressive rule, came into the open after Biya's succession to power in November 1982. The limited degree of freedom provided by his New Deal policies offered Anglophones a long-awaited opportunity to voice their deeply felt grievances about francophone domination, exploitation and assimilation. The anglophone problem gained momentum in the aftermath of the political liberalization process in the early 1990s when Anglophones intensified efforts in defense of their interests, claiming first a return to the federal state and later outright secession.

Since 1996, we have observed a clear backdrop in the anglophone struggle. One factor responsible for this situation is the internal problems in the anglophone movements: lack of capable leadership and disagreements on the strategies to be employed with regard to Biya's persistent refusal to enter into any meaningful negotiations with the anglophone leadership. The most important factor, however, is the apparent success of Biya's determined efforts to deconstruct anglophone identity and contain anglophone organization. Like his predecessor, Biya has particularly capitalized on the existing contradictions between the South West and North West, finding it increasingly lucrative and politically expedient to tempt the South West elite away from anglophone solidarity with strategic appointments and the idea that the real enemy was the North West elite rather than the francophone-dominated state. The 1996 constitution even stimulated an alliance between the ethnically

related anglophone and francophone elite (the Grand Sawa movement) on the basis of common feelings of domination and exploitation by anglophone and francophone Grassfielders (the Grand West). While it encourages those alliances for political expediency, the state at the same time is careful enough not to make them permanent. On the international front, too, the Biya propaganda machine was able to score some significant success. Despite vehement SCNC opposition (Konings and Nyamnjoh, 1997), Cameroon was admitted in the Commonwealth of Nations on November 1, 1995. Moreover, during his visit to Bamenda in 1995, the British High Commissioner in Cameroon made the SCNC understand in clear terms that his country was not prepared to back its secessionist policies. Britain, in fact, voted for Cameroon's admission into the Commonwealth. Visiting Cameroon in May 2000, Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the UNO, was a great disappointment to the anglophone community when he chose not to address the anglophone problem.

It would be a grave error, however, to assume that Biya has defeated the anglophone movements and thus solved the anglophone problem. His persistent refusal to enter into any negotiations and his divisive and repressive tactics run the risk instead of further radicalizing the anglophone movements and community. The adoption of armed struggle by the SCYL, the recent proclamation of Southern Cameroons independence by Justice Fred Ebong, and the resurgence of heated discussions of the anglophone problems on the Internet, furnish a clear proof of such possibility.

Given the current stalemate and the SCNC's continuing adherence to its motto "the force of argument and not the argument of force," it would appear that future negotiations between the anglophone and francophone elite about the most suitable form of state, similar to the 1961 constitutional talks at Foumban, remain the most likely way of solving the anglophone problem. During these negotiations, the various options for a future form of state should be discussed freely and frankly. In this connection, it is important to emphasize that the anglophone and francophone elite are by no means monolithic blocs. In a recent article, Donfack (1998) convincingly shows that both the anglophone and francophone elite are divided along various lines, including ethno-regional ones (the South West-North West divide in anglophone Cameroon; the Fulbe and Bamiléké opposition to the Beti in francophone Cameroon, political ones (supporters and opponents of the ruling regime), and constitutional ones (different opinions about the future form of

state). The main options for a future form of state to be discussed during these negotiations appear to be the following:

(1) *Secession of anglophone Cameroon from francophone Cameroon and the subsequent formation of two independent states.* While this option has been given new impetus in anglophone Cameroon in the wake of Justice Ebong's declaration of an independent Southern Cameroons state on December 29, 1999, it is unlikely to receive any support from the francophone political elite, who are in favor of creating a decentralized unitary state and keeping control over anglophone Cameroon's rich natural resources, especially oil. It is also an option that is unlikely to receive international support. International organizations, like the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) are inclined to respect the borders of the current sovereign states, condemning any move towards a further balkanization of Africa. It appears even not to be the main option of the anglophone movements. The latter were more or less forced to adopt a secessionist stand by Biya's persistent refusal to discuss the federal option.

(2) *A return to the federal state.* This option has not only historical roots in Cameroon, it also can claim support in both the anglophone and francophone part of present Cameroon. In anglophone Cameroon, it is backed by most anglophone associations and a number of opposition parties, including the SDF and LDA. In francophone Cameroon, it is backed by certain ethnic groups and opposition parties like the Cameroon Democratic Union (CDU), most of them being allied to the SDF (Donfack, 1998). While all of them agree on the future form of state, they differ on the number of states. For instance, the anglophone movements support the two-state option, the SDF supports the four-state option, and the CDU, like the South West pro-CPDM elite, supports the ten-state option. According to Elaigwu and Olorunsola (1983, p. 282), federalism "basically emanates from the desire of people to form a union without necessarily losing their various identities." Considering the failure of most nation-state projects in Africa, a federation appears at first sight to be an appropriate form of state to accommodate the enormous ethno-regional diversities within the framework of a broader national unity. The failure of federal experiments in Cameroon and elsewhere in Africa (Benjamin, 1972; Thomas-Woolley and Keller, 1994; Woodward and Forsyth, 1994; Olukoshi and Agbu, 1996) actually demonstrates that federalism poses major problems of governance:

problems of criteria for forming states (are these states to be formed on the basis of administrative, ethno-regional, or cultural criteria?), problems of the exact relationship between the federal government and states, problems of unity in diversity, problems of financing and so on. Champions of federalism should take these problems into account, and know that it is a question of choosing between two problematic options.

(3) *A large measure of regional decentralization within the unitary state.* Decentralization could possibly—but not necessarily—be based on the existing ten provinces (one anglophone region, would be more acceptable to the anglophone movements, especially an anglophone region with a Quebec-like special status).³⁹ This option is likely to receive support from the South West elite, who continue to be afraid of North West domination in a federal state, and the majority of the francophone elite. According to a francophone scholar, Olinga (1994), a highly decentralized state structure would kill two birds with one stone. First, decentralization offers a neat formula to fulfil the widespread desire for a large measure of autonomy to both the anglophone and francophone parts of the country, as well as to avoid the current “dramatization” of the anglophone-francophone divide. Second, decentralization will bring about a significant—and necessary—modernization of the country’s administration, providing the state with an adequate tool to experiment with new forms to manage the geographical, human and socio-political space. Olinga concludes that if one abstracts the anglophone problem from the historical context, it is merely a problem of the Cameroonian state, which should take more seriously the potential benefits of a decentralized state structure. An anonymous francophone author appears to arrive at a similar conclusion:

Au Cameroun, la question des Anglophones en tant que tels apparaît moins comme un problème de minorité nationale que comme un problème des institutions de l'état et de leur fonctionnement. Il n'y a pas que les Anglophones, il y a également le nord et l'ouest dont les rapports tendus avec le pouvoir central ne revêt pas un caractère linguistique.⁴⁰

Last, but not least, any future attempt to solve the anglophone problem should take into consideration the aspirations of the anglophone and francophone people themselves, consulting them through a referendum about their desired form of state.

Notes

1. Petition of English-speaking students at the University of Yaoundé to the Ministry of National Education, dated November 19, 1983. Reproduced in Mukong (1990), p. 26.
2. *Some Points of Justice*—Memorandum addressed by the Honorable Solomon Tandeng Muna, Speaker of the National Assembly, to the Head of State, dated January 1984. Reproduced in Mukong (1990), p. 27. For Francophone disregard of Anglo-Saxon certificates and diplomas, see Chem-Langhèè (1997), p. 3.
3. Reference to the incumbent regime as the government of La République du Cameroun, the name adopted by Francophone Cameroon at independence, has become a key signifier in the replotting of the nation's constitutional history as a progressive consolidation of the recolonization of Anglophone Cameroon by the post-colonial Francophone-dominated state. See Eyoh (1998a), p. 264.
4. *The New Social Order* by Fon Gorji Dinka, March 20, 1985. Reproduced in Mukong (1990), pp. 98–99.
5. Memorandum presented to the Head of State and Chairman of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) by a Joint Committee of the Elite of the North West and South West Provinces Resident in Littoral Province, dated May 7, 1985. Reproduced in Mukong (1990), pp. 63–64.
6. Open letter to all English-speaking parents of Cameroon from the English-speaking students of the North West and South West provinces, dated August 20, 1986. Reproduced in Mukong (1990), pp. 109–119.
7. John Ngu Foncha's letter of resignation from the CPDM is reproduced in Mukong (1990), p. 155.
8. See Société de presse et d'éditions du Cameroun, *Cameroon, Rights and Freedoms: Collection of Recent Texts*, Sopecam: Yaoundé, 1991.
9. For reports on the leadership struggle in the LDA, see *Cameroon Post*, April 16–22, 1996; and *The Rambler*, April 30–May 6, 1996.
10. See, for instance, *Today*, March 20, 1995, pp. 1 and 5; and *Weekly Post*, July 26–31, 1995, p. 4. For a more detailed discussion of the Bamiléké opposition position in the SDF, see Konings (1999c).
11. CAM was later launched as the Southern Cameroons Restoration Movement (SCARM).
12. All Anglophone Congress (AAC), 1993, p. 8. For an interesting report on the organization and proceedings of the conference, see “the untold story of the All Anglophone Conference” in *Cameroon Life*, Vol. 2, No. 8 (May), pp. 8–15.
13. See, for instance, the warning of Professor Maurice Kamto, an eminent Francophone legal scholar that “Anglophones blame the Ahidjo and Biya regimes, not the Francophones,” in *Le Messenger*, June 24, 1993, p. 12. Indeed, because of such collective condemnation, the French-language newspapers have been quite reluctant to admit to the existence of an “Anglophone Problem.” See, for example, *La Nouvelle Expression*, January 13–17, 1994, pp. 1–3, for the hostile reception experienced by Simon Munzu when he tried to explain to Francophone journalists and intellectuals the “Anglophone Problem.” It is only recently, thanks to the trivialization of the whole idea

- of minorities in the 1996 constitution, that the Francophone press appears to be waking up to the concerns of the Anglophone minority. See *La Nouvelle Expression*, Dossiers et documents, May 23, 1996, pp. 1-28, devoted entirely to "Minorité, Autochtones, allogènes et démocratie" in Cameroon.
14. See, Avant-Projet de Constitution de la République Fédéral du Cameroun, AAC Standing Committee: Buea, 1993. For a detailed discussion of the federal draft constitution, see Konings (1999a).
 15. The various proposals of the BPI are reproduced in *Today*, April 29, 1994, pp. 3-6.
 16. For the proceedings of the AACII and the Bamenda Proclamation, see *Cameroon Post*, May 6-12, 1994.
 17. Indeed, in June 1995, the national radio carried an announcement on the creation of "une association des francophones de culture anglophone." Everybody knows that there are only ten provinces in Cameroon at the moment. By adopting the name, "Eleventh Province," these immigrants express their marginalization, being recognized neither as Francophone or Anglophone citizens. For a discussion on the "eleventh province" association, see Geschiere and Gugler (1998), pp. 313-314; for the relationship between anglophone identity and autochthony, see Konings and Nyamnjoh (2000).
 18. The SCNC Press Release was reprinted in *Cameroon Post*, August 16-23, 1994, p. 3. For a discussion on the issues of names and renaming in the Anglophone struggle, see Nkoum-Me-Ntseny (1996), pp. 81-89.
 19. See SCNC, *Petition Against the Annexation of the Southern Cameroons*, Buea, May 1995 (Mimeo).
 20. SCNC, *The London Communiqué*, London, June 22, 1995 (Mimeo).
 21. See, "SCNC Homecoming," *Cameroon Post*, July 3-10, 1995; Also see *La Nouvelle Expression*, July 4-7, 1995, p. 6.
 22. For these SCNC rallies, see "SCNC Hits Kumba: 75,000 Jam Town Green," *The Herald*, August 3-6, 1994, p. 1; and "AS Elites Condemn Military Occupation: SCNC Plans Operation Storm Mamfe," *Cameroon Post*, August 28-30, 1995, p. 3.
 23. The results were published in *Cameroon Post*, June 18-24, 1996, pp. 6-7; and June 25-July 1, 1996, p. 6.
 24. *Cameroon Post*, October 8-14, 1994; *The Witness*, November 12-18, 1996.
 25. The SCNC Chairman, Sam Ekontang Elad came under severe attack on August 21, 1995 after repeated radio and television announcements to the effect that he had issued a press release informing the public of the suspension of the SCNC "sensitization tour" in the aftermath of the historic SCNC mission to the United Nations. Although he provided some evidence that he had become a victim of a government plot to compromise him and the SCNC, he nevertheless lost credibility. Soon after this event, he was forced to resign "for health reasons." Carlson Anyangwe and Simon Munzu left for jobs in Zambia and Rwanda, respectively.
 26. *Cameroon Post International*, October 2, 1997, p. 2.
 27. See Mr. Fidelis Chiabi, Chairman of the former Anglophone Youth Council, in *Cameroon Post*, February 1-2, 1994, p. 7.
 28. For the "parliament" at the University of Yaoundé, see for instance, Lisinge, A. D. (n. d.), *The Philosophy Behind the University Crisis*, n.p.

29. In a report that was full of factual errors and based on spurious evidence, *Jeune Afrique Economie* supported the Biya government's allegation that the SCNC was responsible for the revolt. See *Jeune Afrique Economie*, April 14, 1997, p. 8. The journal's support is not altogether surprising. Titus Edzoa, a former Secretary-General at the Presidency, once revealed that the journal was used for public relations purposes by the regime. To this end, the regime had funded the journal to the tune of CFAF 1.5 billion (US \$3 million). Our account is based on various SCYL reports and interviews with some SCYL leaders. Prisoners were not brought up for trial until 1999. They were not treated as political prisoners, but charged with criminal offenses.
30. Speech of President Biya at Bamenda on September 13, 1991, in *Playdoyer pour une vraie démocratie*.
31. See, *The Herald*, December 2-3, 1996, p. 1.
32. For the SWCC and SWELA, see Konings and Nyamnjoh (1997); Nyamnjoh and Rowlands (1998); Eyoh (1998a, b); Konings (1999b).
33. See *Cameroon Post*, April 20-27, 1994, April 29-May 1, 1994.
34. *The Herald*, November 3-10, 1993, p. 6.
35. See *Cameroon Post*, October 29 - November 4, 1996, pp. 1 and 9.
36. See "Significance of P. M. Musonge's Appointment" by a South West elite, Kome Epule, *The Star Headlines*, November 26, 1996, p. 5.
37. For a more elaborate discussion of the 1996 constitution, see Melone, et al. (1996); and Konings and Nyamnjoh (2000).
38. This appeal to the state was often accompanied by threats of "ethnic cleansing" and "removal of strangers" who in many cases were second or third generation descendants of immigrants.
39. For a Quebec-like special status for Anglophone Cameroon, see Susungi (1991). SCNC delegates have sometimes requested the Commonwealth of Nations to consider granting Southern Cameroons such a status.
40. L. P., "Les minorités nationales," *Le Courrier de ACP*, No. 140, July-August, 1993, p. 81.

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