

THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS ON CULTURE

"As far as culture is concerned, we must in fact refrain from any blind and narrow nationalism and avoid any complex when absorbing the learning of other countries. When we consider the English language and culture and the French language and culture, we must regard them not as the property of such and such a race but as an acquirement of the universal civilisation to which we belong.

That is in fact why we have followed the path of bilingualism since we consider not only that it is in our interests to develop these two world-wide languages in our country but that furthermore it offers us the means to develop this new culture which I have just mentioned and which could transform our country into the catalyst of African unity.

For that, it is not enough that West Cameroonians learn French as a second language, as can be done in other countries, Nigeria for example. It is not enough that East Cameroonians learn English as a second language, as can be done in France. On the contrary, from the primary school onwards, all children must learn to express themselves fluently in both languages.

This evidently implies an educational reform which can only be gradually brought about, due to the inadequate facilities available and the problems inherent in such an orientation.

Our goal however is clear: it consists firstly, both in and out of school, of gradually creating a civilisation which, whilst being based on our African heritage, will also draw its inspiration from what is best and most valuable in the cultures imposed on us."

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