

Resistance to European Penetration into Africa: The case of the North West Region of Cameroon**MATHEW BASUNG GWANFOGBE (PhD)**

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Abstract

After centuries of varied forms of European commercial activities on the African coast, the second half of the 18th century saw a change for more profit when they decided to penetrate into the hinterlands of the continent for better exploitation by establishing imperialist administration over the Africans. Many Africans resisted the imperialist penetration while **some** people welcomed them at the initial stage but resisted the nature of their colonial rule in later years. This study demonstrates that the Germans who colonized Cameroon encountered resistance from the coast to the hinterland and had to apply brutal force to establish and sustain their rule until their eviction from the territory after the First World War. Even those who initially received the Germans ended up suffering from the ruthlessness of their heartless imperialism. The case of the Bamenda Grassfield demonstrates the pattern of German penetration and the callous mistreatment of the Cameroonians that sustained resistance from their arrival till their defeat and eviction during the First World War

Key words: Penetration, resistance, colonial rule, annexation, coastal people, hinterland, German traders, German planters and plantations, German Imperialism.

Résumé

Après des siècles d'activités commerciales européennes sous diverses formes sur les côtes africaines, la seconde moitié du 18^{ème} siècle a connu une ruée vers plus de bénéfice, puisque les Européens étaient déterminés à pénétrer dans le continent pour mieux l'exploiter, en établissant une administration impérialiste sur les Africains. Plusieurs Africains se sont opposés à leur entrée dans leurs territoires pendant que d'autres, pour diverses raisons, les ont d'abord bien accueillis, avant de montrer une résistance à leur modèle d'administration plus tard. La présente étude démontre que les Allemands qui ont colonisé le Cameroun ont rencontré de la résistance depuis les côtes jusqu'à l'arrière-pays, et ils ont dû recourir à la force pour établir et maintenir leur administration, jusqu'à leur expulsion du territoire pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale. Même ceux qui les avaient bien accueillis avaient fini par subir aussi le caractère impitoyable de leur impérialisme cruel. Le cas des Grassfields de Bamenda démontre que les traitements inhumains subis par les Camerounais ont perduré du début de la colonisation allemande à leur éviction pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale.

Mots clés : Pénétration, résistance, administration coloniale, annexion, peuples des côtes, arrière-pays, commerçants allemands, impérialisme allemand, planteurs et plantations allemands

Introduction

The concept of resistance has been variously perceived by some scholars as the immediate and prompt rebellion to the invading pioneer European imperialists at the beginning of colonial rule in Africa. But it can also be argued that it was the rebellious protest against the European colonialist's invasion and subsequent administration. This was the case with the German colonial annexation and administration in Cameroon where the people's obdurate attitudes persisted until the First World War. Some people demonstrated resistance at the beginning of German imperialists' invasion while others resisted during the German administration and some even connived with the Allied Powers against Germany during the First World War. This paper attempts to validate the fact that there was a protracted resistance manifested in the Western Grassfield of Cameroon, even by those who initially welcomed the German colonial power. Furthermore, it seeks to establish the fact that resistance was not only during penetration but all through the three decades of German colonial rule in Cameroon. In other words, even those who initially "collaborated" with the imperial administration eventually resisted their ruthless system of governance. The paper further dismisses Hienrich Schnee's postwar arguments in favour of German good governance in the African colonies (H. Schnee: 1926). Attempt is made to highlight the nature and pattern of resistance to German rule from the first penetration till the outbreak of the First World War and the degree of callous destruction to both human and property during the period of invasion and the establishment of their colonial administration in the region.

Advent of Europeans on African coasts.

Since the 15th century it was commonplace to find Europeans on African coasts. Their activities were eventually centered on slave trade. But when

slave trade was abolished and replaced by peaceful trade in the 19th century, European traders sought to penetrate into the hinterland of Africa in search for raw materials for their industries. The upsurge of industrialized and expansionist nation states in Europe in the second half of that 19th century further motivated colonial designs and an increased search for raw material and markets for European manufactured products. To succeed in accessing raw material in the hinterland of Africa, Europeans had to undo the middle-man role played by the coastal Africans. On the Cameroon coast where English traders were dominant, the German Chancellor, Otto Von Bismarck tactfully displaced them and declared German protectorate over the territory by signing a treaty with some of the Douala chiefs on 12th July 1884. Subsequently, attempts by the Germans to penetrate into the hinterland provoked resistance from the Douala people whose chiefs had foreseen this danger and proposed a clause to block it before signing the treaty. Evidently the Germans came with an imperial motivation and not just for trade as the Cameroonians seemed to have perceived. From 1889 to 1914, effective German presence was established by diplomacy and where resistance was demonstrated, punitive expeditions were applied to establish *pax Germanica*.

German colonial ambitions

The Germano-Douala treaty of 12th July 1884 expressly stated that the Germans were not to penetrate the hinterland and obstruct the Coastal peoples' middleman trade with the people in the interior of the territory. However, German attempts to venture inland abrogated this clause. They had to do that in order to establish political, economic and cultural sovereignty over the colonized. They also wanted to establish frontiers with other European colonizers. To succeed, they ultimately needed full knowledge of the geographical and natural potentials of the territory. It is because of this that, after signing

the treaty, the Germans were bent on exploring the limits of the territory. Indisputably, Africans never understood the colonizers intentions until they started manifesting imperialist designs.

Eventually, the Douala chiefs became victims of German maneuvers in spite of the fact that Lock Priso of Hickory town (Bonaberi) had warned and even declined signing the treaty of annexation. He even organized an abortive resistance against the Germans which resulted to an insurrection in December 1884 that was crushed by the German forces. Subsequently, this was followed by the Bakweri resistance that was also repressed in 1894. The suppression of these coastal peoples bolstered the violation of the treaty and permitted the Germans to penetrate into the hinterlands and establish their ascendancy either by diplomacy or by punitive force over the rest of the territory. Undeniably, German quest for raw materials for their industries and human labour to work in the plantations that they established at the coast combined with the desire to establish authority over as much of the land as possible compelled them to penetrate into the hinterland. Their interest was even more triggered by the fact that the Douala chiefs insisted in the treaty that they had to maintain monopoly of the trade from the interior. They understood from the Douala interest that there was much to gain if they could circumvent them and exploit the interior.

Additionally, the doctrine of 'effective occupation' that was adopted by the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, specified that an "imperial title was not secured until a skeletal presence on the ground existed" (C. Young, 2004:26). The Germans were fully aware of the fact that the English could expand from their Nigerian protectorate in the West just as the French from their colonial territories in the East and south. As such it was imperative for the Germans to hasten and delimit their area of occupation. It remains debatable if Cameroonians

knew that the Germans were out to establish dominion over their territory.

Zintgraff's earlier explorations: prelude to penetration into the Grassfield

The first German attempts to penetrate into the Grassfields were conducted by Dr. Eugene Zintgraff in July 1886. Zintgraff was born in Dusseldorf, Germany, in 1858 (E.M. Chilver, 1966). His first experience in the exploration of Africa was in 1884, when he accompanied the explorer, Chavannes, to the lower Congo. In 1886, he was recruited into the German Government service and sent to Kamerun to help explore the territory for effective German administration. His proposal to explore Kamerun from the Ubangi River to the coast was rejected by the Government. In 1886/88 he made some probing expeditions in the coastal inland and around the Kamerun Mountain. In early 1886, he and Dr Krabbes (who later on was appointed administrator in charge of the Victoria District) took a Government Steam Launch and spent the first night in Bonduma. From there they travelled with a trader-chief, Nggale, to Yabassi (Chilver, 1997:2). Here they could not find appropriate goods for European markets but discovered that European manufactured products were in high demand.

Zintgraff's second expedition was from September to October, 1886. From Douala, he went by steam-launch up the River Mungo to Bakundu and from there to Bombe and continued to Mundame and thereafter to Mukonje where chief Makia halted his caravan for invading his territory without permission. After two days he was permitted to continue to Kumba where he was well received and given guide to Lake Barombi. Here he found people from the northern hinterland on trade mission and concluded that a convenient road was possible from there to penetrate into the inner country.

The third expedition was to the Bakossi land. Zintgraff travelled by canoe up the Dibombe River

in the company of Chief Mikeng of Pobo to Mangamba from where they travelled to Nyassoso. He also discovered that there could be a road from Nyassoso through which he could travel into the northern hinterland.

On 29th January 1887, Zintgraff again left Douala in the Governor's Steam Yacht for Victoria. From Victoria, he went to Buea and met the Buea chief (Kuva Likenye) before visiting Lissoka from where he travelled to Lake Barombi in present day Kumba. Here he met traders from the North Eastern hinterland. He therefore recommended to the German Colonial Authorities and Barombi was made a German station to facilitate penetration into the hinterland.

From Barombi, he travelled to Ndobe (Lobe in Ndian) in the West and surveyed the area along Rio del Rey on the Western side of the Cameroon Mountain. Here, he discovered that the soil was rich and suitable for the development of oil-palm and rubber plantations and also found that there was abundance of ivory. The reports of these explorations were discussed with the Governor who in turn presented it to the Foreign Ministry in Berlin in May 1887. The reports must have further reinforced German interest for the establishment of plantations in the region for these tropical products.

Zintgraff's expedition to Bamenda, Yola and Adamawa

In July-August 1888, Zintgraff left from Douala in the company of Muyenga, Manga Bell's slave of Bayang origin. They went through the German Station at Barombi in search for a route to the northern hinterland and ultimately to Adamawa. He believed that by establishing such a road that will pass through a chain of German stations could connect the hinterland to the coast and ease German trade caravans. That is why he was granted permission to establish the station in Barombi, which was not far from the navigable Mungo River. From Barombi, he travelled

through Tali and Sabi and met the first Grassfield people as he climbed the escarpment at Babessong (Ashong) in present day Batibo Sub-Division.

On his third day in Ashong, he received envoys of the Fon of Bali who came to accompany him to their land. He and his carriers left Ashong on 16th January 1889 for Bali where he was offered a hospitable reception by Fon Galega I. They were well lodged in newly built homes that eventually served as the Bali German station (*Baliburg*) until 1902 when the station was transferred to Bamenda. After three months, Zintgraff left Bali on 25th April 1889 in pursuit of his dream to get to the Benue. He promised Fon Gelega I to expect him back and the Fon gave him soldiers and carriers. He trekked through Bande (Mankon) to Bafut where he spent some days with Gwelem, Fon of Bafut, before embarking on his journey to Takum. From Bafut, he crossed River Menchum and passed through Befang and continued to Takum.

From Takum, he proceeded to Donga on 28th May 1889, where he spent five days and moved to Okari (Wukari). Then he travelled to Ibi, where he visited the factory of the Royal Niger Company. Here, he used the Company's wireless communication facilities to notify Berlin of his arrival at the Benue. At Ibi, he had the choice of making a return journey by a Steamer through the Benue-Niger to the coast or continues to Banyo and return to Bali. He chose to travel through Bakundi and Gashaka on his way to Banyo back to Bali where he had promised to return. But he was refused entry into Banyo by the Fulani ruling regime in Yola, so he sought for a way through Takum.

From Takum he travelled through Bum and Bikom (Kom) where he was detained for some days by the Fon of Kom. After settling issues of trespass with the Fon, he continued his journey through Bamungu (Babungo), Bambui, Bafuen (Nkwen), Bamendankwe, Nsongwa unto the station in Bali. Here it was great joy for him to re-unite with Fon

Galega II of Bali. After six weeks in Bali when he recuperated from the fatigue of the difficult expedition, he left for the coast on the 24th of December 1889 to make his report to the German administration and request for more funds to establish German posts along the road he had used to *Baliburg*. It is important to state that during this expedition, he encountered little or no resistance except a hitch first with the Bayang at Mamfe and with the Fon of Kom. But his disenchantment came from the fact that he was refused entry into Banyo. All the same he established contacts with the interior people of the territory on which the Germans could now start trade and establish colonial dominion.

At the end of November 1890, Zintgraff took off from Douala for the second expedition to Bali and arrived on 9th of December 1890. During this second expedition to the Grassfield, Zintgraff wanted to open trade with the Mankon and Bafut people but when he sent two via-boys to survey the potentials of these villages for trade, they were killed and the Mankon people refused to pay compensation of 10 ivories and two oxen. Zintgraff attacked on 30th January 1891 and was overwhelmed by a joint Mankon/Bafut force that killed four Germans; Lt. von Speangenberg, Huwe, Tiedt and Nehber and 180 *Balitruppe* (Bali soldiers) while Mankon/Bafut lost 1,500 warriors (E.M. Chilver, 1966:27). On the 8th of February 1891, Zintgraff sent a request to the Governor to assist him. But when assistance was not forthcoming, he left Bali for Douala on the 12th of February 1891 and after a few stopovers on the way, he arrived at Douala on the 1st of March 1891. The Governor argued that Zintgraff's wars were not ordered by the administration and as such did not merit any assistance. However, because of the death of the Germans, Governor Zimmerer reinforced the German troops with 120 soldiers, rifles and ammunitions but appointed Conrau, a Jantzen and Thormalen Company agent to replace Nehber as leader.

On 23rd August 1891, Zintgraff arrived at *Baliburg* with Hutter. His return caused many villages to seek for amicable relations and German protection. Bamundankwe and Bafuen or Bafreng (Nkwen) submitted themselves to the German administration. Similarly, Bagam and Bansa sent embassies to recognize the authority of the Germans. During this visit, he signed a treaty with Fon Galega I, paramount ruler of Bali to establish German rule. Zintgraff dictated the terms of the treaty which recognized Galega as the paramount ruler of the Grassfield but that he and all his vassal states had to submit themselves to the German administration. It is important to underscore here that although the Germans recognised that the Fon was ruling a number of vassal states when they arrived, they were determined to achieve their mission of establishing German colonial dominion of Cameroon. They did not care whether or not the Cameroonians understood their mission.

Meanwhile a careful study will reveal that Cameroonians barely perceived that they were barely establishing commercial relationships with the Germans. After all, during the signing of the treaty, the deliberations were undertaken with the help of two interpreters. Zintgraff said something in English (not German) to an interpreter who in turn repeated it in *Vai* to Fonte who repeated it in Bali to the king and the answer was made through the same channel. Evidently, such interpretations had impacts on the correct understanding of the clauses of the treaty by the Bali people that they were surrendering their autonomy to imperialist Germany. After all, when asked for people to work in the plantations, the Fon thought the people were going to work for a brief period, enrich themselves and come back with wealth to the kingdom.

German pacification of Mankon and Bafut

On 9th December 1891, the Germans received a peaceful delegation from Mankon that paid ivory and labour compensation for the 1889 war. But in the night of 10th December 1891, Mankon made

a surprised attack on Pavels' patrol. The Germans answered with full force killing 200 Mankon warriors. When Mankon surrendered, German troops continued to Bafut where they met with another German contingent under Captain Glauning that invaded Bafut from another direction. Both contingents annihilated Bafut after seven days attack. The Fon of Bafut fled to an unknown destination. (N.P. Nkwi, 1989:40). Pavel turned again on Mankon and completely crushed them on 20th December 1891.

Following the subjugation of Bafut, the Fon of Kom did not hesitate to submit to Germans suzerainty. He sued for peace to Captain Von Pavel, the commanding officer of the expedition, by sending gifts and accepted to provide labour for the construction of the Bamenda Military station (J de Vries, 1998:12). But, the peace was short-lived as the Germans raided Kom leading to widespread destruction. The raid resulted from the fact that the Fon did not meet up with the demand for labour and failed to supply food to the German Military station in Bamenda. The Germans had not only demanded Labour and food, but these were to be accompanied by the Fon's daughters. The Fon refused to comply with such heartless and licentious demands. Consequently, the Germans invaded the Fondom with heavy artillery. The confrontation dragged on for seven months before Kom was conquered (Ad (1926) 2, No.59/26:37) As a result of heavy human and material casualties, Kom dejectedly submitted to German rule in January 1905 (P.N Nkwi, 1982:140).

Pavel's expedition to Banyo

Report was received from Banyo that a German officer had been killed in that Lamidat (P.N Nkwi, 1982:42). Pavel left *Baliburg* on 8th January 1902 with 5 officers, 150 African soldiers and 600 carriers and travelled to Bambui where he was received by the Fon of Kom, the chiefs of Bambui, Bambili and Mejang who all declared

their loyalty to Germany in appreciation for the defeat of Bafut that had been a source of nuisance in the region for a long time. Bafut regularly raided these villages and so its defeat was a source of relief to the neighbours.

From Bambui, Pavel travelled to Babessi and onward to Babungo. The chiefs of these villages all pledged their loyalties to the Germans. On the 15th of December 1902, Pavel arrived at Nso and was received by the Fon. From Nso, Pavel travelled through Nsungli land and arrived at Banyo on 29th January 1903. He confirmed that Captain Nolte had been killed by a rebellious Lamido and that the Lamido was later killed. Pavel concluded a peace agreement with the new Lamido and left Banyo in February 1903.

Lt. Hirtler's Expedition to Bamum land

Lt. Hirtler was chief of Station in Bamenda from January 1903. He was interested to find the way to the Bamum land. An earlier failed attempt had been made by Lt. Schlosser. He also wanted to find out if there were minerals around Babanki-Tungo and to verify if cotton was grown in the region. He took off from Bamenda in January 1903 with 19 soldiers and carriers for Babessi through Bambili and Babanki-Tungo to Bamessing. From there he moved to Bamali and onward to Babungo and then to Babessi. He also visited Bagam, Bafu-Fondong and Bacham and returned without getting to Bamum.

It was not until 17th October 1903 that Hirtler left Bamenda through Babanki-Tungo unto Bambalang where he spent some days settling intra-village disputes before continuing to Babessi and unto Bangolan. While in Bangolan, he received a delegation from King Njoya of Bamum on 26th October, 1903 that escorted him to Fumban where he was accorded a hectic reception. He stayed in Fumban until 1st November 1903. Njoya promised loyalty to the German administration and sent a delegation to the Governor in Buea with gifts of Ivory. Hirtler

promised Njoya the construction of a railway and the establishment of a trade center in Bamum. From Bamum land, Hirtler decided to move south. He was accompanied by 25 soldiers, 450 men and women. They arrived at Bangante and were not received by Chief Nana and so he continued south-but was attacked by the people of Bamena and Bazu. He fought back and defeated them and they were sanctioned to pay 30 to 40 baskets of maize, 400 bunches of plantains, 90 goats and sheep as well as 3 cows (P.N. Nkwi, 1982:49)

The Germans in Fontem

One of the German stations established on the way from the coast to *Baliburg* was located at Tinto in Mamfe. It was started in 1901. From there, neighbouring Bayang and Keaka villages were to be administered but more importantly it was a vital stopping/refreshing point for trade caravans from the hinterland to the coast and vice versa. The head of the station also had the responsibility to equip the station and subdue all obstinate people of Osidinge (Mamfe) area. The head of Tinto station was Lt. Struempell. He was assisted by Sub Lt. Kaltenback.

Attempts to establish German rule in Fontem met with a rebuff from the Fon. It was also observed that Bangwa people were trading with the English people in Nigeria. This was injurious to German economy and also indicative to the fact that Bangwa preferred English colonial rule. The German colonial administration decided to bring Bangwa to order. On 5th November 1901, Pavel left from the Tinto Military post where Kaltenback had been installed since May 1901 and after ending operations in Mankon and Bafut, he led his troops to Fontem (P.N. Nkwi, 1989:39). Another company under Stieber also marched unto Fontem and a third company under Lt. Von Madai took another route and they all met in Bangwa so as to discipline the rebels. Lt. Struempell led yet another column and they all met in Fontem on

13th November 1901. After inflicting punishment on the Bangwa, they returned to the station at Tinto. In January 1902, peace was established whereby, Bangwa had to pay 30 elephant tusks, provide 2000 forced labourers and destroy all fences and fortifications. The Chief of Fontem was obliged to report every three months to Tinto Military Station.

German conquest of Nso Fondom

In 1906, the Germans, led by Captain Glauning invaded Nso. After two months punitive assault, Nso was humbled (Cc (1916)2, No 59/26). The attack was from two fronts; one Company comprising five European officers, 90 African soldiers and a machine gun and the other company had 6 Europeans, 100 African soldiers and a machine gun. One Company attacked from Bamum frontier with the support of 200 Bamum soldiers. It should be noted that some years before, Nso had defeated Bamum in an inter-ethnic war and even killed the king of Bamum, so Njoya the reigning king profited from the German aggression to avenge for the death of his predecessor. Nso warriors escaped to the hills and it took the German soldiers some time to wipe out pockets of resistance (P.N. Nkwi, 1981:58-63). After defeating Nso, Njoya returned from the attack on 3rd May 1906, although his soldiers continued raiding and looting. It was on the 5th of June 1906, that the Nso surrendered to the Germans. The combined raids and destructions affected the stability of Nso Fondom. Their crime was simply that they had refused to accept German rule and declined from supplying labourers for German plantations. The captives from these wars and victims of subsequent warfare were also sent to work in the German plantations and serve as porters to German traders.

German subjugation of the rest of the Grassfield

Besides the resistance posed by Mankon, Bafut, Nso and Kom, the Germans also anticipated resistance from Bum, Fungong or Fungom, Aghem, Esu, Esimbi and many chiefdoms of Ngjie. But the defeat of the powerful Fondom of Kom gave the German military the advantage to proceed to Bum and the Fungom chiefdoms. On arrival at Lagabum, the Bum chiefs sued for peace. The defeat of Kom had instilled fear in the minds of the neighbouring peoples so they wisely submitted to the Germans without a fight (Ad (1935)⁵ No.688:39).

At this time German atrocities had reached the peak and there was no longer respect for old friends and earlier established relations. The Germans disregarded any form of old relations or early friendship established by Zingtgraff. In 1889, this pioneer German explorer enjoyed two weeks hospitality in Lagabum and two nights in Fonfukka as well as in Munken, Fang, Mashi, Abar, Kung, Esu and Gayama when he travelled to Adamawa. These good relations were cemented by the exchange of food for cloth between Zingtgraff and the people (Ad (1929)¹⁰, No 608:22). Relations with the people of Fungom became even stronger as the Fon welcomed and offered him food on his return visit. In recognition of the Fon's gesture, Glauning decided to buy a cow from them at an exorbitant price of sixty marks. This marked the beginning of friendship and collaboration with the Germans in the area (Ad (1929)¹⁰, No. EP. 6808:26). Similar friendly relations were also established with the people of Befang and Esimbi when Glauning visited them in 1907 on his way from Bafut (Ad (1922)¹⁴, No. 772/22).

Despite these amicable relations, the conflict in Kom caused the Germans to disregard any earlier established relations. Villages along the routes that the Germans took were invaded and pillaged. The approach of the Germans under Glauning

caused many people to hide. Mmen village was Glauning's gate way into the Fungom area and as such became the first victim. From Mmen, he went to Kuk where the people went into hiding but were courageous to return and supply Glauning with food and friendship was established (Ad (1929)¹⁰, No. EP. 6808). In Weh, many people were killed and some went into hiding while the village was ransacked. In Wum, the Aghem people received the Germans and they spent a night before returning to Bamenda (Ad (1922)¹⁴, No. 772/22:13).

Although many villages accepted German rule, they hated the despicable vandalism of the German military. In Mmen, the refusal to supply food to the German troops had led to razing down of the entire village by fire and taking their chief to captivity. At Munken, an attempt by Glauning's officials to force open the chief's store house had been resisted and five German officials and several Munken people lost their lives. It was on Glauning's second visit, that peace was made and Munken grudgingly accepted German rule.

The people of present day Boyo and Menchum Divisions were obliged to yield to German pressures and accept their rule not out of good will but because their weaponry did not match that of the Germans. The terrorization posed by the German military weaponry obliged many people to prefer collaboration to German brutality. As a result of German ferocious raids, their hostile imperial administration was established in the Grassfield. Notwithstanding the suppression of the people, uneasy calm reigned in the region because the indigenous people dreaded the repercussions that would ensue if the Germans sensed any mistrust.

On mere suspicion of resistance to German rule, communities could be raided, plundered and razed by vicious German soldiers. A case in point was the Aghem people who were stormed and shattered in 1905 because of a rumoured suspicion of rebellion from a rivalry village chief.

The Germans profited from internal disagreements to subdue the people, for example, it was alleged that there was insubordination to the chief of Weh. The German troops invaded Weh and arrested twenty-two persons and killed twenty others for refusing to obey the chief's orders. Those arrested were confined in the Bamenda prison.

Though some chiefs were protected against their subjects, suspicious chiefs could not escape the wrath of the Germans. Wum Assessment Report states that the palace of chief Mubadji was burnt because the people refused to supply labour. The reports further indicate that in Nyos, when the chief refused to supply carriers and labourers he was arrested and many of his subjects executed. Similarly, in Munken, the chief was demeaned by being publicly whipped for refusing to supply carriers. Meanwhile the whole village of Abar was razed for refusing to supply labourers and carriers. This was the spirit in which the German imperial rule was established. Their activities were characterized by dishonour and such indignity that left the indigenous people invariably in a state of frustration and humiliation in their own homes. Obviously such people could never have supported the Germans at the outbreak of the First World War in Cameroon.

Report on Ngie also reveals similar heinous German military actions against the people in 1902 following a German imperialist expedition in the area. Villages were razed to ashes, unarmed civilians executed and others imprisoned alongside their chiefs. In spite of these atrocious actions and strained relations with the people, the Chief of Akorkwe was tricked by the Germans to summon his people for peace and instead of talking peace to the people when they assembled, the Germans arrested and imprisoned them (Ab (1923) 28:19-21).

The report further reveals similar malicious acts in Bonaten where Angara, the resistance leader was wounded and incapacitated. His replacement

who was supported by the Echaka people continued with the protest against the Germans. They were rounded up by the Germans and either imprisoned or executed and their villages scorched down. Echoes of the German violent pacification campaigns led the people of Adji, Apong, and Fawnbot not to resist the German assaults but rather to collaborate with the Germans. They offered them food and supplies but when they faltered in the supplying of labourers, they were confronted and their villages shattered. Such acts were also perpetuated against the people of Tedji. The Germans had offered them clemency and friendship if they returned to their burnt villages. A summary account of German pacification massacres in Ngie was presented by A. D. T. Weed, Assistant District Officer (ADO) for Bamenda Division who indicated that with the exception of Adji and Apong villages, whose chiefs readily succumbed to the Germans "*... every single house was burnt throughout the whole country for one reason or the other, either for their initial resistance or flight or for not complying with some consequent order*" (Ab (1923) 28:19-21).

Undeniably, German attitude which in some cases ordered chiefs to set fire on the houses of their subjects was embarrassingly humiliating and demoralizing. Weed further reports that "*... the chief of Fawnbot who refused to supply labour for road making was forced to take a torch and himself set fire to every house in his village*" (Ab (1923)28:19-21). It is further reported that all the Ngie chiefs were imprisoned for up to three months with the exception of the chiefs of Etuwi and Adji.

Germano-Bali relations after the treaty

Bali monarchs (Galega I and Fonyonga II) who reigned during the German colonial period are often seen as having collaborated with the Germans to establish imperialist hegemony. But a careful examination of the situation of Africans of that age will demonstrate a limitation in their knowledge of world affairs at the time. Whereas

contemporary observations are based on the perspective of post-colonial understanding, it is important to consider the factors that guided decisions at the time. Galega I had an empire he and his predecessors had conquered and governed before the arrival of the Germans and he had to preserve it with care. If he reacted like his contemporaries, his kingdom and the vassal states would have been shattered at the very beginning of German invasion of the Grassfield. Having been told that slave trade was abolished and peaceful trade established, Galega I did not expect that the German request for labour was more or less another form of human slavery. He believed the people sent to the plantations were going to make fortunes and return with riches to the kingdom.

But towards the end of his life, Galega I realized that the people he sent to serve the Germans were not forth returning. He also noticed that his relations with his neighbours and subjects were increasingly being compromised because of his association with the Germans, so he had to retract. Since Galega declined sending more workers to the plantations, the Germans ignored him and applied force to extract labourers from other villages in the region. It should also be noted that after using the *Balitruppe* to defeat the Grassfield chiefdoms and establish German rule, the German imperialist regime started dissociating with Bali. They no longer expressed loyalty to the new Fon of Bali, Fonyonga II (1901-1940), who succeeded his father in 1901. The Germans equally assumed that Bali could also pose a threat to the regime as the Douala had done. It is also possible to argue that the transfer of the German headquarters from Bali to Bamenda in 1902 was partially caused by increasing tense relations between the new Fon, who found out that the Germans were impeaching on his authority and the German administrators expected the Fon to pay homage to them.

Bali sources hold that the Fon asked the German administrators to transfer to Bamenda (Chief Fomunyam: 2007) so as not to continue to share

in the royalties from his subjects. Nyamndi argues that “nothing epitomized the association of Bali and the Germans better than the presence of the German station in Bali” (N.B. Nyamndi, 2008:118-126). But a careful analysis will show that after the complete conquest of the Grassfield, the Germans found Bamenda to be a more strategic place from where they could administer the entire region. However, the proximity of the new station at Bamenda to some of the Bali vassal states and rival kingdoms facilitated the Germans design to weaken the powers of the Fon of Bali and have a direct control of the region.

Thus, the initial cordial relations between Bali and the Germans deteriorated as the Germans firmly consolidated their rule in the region. Henceforth the supply of labour and collection of taxes from the different villages of the Grassfield was done without the use of *Balitruppe* as people of other ethnic origins replaced Bali people. Under Governor Theodore Seitz (1907-1910), Bali vassal chiefdoms (Bamessinge, Babadju, Bangang, Bamumbu, Widekum villages etc.) were granted independence by the German administration (Memorandum of 11 September 1911 by DO of Bamenda to the Governor). The Germans had achieved their goal of establishing their administration and no longer had any regard for the Zintgraff-Galega treaty of 1889. Rather, Governor Karl Ebermaier described Galega I as “a negro intriguer with lust for power” (Governor Ebermaier, 1912). From 1908, the German administration developed an estranged relation with Bali. In 1912, Fonyonga II of Bali had to appear before the administration to testify that he was not collaborating with Douala Manga Bell and Martin Paul Samba to instigate a nationwide rebellion against the German administration or else he too would have been executed. As such, the Germans became the enemies of Bali, their former ally.

This explains why Bali refused to offer the Germans any support during the First World War.

In retaliation, on 15th November 1915, the Germans led by Abramowski stormed Fonyonga's palace treasury and plundered precious relics and the sum of £2000 before setting the royal citadel ablaze. (W.E. Hunt, 1925) How the Fon and all royalties together with the rest of regal antiquities escaped the inferno remains a mystery. The attack on Bali proved that the Germans had no friends and respected no treaties or agreements. Just as the Douala chiefs received them and eventually became their enemies, so too were those Grassfielders that received them and ended up as enemies.

Conclusion

German penetration of the interior of Cameroon land was motivated by the desire to explore and be acquainted with the economic potentials (including human labour) of the country for better exploitation and also to establish colonial boundaries with rivaling imperialist powers. Resistance to their penetration into the Bamenda Grassfield resulted largely from the constant demand for carriers by German traders and labourers by the planters. The forceful displacement of people from their homeland often resulted to the loss of individual and collective liberty and security. The chiefs lost their autonomy and suffered incessant subjugation to the colonial administrators. The Grassfielders resented forced labour and the abhorring working conditions in the distant tropical hot climate in the plantations at the coast where many died and those who survived were often separated from their families sometimes forever in life. The refusal to supply labour also stemmed from the fact that many who went to work in the plantations, road and railway construction sites, never returned and were never accounted for. As such, pressure from the subjects obliged the chiefs to discontinue the provision of more labourers and carriers. When German recruiting teams arrived any village, all the villagers escaped into

the bush. As a result, chiefs became object of scorn and ridicule by the Germans. Those who supported the Germans fell out of favour with their people. It can therefore be established that resistance was not demonstrated only during penetration but throughout German imperial period. As illustrated above, German campaigns for labour in the plantations, for public works and for porters were carried out with force and wherever there was resistance, a village was set ablaze, the traditional ruler shamefully beaten in public and those who resisted were gunned down or sent on exile. Evidently, Hienrich Schnee emotional and deluding argument that the Germans did not brutalize the people they colonized is dishonest as far as Cameroon was concerned.

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