

THE WORKING OF THE GERMANOPHILIA AND GERMANOPHOBIA CONCEPTS IN POST GERMAN CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT

The German colonial assignment in Cameroon like almost everywhere in tropical Africa was short but enormous in its shaping of every aspect of the social and political economy both during that period and for close to a century thereafter. When the German War general Von Rabben finally accepted defeat and the fortress of Mora collapsed on February 18, 1916 sealing off all official German colonial ventures in Cameroon, it became clear that those who had admired the German way of life (Germanophiles) and those who had wished and prayed for their departure (Germanophobes) were going to negotiate their survival on new horizons of loyalty. Germanophilia is a term used to describe the feelings, activities and any sort of verbiage which sought or was intended to portray admiration for the Germans or anything connected to their way of life. The Germanophobia principle on its part was used not only to mean the inculcation of values and activities that signified fear for the Germans but hatred as well. This paper is an attempt to quarry evidences from primary and secondary sources and complement them with interviews to build a portrait of the working of these concepts in post German Cameroon. From its analyses it proffers that the feelings of fear or love for Germans chattered different courses and stages of political growth in both parts of the country. It also asserts that this case study can also be replicated in Togoland and Namibia where the Germans also exercised colonial responsibilities with equal implications.

Key Words: Germanophile, Germanophobia, Post German, Cameroons

Introduction

A photographic or literary description of life by any genuine scholarship in the German Kamerunstadt leaves an impression of the survival of two contrasting concepts within which people in both sides of the Cameroon River¹ were forcefully given or freely gained membership. These two broad concepts are Germanophile and Germanophobia. It is very

probable that a third concept that could have animated spirits and political growth could have been formed by a significant majority constituted mainly by those who were eager to identify their camp with time and circumstances as the German colonial administration inched into the hinterland and even for some time after the German period . Germanophobia as a concept emerged from a multitude of backgrounds. Within this background towered the fact that; most people failed to see the broad implications underlying the German policies in Cameroon.² In this blindness, they focused on the fact that the Germans adopted flogging as a standard system of punishment to the natives without a corresponding treatment to the whites especially the German traders who constituted a veritable headache to the German administration in Cameroon. With this slanted view of things this school of thought easily tagged the German administration as harsh, wicked or heartless. This has been the position of some recent scholarship which picks up only the gloomy side of the German administration or its administrative system to posit that the whole episode of the German colonial administration in Cameroon was an event of pure futility either to the development of the nation thereafter or to the welfare of the natives. The growth of this spirit or concept referred to as Germanophobia throughout the entire length and breadth of the German period was nurtured by this passion that was in every sense replete with a lot of rancour and prejudice.

The Germanophobia spirit survived with outstanding results especially in French Cameroon because the proto-type French administration which buttressed the righteousness of assimilation took the necessary steps to make the different groups of people therein to see the Germans and any doctrine and concept connected to that nation as evil. In the context of history, it was very normal for France to go every length to paint the German nation and everything connected to it that black because even with an over ambitious programme buttressed by their War time President Georges Clemenceau “Hang the Kaiser and let them pay” along with the humiliation given to Germany by the resolution of the treaty of Versailles in the hall of mirrors in Paris during the June 28th 1919, France still regretted the loss of Alsace and Lorraine and the Rhur coal fields to the Germans during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1. The fact that Germany got united after this war literary and practically, provided worrisome moments to France mainly because it erected a strong and brave continental power house in European great power diplomacy that constituted a veritable challenge to French hegemony. In fact the humiliation meted out to Germany by the vindictive Treaty of Versailles of 1919 through varied forms of punishment especially the

drastic reduction of their military seemed not to have changed anything in substance about French paranoiac attitude towards the Germans.

Conversely, Germanophile or Germanophilia on its part was a concept soundly rooted in the practical reality of the time. It meant the love and sought to stand for; admiration or yearning not only for the Germans but also for their system of administration and constituency of thought. Its adherents were those who were fully aware that the German administration had challenged and distorted the traditional hierarchies and structures through brute force³ but believed that the overall situation was quite positive for the natives and Cameroon as a whole. They were those who were conscious of the fact that the German administration was harsh and inconsiderate to the passions of the natives but were on the whole positively appreciative of their strides in the domain of education and other infrastructural progress. Of course the reasoning of this class of people found ample space to blossom because the German administration had rendered most natives custom and traditional practices like the killing of twins, the burial of fons with young people alive substantially obsolete.

Though most of this people came to terms with these new realities at different times, the overriding message worth keeping in mind was that; the dualist system of administration introduced by the Germans was like a technical divorce on the part of the natives with some of their native laws and customs to espouse an alien culture within which two diametrically different cultures and traditions were bound to strive. Indeed, the infiltration of alien cultures and traditions that perturbed that traditional world view and religion arrived at the grass fields traditional polities at different times but by 1916 when the Germans were ousted out of Cameroon and even for some time later the German way of life had gained a significant attraction among the grass field natives. All of these developments worked together for the growth of these two parallel concepts. After a somewhat thorough explanation of the meaning of these concepts the pricking issue that deserves greater attention in the next logical thought remains the special circumstances (historical premise/rudiments) that necessitated the growth of these concepts.

The Rudiments of the Concept

Cameroon like any geographical niche of Africa has been a victim of foreign developments and shaping some of them deserving broad spectrum praise and others constituting a hall

mark of shame and regrets. As indicated above, the First World War in Cameroon like the French, British and the German colonisation in context did not come because of home needs or realities. By any reckoning they were borne out of foreign acrimony especially their growing ambition to shape affairs in Africa according to their colonial whims and caprices. This explains why any idea that was directly connected to colonisation or anything in that sense had to succumb to sometimes contradictory and parallel spirits and positioning. This is the context within and through which these indicated parallel concepts survived and have shaped developments in Cameroon for close to a century running. In any case Germanophile despite of semblance of widespread indictments of the Germans as harsh was bound to stay alive because of some sound practical reasons

Reasons for the Survival of Germanophile Syndrome in Cameroon

In concluding his master piece on the Germans in Cameroon which he aptly described as a study in modern imperialism Harry Ruidin's capitulations of the natives passion for the Germans is telling and representative of the rest of the pro-German sentiments that were kept alive and active in Cameroon long after the Germans departure. He does not only submit that the German administration in Cameroon could have attained the heights of wholesome praise if it is to be compared to some other European power given the same circumstances but goes further to give the natives admiration for the Germans when he intimates that;

It was my good fortune to travel a good deal in the interior of the Cameroons, wherever I went, I heard the native praise the excellent German administration. The frequently made comment about the Germans was that, they were very strict at times but usually very just. That is high praise and even greater praise lies in the affection that the natives felt for individual German officials. A nation cannot ask for higher tributes to the excellence of her administration than such opinions from people administered.⁴ All of these points to a number of things not only connected to the German administration but equally about their way of life that worked tirelessly to make the German period nostalgic.⁵

For real, this is a telling but very confusing testimony for the Germans; a people who have received wholesale blame for maltreating the Cameroon natives. In the early twenties, it was difficult for such testimonies to be heard or even identified because both the French and the British were still in the process of erecting the structure within which they were going to perform the mandate assignment. In any case Germanophile and any activity or passion connected to it was kept alive by the fact that :

(a)The thirty years of German rule in Cameroon was going by the number of years tiny but at the same given time and circumstances much more like day and night⁶. Indeed, compared to the British or the French elsewhere in Cameroon or the African continent, the German infrastructural progress educational thoughts along with the political formation could be ranked top by any reckoning but a lot of people were most often confused by the French to see only the flip side of it. The brute force that expressed itself through public flogging by the Germans especially for boycotting public work was not just adopted by the Germans as a way of show or as a sort of fancy. It was planned, nurtured and executed because of local exigencies. These exigencies were many but a chunk of them emanated from the fact that money was generally lacking or insufficient to sustain infrastructural development. The problem of public flogging that gained wide spectrum criticism from the natives and beyond was not a German invention. It was already a form of punishment that was widely practiced in Africa and so the Germans for the most part only exploited a home based practice to achieve their most needed results. Those who were sharp enough to understand the *raison-d'être* of this practice refused to subscribe to the blind submission that the Germans were by every weighing process heartless and continued to find the Germans worthy of praise in the colonial enterprise or anything connected to it.

(b)In concrete terms the Germans infrastructural developments in the Kamerunstadt despite the odds was really awesome. The routes and railways like the Douala –Nkongsamba,the Douala-Kribi and then Yaounde railway lines together with the roads though at some dear cost to the natives opened up the interior of Cameroon not only to the Germans but also to the free circulation of alien cultures, traditions and world view which a lot of people were already addicted to. With the exception of Zintgraff exploration which was effected through caravan connections and road network the grassland remained relatively eclipsed until 1900. After that year the need to churn out labourers coincided with the desire to open up the hinterland to other parts of the world and this culminated in the construction of a fairly usable road that ran from the coast to the interior.⁷ Besides this, the Germans had introduced the masses not only to the practice of trade but also offered them the opportunity to develop alternative ways of surviving. This alternative way of surviving provided lots of opportunities to the natives especially owing to the fact that the duel of power and leadership had carve out new contours

with the traditional government and all its accessories relegated to the background.⁸ This road network did not only change the peoples' world view but organically changed the taste and standards of some of the natives who could venture into trade. It was through this that treasures of the interior like tobacco, ivory, ramie, kola and minerals were discovered and traded with. To this they introduced Coffee, Cocoa ,rubber, cotton, pairs (avocado) which enriched both the agricultural and consumption pattern of the natives thereby ignited It looked at the beginning like those who were recruited to work in the plantations were in everything but name slaves but when a few of them started returning for visits to the grassfieldsthmergey looked different not only in attire and physique but also in the way they carried themselves. This was a thing which those who had not been given such opportunities yearned to experience. A reverence for this emerging class of people with changed mind-set directly meant a reverence for the Germans who were the authors of everything that this changed implied. These were some of the rudiments that kept the Germanophile alive after the departure of the Germans.

(c)In the domain of housing infrastructure and education there was equally much to keep the natives both worried about the departure of the Germans and yearning for their return in some blessed future. Brute force as indicated was part and parcel of the German colonial administration quite alright but it is suffice to note here that; it required only such a scheme to get to erect buildings of substance like the government Lodge (Schloss) in Buea constructed in 1901-2,Bismark fountain in Buea built around 1904, the Native Authority Court in Buea built in 1902-3,the tower of the senior district office in Mamfe built in 1908 as well as the Bamenda Fort that was built around 1908 along with the Bafut palace that stands the taste of standards even up to these days.⁹ These edifices alone constituted a source of wonders and admiration for the Germans from the natives given the thinking and technology at the time. The conspicuous look of these structures was not easily deleted with the departure of the Germans from Cameroon especially given the fact that the developmental packages to be offered by the British or the French was not known or anticipated by the natives.

In education, the Germans too attracted a lot of attention and admiration. Though there was no clear cut educational policy until after the educational conference of 1900, the Germans also initiated an educational programme that was sensitive to the need of the time. There was

a growing need of well-trained Clerks, administrative assistance, junior technician's interpreters and all sorts of support staff to run the German breed of administration in Cameroon. To provide an apt solution to this urgent problem the Germans put in place and educational scheme that was sustained by Grant in Aid by 1907.

This programme produced both the required labour skills and brains needed for the colonial enterprise and brought to fore an elite class that did not only speak German but were ready to comport themselves German-like in almost everything but colour.¹⁰ The emergence of this elite class with a strong passion for alien culture and the people incarnating it was not typically unique to the Cameroon natives. It was of course a practice and a mark of identity that was alive in all African territories that were encompassed by colonial responsibilities.¹¹

The German educational scheme in Cameroon emphasized not only issues of Arithmetic, Nature Study, Geography of Cameroon and Agricultural Science but also paid particular emphasis on the German language. Contrary to an earlier educational scheme that permitted the teaching of other Foreign and local languages the education reform in the KamerunStadt under governor Theodore Seitz made the study of German Language an indispensable subject in the school curriculum and went further to forbid the teaching of Douala language in key towns like Kumba, EdeaBuea and Yabassi. By 1916 when the power of command as far as administering the territory switched hands from the Germans to the French and the British, a sizeable number of elite had been trained and equipped either within the framework of the 1910 educational scheme in Cameroon or abroad in Germany to serve the Germans and by extension the natives thereby, providing the nexus for the survival of the Germanophile syndrome in Cameroon regardless of the changing circumstances. J.Dreeck records that the Duala outclasses any other native entity that imbibed the education programme in Cameroon. Referring to elites class that was mounted and calcified within the framework of German Philosophy as Germanophone, he notes that,

The Duala provided the large- perhaps the majority though the coastal people of Victoria and Kribi produced others- of clerks who worked for the German Governments and Firms. Prominent Government Clerks (Kanzlisten) among the Doualas included Franz Madutta Bell, Thomas Missipo Mouloby and Tacco Moume of Bell, Robert Edinguelle Meetom of Akwa and Isaac Mounmie Etia of Deido. Other Dualas were government school teachers like Franz Segat Kou and Albert Mo,daBebe Bell of the Bell chiefly family. ... Among the many Dualas who went

to Germany to study were Rodolph brothers Richard (an agronomist) and Henry(a mechanical Engineer),Joseph Ekwe Bile (trained as an architect)David Mandessi Bell, Stephen Duala and Makambe Moukouri.¹²

This list of people who were involved in formal education from a single ethnic group looks long going by the standards of the time where education was considered by traditional norms as cosmetic but all of this truly represents the vim and passions of a cross section of the Germans trained cream of individual from Douala and its environs who together with the ex-German soldiers constitute the brain behind the working and survival of the Germanophone or Germanophile sentiments in Cameroon.

Aside from infrastructural, communication and educational progress that worked in harmony to keep the Germanophile syndrome intact in both the French and the British Cameroons during the early German period, stands conspicuous the problem of who was to run and foot the bills of the plantations and the rest of the infrastructure left in place by the Germans. This really constituted a problem because the incoming colonial powers notably Britain and France did not seem to have any immediate programme for this plantations and structures. This eventually came to be known in the British and French colonial jargons as the problem/Palaver of Ex-enemy property.

In retrospect, the division of Cameroon between France and Britain under the mandate system was bound to produce multiple forms of issues all of them crucially connected to the question of power and leadership as well as the development of the country thereafter. This was rooted mainly on the fact that; (a) these two nations had diametrically different colonial policies and orientation one rooted on Indirect Rule and the other based on Assimilation and its accessories. This alone suffices to emphasize that life and developments in the British part of Cameroon as far as power and authority was concerned was essentially going to be a continuation whereas things were going to be different in the French part where assimilation that was in any sense a novelty continued to cultivate or produce different results. Concretely, France and Britain did not only differ in their colonial policies in administering Cameroon. The two nations had fundamental differences in the apprehension of Post War Germany as well as the historical relation both had shared long and prior to the war. Unlike France whose relations with Germany were for the most part pregnant with acrimony of a worrisome

dimension, Britain had kept a fairly cordial relation with Germany until the years of the First World War. Again though both nations were architects and signatory of the obnoxious Versailles treaty, Britain felt that Germany was unfairly treated while France held the contrary. This juxtaposed apprehensions played a great part in making or marring the survival of the Germanophile syndrome especially the question of handling the property and conceptions which the Germans had implanted. If there is anything that was worth paying glowing tribute to the usefulness of Cameroon to the Germans, it should be the fact that her soils were very fertile for the opening up of plantations and this was sustained by the fact that the grasslanders provided most of the required human labour that was needed not only for the plantation assignments but also for the performance of other menial jobs that failed beneath the German pattern of prestige. This is one of the motivating reasons for the Germans to open plantations mostly along the slopes and fringes of mount Fako. These plantations did not only employ a greater percentage of the native folk but also organically adulterated most of the people's traditional life styles and world view.¹³

As for colonial negotiation and bandwagonism, the question of how to keep or protect the German plantations that were overwhelmingly present in British Southern Cameroon as signalled earlier really became a veritable problem. The first attempt was made to auction these plantations in the early 1920s but restrictions were placed on it. One of these restrictions made it abundantly clear that German nationals were not authorised to be part of the buyers.¹⁴ Even with the boom of the early 1920s no nation or group of buyers seemed technically and materially prepared to take over the German plantation better than the German businessmen. It appeared for some time as if the plantation which naturally constituted a giant portion of the revenue/income of the Southern Cameroon economy were going to wither away or grow wild. The fact that the Britishers both literally and practically refused or were in the main unwilling to carter for this plantation further confused the matters surrounding the issue which together with other German investments in Cameroon were generally referred to as enemy property. Caught in this kind of dilemma the British in 1925 opened up the auctioning landscape and allowed the auctioning to move in consonant to the forces of demand and supply. This provided the single much cherished opportunity that almost perplexed German traders and planters had been yearning for. In response they bought

the plantations en masse and wasted no time in trying to keep them at the pre-war scale and even more.¹⁵

Logically, the return of the Germans in numbers as planters and traders in the British Southern Cameroons technically implied that everything German but colonial colouration had been revived in this zone. Ndi notes passionately that nostalgia for the Germans grew with a startling velocity in Southern Cameroon especially when the ownership of the plantations was rescheduled. The issue was so shocking that of the 264000 acres of land advertised in British Southern Cameroons the Germans alone bought about 2007000.¹⁶ Two things are to be underscored about this disguised return of the German businessmen to Cameroon. The first was that the return of these Germans as traders and planters technically represented elements of continuity in change. Indeed, with no British official restrictions on how they(traders) were supposed to conduct themselves, these Germans were allowed with the free hand to continue comporting themselves in every detail aspects German-like. The absence of a veritable British structure and men nurtured in the realm of British or French training to perform special duties in the plantations further encouraged the traders to continue running their businesses even with a much expanse of freedom than that obtained during the German period. This freedom continued to buttress the German way of life thereby making Germanophile to remain afloat in most dealings.

The second issue closely associated with the mass return of the Germans to Cameroon under the guise of trading and preaching was the fact that they used not only the German language but intrinsically inculcated German methods/culture to conduct any kind of activity with the Cameroon natives. By so doing the German way of life remained predominantly alive and almost competed comfortably with the British until the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.¹⁷ Though the British as per the Mandate assignment were supposed to run every affair that had to do with the internal and external politics and development of Cameroon, plantations and other German investments were not taken as basis of developments that could be harnessed for better results but rather globally viewed by with scorn and phobia. This is why they continued to class them as enemy property an issue which was too complicated for the natives who knew and could talk best only of the Germans to understand.

The survival of the Germanophile syndrome in British Cameroon was not only implied and expressed implicitly. It became an open game and could be vividly read in the number of officials and people who were involved in post War German missions. A few examples are suffice to make this case truly representative and demonstrative. Indeed seven good years of British supposedly presence and ownership of British Southern Cameroon, very little even in terms of mere numbers could be registered here. Though an escapist analogy could be given that the Indirect Rule system permitted for a few Britishers to be present on Cameroon soils, it was startling to note that as of this time, there were only 86 of them (Britishers) in Cameroon both for colonial and private economic assignments.¹⁸ This alone becomes worrisome because this thin number was contrasted by a whopping figure of 285 Germans who were employing about 25000 natives to serve in different capacities in their plantations.¹⁹ On the spiritual plane which is by any reckoning the bed rock for the survival of any practice, the ministers of the Baptist Mission who were the first to set up the first colonial station in Cameroon were all pure or Swiss Germans. This was reinforced by a few catholic Missionary who were also Germans and Italians. It was really paradoxical for Britishers to be relegated to the position of a far from effective minority in their mandated territory²⁰ This overwhelming numerical domination of the British by the Germans though without official colonial backing worked against the British for the most part and provided a favourable landscape for pro-German sentiments to take shape and blossom.

On a comparative scale, life in the plantations during the Inter War years (1919-39) was not the best if the number of hours put in by the workers is weighed on the wages and other amenities along with the treatment the other natives received in other African colonies but the degree of freedom and other elements of respect accorded to the natives by the Germans in Southern Cameroons made them happy. This happiness laid the basis for a genuine love and trust for the Germans (Germanophile) thereby, providing the main ingredients for the natives yearn for their return to Cameroon for the colonial assignment someday. The growth and calcification of the Germanophile syndrome in British Southern Cameroons provided anxious moments for the French another mandated power who hated anything working in the favour of Germany with a passion. This anxiety was accentuated when despite the somewhat fair treatment of workers in the plantation run by the French nationals; there was still a noticeable exodus of French Cameroonians to British Cameroons for jobs.²¹ The mass influx

of French Cameroon to British Southern for greener pastures demonstrate a yielding passion alive among the French Cameroon for the German way of life and intrinsically nursed the seeds of a later clamour by people from both sides of the Mounjo River for Cameroon to be reunited but this had little to do because Britain was determined as much as possible to justify the functional essence of the Indirect Rule system.

Under an extensively British propagated pretext that Indirect Rule provided the best known form of training and catering role for the mandated territories, she conspicuously failed to create an impact of her own in British Southern Cameroons for close to two decades. The consequence of such a marked failure was that by 1939 and even for some time after, pro-German sentiments grew and got matured on almost every lane. The almost complete absence of a veritable British culture in Southern Cameroon enabled most of the First World War veterans to come into conclusions that there was every need to have the Germans back to all of Cameroon to take over the Mandate assignment which was wrongfully given to Britain by a weak and ineffective League of Nations.²² The British mandatory responsibility in Cameroon by 1939 substantially amounted to legal nomenclature so much that; the natives love for the Germans (Germanophile) competed very closely with the British Fear for Pro-German sentiments (Germanophobia) which were considered of no threats to the British in the 1920s. With regards to the climax of the contest between these two concepts which gave overwhelming victory to the Germanophile syndrome in Southern Cameroons on the eve of the Second World War Ndi again notes that;

With the approach of the Second World War, there was universal [meaning global] panic among the rank and file of the British administrators. This was because there was a general clamour among the workers in the plantations directed by local Nazi leadership for the expulsion of the ineffective British from Southern Cameroons and the immediate return and the Germans who had been unjustly expelled after the First World War. By default Southern Cameroons, a British territory was by virtue of its history and economy tightly held in the German grip [so much that] as War approached in 1939, the news was on every lip of every boy in the higher classes primary School aided[or] facilitated by the older generation of Cameroonians, who yearned for the German Era. The heavy Nazi presence on the plantations enhanced the propaganda machinery raising high hopes that southern Cameroons would soon return to the German Reich clearly depicted in national poems such as : “Our Plea and aspiration and aspiration lie; to see our rights fulfilled that soon the German flag may fly on Kamerun soils.”²³

On a very candid note; the British reluctance to play the master role accorded to her by the Mandate Commission of the League of Nations ostensibly earned her the title of an absentee landlord and gave the Germans under different tutelage the freedom to shape the natives' mind-sets and frame of references in the likeness of the German philosophy and world view. Though this can be understood from the fact that Britain saw in the German a better devil in the camp of capitalism if placed in a plane with communist Russia or any other nation that was pro-communist, it was by every reckoning; a gruesome error for Britain to have allowed the economy of their colonial territory to blossom and flower essentially in the hands of the German traders, Missionaries and planters of various grades and educational attainments. If the natives who were possibly pushed by the Ex-Service men had the guts to yearn for an immediate return of the Germans in 1939, such wishes were highly connected to the fact that the British underestimated the consequences of the growth and free functioning of pro-German institutions and authorities within this ecological niche. In any case, this nonchalance nursed people of a particular political orientation and moral upbringing and also negotiated unique horizons of growth and pattern of nationalism in British Cameroons both before and after 1945. The Germanophile concept in British Southern Cameroons did not only grew with startling velocity but got intrinsically implanted in almost every aspect that had to do with the character formation of the people(natives) especially their regard to issues of the tenure and distribution of power and leadership. This prepared an interesting background worth understanding the comportment of the natives during the age of nationalism and why the K factor came to stand as a most sought element by British Southern Cameroonians though the case was diametrically different in French Cameroon.

The Germanophobia Concept in French Cameroun

The division of German Kamerun after the First World War and the decision by the League of Nations in 1922 to place these spheres as mandated territories under Britain and France produced a landscape whereby, the Germanophile syndrome was pampered and fertilized by British nonchalance in Southern Cameroons juxtaposed by a profound exercise of hatred, fear or disdain for the Germans and any other policy or practice connected to her way of life or world view in French Cameroun).The Germanophile grew in British Southern Cameroons because of British nonchalance especially their unwillingness to assume the master role

responsibilities. The growth and calcification of the Germanophobia syndrome in French Cameroun was purely an intentional issue. Unlike the Germanophile syndrome that emerged and expanded in Southern Cameroon as a result of a genuine manifestation of love from the natives, the Germanophobia concept that towered in French Cameroun was mounted and made concrete in the political, social and economic landscape by the French colonial authorities. Though there were a number of evidences throughout the French Cameroun to substantiate the natives disdain for the Germans, real rancour and fear of every activity in Cameroon that stood to suggest goodness and moral probity of the Germans came from the French colonial authorities and the policies that were debated and passed into Law in France.

The Constituents and Growth of Germanophobia

Concretely, the geo-strategic location of Cameroun both in central and Equatorial Africa elevated her to the heights of international envy and this remained almost constant between the circles of European great powers. Even with frail home support, Germany wanted a place in the Sun in Africa and this coincided with the fact that the Kamerunstadt laid along her path to East Africa. To France German Cameroon was to her a living dream. The 1911 Duck bill agreement between France and Germany merely interrupted her dream of an extensive portion of land in Central Africa. The departure of Germany after the War provided the opportunity for her to realize this dream. Quite obsessed with this ambition, she was to make sure that anything Germany was kept at a reasonable distance away from Cameroon. It was her intention to see that all pro-German sentiments were eradicated and pure French mentality forced to stay and remain active in the mind frames of the natives. Such a stand found witty substances to blossom because her policy of assimilation tried as much as possible to dissuade the natives from thinking anything negative about the French.

The colossal disdain for the German way of life or anything connected to their spirit found expression in (a) the way the French wholesome kept the Germans from attempting to have a share in the Ex-German plantations that were found within their territory, (b) their attempt to censor the activities of Ex-service men, along with their dressing style and diction as well as (c) the way they instructed their administrators to take measures to ensure any pro German sentiment/agency to destroy from gaining shape and weight. While Britain allowed the ownership of the Ex-German plantation to respond freely to forces of demand and supply

with no restrictions on nationalities, the French kept these enemy property exclusively within the market reach of French nationals or anything in that direction. Germany had been widely blamed advertised even by France for being heartless and inconsiderate in their treatment of the natives especially the issue of forced labour, public flogging and land expropriation. The fact that France had the Mandatory assignment over this part of Cameroon meant that the much criticized poor treatment of the natives was now a matter to be heard and read only on the annals of history but the French brought in the Prestation and the Corvee under their obnoxious policy of *la mise en valeur* which greatly assailed the natives. It was however very astonishing for the natives to find that the labour policies of the French were in no way better from that of the Germans and this was accentuated by a long range of restrictions and some sort of espionage on the people. The Doula ethnic Unit that had the most informed and the longest foreign experiences with colonial power were particularly vexed and were as such vocal against the French.

Though the informed/learned Douala were useful to the French, there was a claim made lavishly expressed by France that the natives were always on the course of exaggerating their usefulness or importance to the French authorities. The French's decision to oversimplify the natives rage or grievances by this vague claim made the Doula to become nervous and as such, petitioned the French to the League of Nations in 1929 since the Mandate Commission offered to them such opportunities. In this acerbic and witty petition, the Doula asked for the immediate cancellation of the French Mandatory assignment over them and made it unequivocally clear that the town of Doula and the people therein were fit enough to be accountable only to the League of Nations rather than passing through any obscure power like France that was grossly insensitive to their needs and realities of the time.²⁴ Apart from the fact that this petition²⁵ kept the French authorities in Cameroon worried,²⁶ they were also particularly disturbed that this petition was written in the German language which in every sense, was suggesting that the French had left nothing solid of colonial orientation to the people under their colonial constituency. It equally entailed that the natives recognised and mastered best the German language before anything else. Thirdly, it implied that the people still recognise the Germans as superior and globally that, the French impact was not yet felt even at the level of language after a period of more than a decade of rule. The fourth issue connected to this petition which the governor and the French minister

of colonies struggled to sort out was that petitions from the natives were either framed or instigated by Germans either under the disguised cover of colonial push or by individual Germans operating in British Cameroons and Rio De muni.²⁷

The Pinnacle of its Growth

Despite the long explanations given to the French Minister of colonies by Marchand within which he strove to declare the petition as null and void and as such of no grave consequence to the French colonial mission in the territory, the colonial minister's scorn for the Germans especially the native's decision to use the German language remained conspicuous and as such, he reiterated that:

There is lack of difference and even of simple correctness with regard to mandatory powers which I shall not tolerate any longer.If in future any native presents you a petition written in German language, you should inform them that no attention shall be paid to their complaints and that it is incumbent on them to use the French language when formulating their complains[or any other commination with the French metropolis.]²⁸

Two things are worth noting as far as the Germanophobia survival is concerned in this citation. The first is that the French minister of colonies probably knew that it was easy for the natives to turn German on the mere account of Language mastery or its continuation in drafting official letters. Besides, this instruction clearly indicated the amount of fury that was in the minister of colonies' bosom against anything German or connected to their way of thought.

This petition along other developments about the fate of Germany in international circle transformed what could remain as mere suspicion into deep rancour that yielded paranoiac and subversive activities towards the Germans by the French. With America and Russia essentially non actors in the international scene, the League of Nation as indicated earlier was found grossly wanting. This coincided with the fact the Britain under policy of Appeasement was prepared to treat Germany responsibly. With the progress in international morality put in place by the Weimar Republic, Germany got her membership into the League of Nations in 1927. All of these development seemed to be positive progress along the road to diplomacy in modern Europe but were not good omens for France in either Africa or abroad.

All of these developments only gave Germany the guts to reactivate her colonial old ambition in Africa known as Mittilafrika which was hated to the core by France. A reactivation of this

colonial dream meant that France was literally going to be off-rooted from their mandatory assignment in Central and East Africa thereby depriving her from a people and colonial territories that were already pegged to be very useful to the development of metropolitan France. It was an assembly all of this that fomented fury and rage within the French against the Germans. In fact the geographical position of French Cameroun, some historical precedence and the comportment of Britain in managing her part of the territory pumped in more rancour into this rage. French Cameroon was closer to equatorial Guinea(Spanish Guinea)where German sentiments were still very strong. In the South was found Rio del Muni another pro-German ecological niche which shared an extensive boundary with Ebolowa. Within the territory was found Kribi an area which the Germans had initiated a sea port programme and where German traders were still very actively alive. The already volatile situation was further accentuated by the fact that all along the West and the Southern West coast of French Cameroun was found British Cameroons where German traders and planters together with their labourers were still very active. French fear, rancour or disdain for the Germans even without any international connection could have emerged just from the fact that she was practically sandwiched by pro-German forces that were for the most part in discordance to the French philosophy of life.

In this atmosphere the French minister of colonies decided to make sure that steps were taken to erase these sentiments where ever they were or about to be implanted.

As from 1927 the French minister of colonies issued standing orders to the French governor within which he instructed the governor to take special measures to erect an intelligence network capable of supplying information about any activity within the Cameroon soils favourable to the Germans (b) set up a monitoring committee which can identify the possible reasons for the existing of such activities and (c) deploy subversives in place to ferret such tendency with immediate effect. One of such threatening but thrilling instruction to the understanding of French hatred for the Germans reads

I cannot remind you too often that you occupy a delicate post; It is not sufficient to be a good commandant de cercle that you are, it is also very necessary to be an attentive political observer and an intelligent agent who obtains information. If you do find yourself suitable for this position tell me ; my estimation of you will not diminish but I shall act accordingly. In any case I urge you to exercise a very discreet but close surveillance of Mr M. Otmann of the New Guinea whose political activities have been brought to my attention.²⁹

This instruction typifies the tone and content of rancour that the French authorities had for the Germans both collectively and individually. Many of these instruction continued to be showered on succeeding governors. Candidly there was much of information flow to France about German activities in Cameroon and Africa at large. This for the most part yielded confusion to the governor on the ground, who though being in the same line of thought with other French authorities, read things differently. Though the Great Depression of 1929 some sort of jolted the political balance in Europe the rest of the French mandatory and even trusteeship period was wrought with such high handed mechanization of pro-German sentiment. The fact that the Germans planters recruited German war veterans and gave the extensive rights made the French worried and seeking for revenge of some sort. Despite the air of suspicion that France had for Britain with regards to British treatment of the Germans the fear of communism far exceeded this passions. With the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 French fear and hatred for the Germans proved useful because it demonstrated in full glare that the Germans despite their show of friendship powers had elastic demands.

Conclusion

The analyses and submissions on the survival of these concepts above leaves a graphic picture of the theory of continuity in/and change in post German Cameroon. Germanophile grew and calcified in the private and public spaces in British Southern Cameroons because of the British nonchalance most especially her inability to run financial projects for/in the territory. Though Britain as managing power could be blamed for failing awfully to play her master role, she can be credited to have kept the idea of the ONE time one and indivisible Cameroon alive. As for France, time honoured colonial rivalry and local realities pushed her to develop a hatred for anything German (Germanophobia) but this was soon to collapse when independence loomed. The overwhelming presence of the **K** representing and referring to German Kamerun and by extension a one and indivisible Cameroon that became the substance of all negotiations towards unification were deeply rooted in the dynamics of these concepts. To some extent, this also helps to explain why even radical parties like the UPC formed in 1948 adopted the one Kamerun agenda tactfully avoided the K in its nomenclature.

REFERENCES

¹¹¹ The Mounjo River for which in 1919 became the main feature that mapped out the boundary line between the French and the British Cameroon was known and can be still known in Cameroon political lexicon as the Cameroon River. This was a name that was derived with the chiefs were struggling to map out their geographical sphere of influence during the annexation treaty wahala.

² The fear, hatred or scorn for the Germans was an ever present issue in French foreign policy. In Cameroon, the Germanophobia concept gained ground with terrific velocity because in French Cameroon.

³This can be understood from the fact that unlike the French and the British whose nations knew and were fully aware of the underpinnings of colonisation, the question of colonial ventures especially in the African continent constituted a veritable problem in the German legislature and political planning. They were people who argued and were prepared at any given moment obstruct any idea and scheme that supported colonial ventures and a significant few who were ready to give it a chance. How this made or marred political progress in Germany at the time is interesting but not useful here but it is worth noting here that the fact that colonial ventures attracted pale attention to the Germans until 1906 when an election was held only on the matter suffice to demonstrate that the Germans had no choice than to force the natives to carry out public works given that finances to engage in such projects was quite in adequate. To see how this operated read Haupt, Werner. *Deutschlands Schutzgebiete in Übersee 1884–1918* (1984) Germany's Overseas Protectorates 1884-1918 Friedberg: Podzun-Pallas Verlag. Hoyt, Edwin P. (1981) *Guerilla*. Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck and Germany's East African Empire. New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc.; and London: Collier MacMillan Publishers.

⁴Ruddins (1938) *Germans in Cameroon: A study in Modern Imperialism*. 419.

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⁷ The Germans even by ordinary logic are to be credited for mapping out the first road and rail network in Cameroon. It was indeed a difficult but brave task for them to be negotiating roads through thick forest of the South and again on the Hilly grassland topography but the need and the essence gave the Vim to forge on.

⁸ Due to the high cost of administration owing to the fact that the interior of Cameroon did provide even for the time being the juicy opportunities that could sustain the this cost the Germans heavily relied on the traditional system of governance but not in its pristine form. They moderated and even adulterated the traditional system to suit the changing realities and the native stock painfully grew to realize this. The fact that notable who refused to perform public assignment on mere account of their nobility or royal ties were flogged in public places was enough to indicate that traditional governance had imploded. This ideas and many more have been cited and paraphrased in details by Jonathan Derick (1980) "The Germanophone Elite of Douala under the French Mandate" in *Journal of African History*, volume 21, No 2, pp.255-67.

⁹ By coincidence, edifices of renowned calibre constructed during the German era were found in British Cameroons just like the plantations with a majority of them located around Buea which served as the capital until 1914.

¹⁰ See a full and detailed development of this by Jonathan Derrick (1980) 'Elite of Douala under the French Mandate' in *Journal of African History*, pp255-67.

¹¹ For a more general picture of How and Why there was always the emergence of an elite class that sought to keep the old masters and protect the old habits read L.H. Gann and P.Duigan(1977) *The Traditional and Modern Elite in the Politics of Lagos* along with 'The Rulers of German Africa 1884-1914' in G. Westley Johnson *the Emergence of Black Politics in Senegal*. Whilst this produces a graphic representation of the comportment of Elites in French Territories, a picture of how this worked in British territories is vividly presented by D. .Kimberly (1971) *A Political History of Ghana 1850-1928*.

¹² Jonathan Derrick, 'The Germanophone Elite' p.257-8. The overwhelming presence of Christian of foreign names in this citation indicates the level at which Christianity especially Protestantism had consumed at least by nomenclature the Duala and the coastal people.

¹³ The Life of labourers in the German plantations differed in a number of areas. On one hand the social intercourse between the different grades and ages groups of the worker alienated them from their traditional philosophy that upheld the sanctity of the fon and on the other their closely to missionaries made most of them to espouse Christianity.

¹⁴ Part of the deal stroke at the 1919 Versailles treaty seemed to be that Germany should as a matter of necessity be isolated as far distant as possible. if this was the case its life span was short-lived because the growth of Communism since the Bolshevick revolution of 1917 posed more of a trait to the capitalist world than Germany.

¹⁵ Confidence Chia Ngam in a paper titled 'The Predicaments of the Germans in Cameroon: The Contributions of the German Traders and the Duala' presented in a Conference jointly organized by the Department of the History of the University of Douala and the German Cooperation inn Douala on August 2014 to commemorate 100 years of the end of the First World War, suggests that the German Traders had significant differences in terms of mission and approach to colonial issues and regards to the natives but this does not entail that the traders and the Colonial administrators had different cultures. Infact when it came to protecting German interest visa vis a foreign element, both functioned in one file.

¹⁶ Anthony Ndi T.(2005)*The Golden Age*,p.43.

¹⁷ A thrilling account of how this prepared the background to the Second World War is presented in Anthony Ndi T.(1986) 'The Second World War in Southern Cameroons and Its Impacts on Mission State Relations,1939-50' in David Killingray and Richard Rathbone eds,*African and the second World War*, London: Macmillan Press Limited, pp.204-32.Similar ideas are presented in simonJ.Epale (1985) *Plantations and Development in Western Cameroon,1885-1975: A study in Agrarian capitalism*, New York, Vantage Press,pp.114-16.all of these documents are cited in details by A Ndi,(2005) *The Golden Age* ,p.43.

¹⁸Ndi, *The Golden Age*, p. 44.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.p.44

²¹ The mass exodus of the natives from French Cameroun for greener pastures (jobs)in British Cameroon can be explained variedly each with its own its own futile and conflicting claims. This notwithstanding it should be noted that the conditions of work in French Cameroun were ridden with a deal of suspicion and contradictions keeping the natives especially the informed ones quite worried and most of them found it reasonable given that the It was better to deal with the Devil (Germans) they knew better than the Angel(presumably the French)they did not Know.

²² By 1939 these veterans were able to count a handful of international problems that the League Nations as the guarantor of peace in the world had failed to solve. Among this was its inability to stop the Japanese aggression on Manchuria in 1931,the German Remilitarisation of the Rhine land in 1936,The Spanish civil war that was on course as from 1936 and not forgetting the re-establishment of the Achluss. From this they could conclude as it was done all over the world that the League of nations was a toothless bulldog capable of barking but having nothing to offer in substance.

²³ ibid.pp..48-9. He is paraphrasing and quoting an analysis of the Plantation Life and Development in Cameroon by Simon Epale pp.124-5.

²⁴ A full grasp of the entire content and tone of this petition is found on the report of the Ninetieth session of the permanent Mandate Commission(hereafter cited as Pmc)1930 annex 13.p196.

²⁵ The frankness of the this discussion is carried by file No APA 10890,which carries a letter from Marchand the governor in Cameroon to the colonial minister of May 24 th 1930 ,here after class in Buea National Archives.

²⁶ The French Colonial Governor in Cameroon at the time Marchand did take the petition serious by the French minister of colonies found it witty and capable of putting the entire French administration in Cameroon in trouble. What they saw in it was not only the fact that the natives had the guts to protest their seemingly humanist administration but that they were about to replace Germanophobia with French ophobia.

²⁷ Though neither during the reign of Bismark, the Weimar or the Nazis regime Germany showed much love for colonies there was the concept of a great German African empire(Mittilafrika) which linked the central Africa with the East for Germany. Such concepts calcified French fear and hatred for Germany since it stood on her way of forming her own African empire.

²⁸Ibid. Emphasis in the square brackets are mine.

²⁹ Cited by Richard A. Joseph(1975) in''The German Question in French Camerooun1919-1939 '' in *Society for comparative studies in Society and History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.