
ANTECEDENTS OF FRONTIERS AND CONFLICTS OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN THE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR IN CAMEROON: THE CASE OF HISTORY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Colonial experience bequeathed a binary legacy for Cameroon which through reunification ignited the spirit of unity in diversity. The coordination of colonially inherited cultural values should have been mainstreamed in the history education syllabuses operational in Cameroon secondary schools. This paper engenders a retrospective and comparative study of the foundations and purpose of history education in Cameroon during the colonial period. It seeks to identify outcomes of history education in the colonial era while investigating links between colonial history education and the development of frontiers and conflicts evident in the quest for internal cohesion, national unity and integration in the bilingual and multicultural Cameroon nation. To respond to these questions, we made use of a comparative qualitative analysis of the history education programmes introduced by the various colonial regimes in Cameroon. The periods that starts from the Germans through the British/French and the post-colonial strides in syllabus adjustments and coordination reinforced frontiers through history education in post-colonial Cameroon. This study was guided by primary, secondary and alternative sources. In line with our sources, we concluded that colonial agenda and experience bequeathed unconsciously imbibed psychic frontiers between Cameroonians of British and French backgrounds. These frontiers were vigorously reinforced in post-colonial Cameroon through consistent failures to coordinate or harmonise history education programmes. These dichotomies reinforced psychic frontiers among Cameroonian citizens resulting in almost irreconcilable differences in world views and modes of operation vis-à-vis the nature and structure of the state. Revisiting the UNESCO proposals at independence and reunification may be a reliable tonic to these post-colonial frontiers and conflicts in internal cohesion and national integration in Cameroon.

Keywords: Cameroon, history education, harmonisation, psychic frontiers, conflicts.

INTRODUCTION

The decolonization process in Cameroon resulted in the reunification of the Former British Southern Cameroons and Former French Cameroon following the overwhelming decision of the British southern Cameroons during the February 11th, 1961 plebiscite to vote in favour of Reunification with former French Cameroon¹. Unlike in other African Countries, colonial experience bequeathed a binary legacy for Cameroon which through reunification ignited the spirit of unity in diversity². In the early days of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, a spirit of national unity, through national integration animated political debates and speeches of states men, leaders and politicians. Ahmadou Ahidjo in 1963, reminded Cameroonians of the impossibility of the children of one and the same country to be educated under different systems because it was going to foster the development of an original culture for Cameroon³. By inference, the coordination of colonially inherited cultural values should have been mainstreamed in the education policy, the school curriculum in general and the history syllabus operational in Cameroon secondary schools in particular.

National unity, cohesion and integration has recently been under vigorous attacks across the board between citizens of French and English-speaking backgrounds as well as within the rank and file of ministerial departments of education, National pedagogic institutions, pedagogic inspection services, history researchers as well as history educators, not forgetting the executive, judiciary and legislative arms of state apparatus in post independent Cameroon. Since November 2016, Common Law lawyers in Cameroon⁴ suspended activities in the courts in the North West and South West regions, meanwhile schools have hardly been effective, most especially those of the English-speaking sub system of education within the same regions⁵. This paper engenders a retrospective and comparative study of the foundations and purpose of history education in Cameroon during the colonial period. It seeks to identify outcomes of history education in the colonial era while investigating links between colonial history education and the development of frontiers and conflicts evident in the quest for internal cohesion, national unity and integration in the bilingual and multicultural Cameroon nation⁶. In other words, what was the purpose of

¹ A. Ndi, *Southern West Cameroon Revisited 1950-1972, Unveiling Inescapable Traps*, Pauls Press, Bamenda, Vol. 1, 2013, p.121.

² T. Rosendal, "Multilingual Cameroon Policy, Practice, Problems and Solutions" in *Gothenburg Africana Informal Series – No 7*, Gothenburg, December 2008, p. 13.

³I. Leke Tambo, *Cameroon Educational Policy since the 1995 Forum*, Design House Limbe, 2003, p.186.

⁴ The legal profession in Cameroon is regulated by the Cameroon BAR Association which functions under a bi-Jurial legal system. Lawyers of English Speaking express and Anglo-Saxon legal background refer to themselves as Common Law Lawyers.

⁵ Law N^o 98/04 of 14 April 1998 to lay down guidelines for Education in Cameroon, section 15(1), the education system shall be organized into two sub systems: the English and French speaking sub system.

⁶V. Bong Amaazee, *Historiography and Historical Method*, Patron Publishing House, Bamenda, 2001, p.22.

history education as presented by Cameroon's colonizers and how colonial agenda engendered psychic and attitudinal frontiers resulting to conflicts in national integration in post colonial Cameroon.

To respond to these questions, a comparative qualitative analysis of the history education introduced by the various colonial regimes in Cameroon via: the Germans, the British and the French privileging primary and secondary sources underlie this study. In a historical chronology, the purpose of history education and its introduction in Cameroon schools is presented in the first part of this paper. The colonial agenda in history education in the French and English Sectors follows. Frontiers and conflicts born out colonial history education at independence and reunification tails the study.

THE PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION OF HISTORY EDUCATION IN CAMEROON SCHOOLS

History has remained to the community what memory has been to the individual⁷. This has made history a social necessity as it helps society to find its bearings and orientates its destiny. Being a methodological account of events over time or a systematic account of natural phenomena⁸, history remains the best form of liberal education and it is generally agreed to be the most useful area of study in human society⁹. History studies the chronological record of events (as affecting a nation or people), based on a critical examination of source materials and usually presenting an explanation of their causes¹⁰. Before the 19th century, the subject did not exist in the school curriculum. Dr. Arnold of Rugby School in England introduced the subject in the primary level in 1853 and 20 years later, it was introduced in secondary school and by 1881, history became a subject in its own right with a syllabus¹¹. The study of history was not without purpose. The subject was studied in order to understand present phenomena while preparing society to face contemporary challenges, critically think and judge events¹². In this light, particular attention was necessary on what should or should not have been included in the history education curriculum. In other words, content selection was an important aspect of history education¹³. All teaching centred on history involved the selection of content without which it remained a tale

⁷ V. Bong Amaazee, *Historiography and Historical Method*, p.22.

⁸ J. D. Fage, "The Development of African Historiography", in, *General History of Africa*, Vol. 1, Chapter 1, UNESCO, Paris, p.27.

⁹ I. Leke Tambo, *Principles and Methods of Teaching*, 2nd Edition, ANUCAM, 2003, p. 23.

¹⁰ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history>, consulted on July 10, 2017.

¹¹ W. Nasibi Mary, A Critical Appraisal of History Taught in Secondary Schools in Kenya, in, *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, January 2015, Vol. 4, No.1,p. 639.

¹² J. D. Fage, "The Development of African Historiography", p. 31.

¹³ J.F. Ade Ajayi and I.Espie, *A Thousand Years of West African History*, Ibadan University Press and Nelson, Ibadan, 1965, P.2.

told by a fool with no end result. In this regard the question of what to be taught and for what purpose became an important denominator in history education. Thus the understanding of what material to be selected for history education and for what purpose constituted the bed rock of the objectives of history education in colonial schools in Cameroon.

Before the introduction of formal education in Cameroon by the London Baptist Missionary Society (LBMS), there was an indigenous education system. This system sought to prepare students for their immediate integration in the society¹⁴. This was based on indigenous knowledge accumulated by the Africans over the years and which was in line with the socio-cultural and economic shared features of their communities. This education took the form of different kinds of games including wrestling, dancing, and education for healthy living, cooking, dressing, hunting, farming, blacksmithing, drumming, marriage counselling, poetry, storytelling and critical thinking¹⁵. These formed the basis of the curriculum of African indigenous education which was pregnant with charges of history education.

Western education or call it formal education on the other hand was introduced by Missionaries along the coast of Cameroon where they first had contacts with the indigenous populations. To facilitate their objectives of evangelization, western education and the opening of schools was a necessary agency, not as an end in itself, but as a means to bring the indigenous people closer to missionary objectives¹⁶. The first formal education institution or school was opened along the Cameroon coast by the London Baptist Missionary Society (LBMS) before 1880¹⁷. By 1884 when the Germans annexed the territory, the LBMS had set up several schools along the coast of Cameroon. These schools were basically elementary in nature and the curriculum was limited to reading, writing, arithmetic and Bible study¹⁸.

History was not among the subjects taught in these schools. The early missionaries prioritized didactic practices of oral education like teaching through stories, songs and dancing. These practices were part of the missionary curriculum. They used these methods to attract the natives to their schools and evangelization services. The songs and dances they taught their converts carried charges of history education. However, formal history education per say was only introduced in Cameroon schools with the advent of formal education. The commencement of

¹⁴G. FonkengEpah, *The History of Education in Cameroon: 1884-2004*. Queenstown Lampester, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2007, p. 15.

¹⁵ P. Baguma and I. A. Heisibwe, "Issues in African Education" in A. BameNsameng and Therese M.S. Tchombe (Eds), *Handbook of African Educational Theories and Practices: A Generative Teacher Education Curriculum*, P. 24.

¹⁶Fonkeng, *The History of Education in Cameroon*, 2011, p.18.

¹⁷V. J. Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, Presbook, Limbe, 1996, p.69.

¹⁸Ibid, p.88.

western formal education laid a good foundation for the eventual introduction of history education in Cameroon schools.

COLONIAL AGENDA IN HISTORY EDUCATION UNDER THE GERMANS

The German annexation of Cameroon on July 12th, 1884, signalled the demise of the LBMS and the arrival of the German Basel Mission in Cameroon. By 1886, all Baptist mission schools along the coast of Cameroon had been closed, German education established in the territory while efforts were being made to suppress the English language and culture¹⁹. The Basel Mission therefore inherited all the property and schools of the LBMS in 1886²⁰. Theodore Christaller was the first German school master to arrive in Douala after the annexation. He opened the first public school in Bell town in 1888. Christaller studied the Duala language and produced a book of stories as a guiding text for teaching the Duala their own language²¹. By 1906, the German administration had public schools in Douala, Victoria, Yaounde and Garoua²². Contrary to evangelization, the public schools were out to teach Germanic values, an objective to which the missions accepted to cooperate in order to survive²³. This could be seen in respect to the letter of Governor Julius Von Soden who had earlier on written to the German Chancellor insisting on the need for a German school in the protectorate in case the German Missionaries were not ready to take over education from the British Missionaries. He particularly insisted that it was “injurious to the German Rule” to let the British Missionaries continue in the territory²⁴.

This was the beginning of frontiers in colonial education and history education in particular. The Victoria school was opened by the German Basel Missionaries following the request of Pastor Joseph Wilson. Within his community, there existed several pro British elements. In collaboration with the Germans, a school was opened in his community as a means to enable him win support for the Germans among the pro-English inhabitants of his community²⁵. These were signs of shifting native loyalties and positioning. There already existed rifts between the natives. Unlike the German toleration of cohabitation between Arabic and German languages in schools in the Muslim centre of Garoua in the Adamawa which had faced opposition from the Muslim

¹⁹ V. G. Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges, from prehistory to the twenty-first century* (Revised and Updated Combined Edition), Bamkika'ay-Kumbo, 2017, p. 186.

²⁰Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, p. 95.

²¹Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, p. 186.

²²Fonkeng, *The History of Education in Cameroon*, p.35.

²³Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, p. 188.

²⁴ M. Basung Gwanfogbe, “Changing Regimes and Development of Education in Cameroon 1886 -1966”, PhD Thesis, University of London School of Education, 1995, p. 47.

²⁵Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, p. 187.

population. The Germans insisted on the use of the German language in former LBMS schools along the Coast²⁶.

The problem therefore was not the native system, but the British values bequeathed to the natives. Consequently, how could the Germans combat the already existing pro-British indigenous elite already gaining grounds in the new German protectorate? What measures were the Germans to pursue in order to ensure the rise of pro-German indigenous elite? Which subjects were to be privileged in schools to ensure the annihilation of British legacies?

In December 1907, the German Governor Theodore Seitz convened an important education conference in Douala which culminated in the German education law for the territory in 1910.²⁷ It was through the reforms instituted by this law that post elementary education started in the territory. This reform established four types of schools via; the Bush School, the Elementary school, the Higher Elementary school, and the Post primary school which were all different in their organization, programmes and lengths of course²⁸. The following subjects featured in the curriculum: the German language, which, it should be noted, had become the official lingua franca in the territory. Arithmetic, Nature study, the Geography of Cameroon and the world and the history of Germany after its reunification in 1870²⁹. Post primary education was handled by the missions, especially in their training schools. Even though Bible history was privileged by the missionaries, from the third year of study, the memorization of German patriotic poems, autobiographical accounts of the Kings of the German empire were enforced with an objective to foster German economic and political supremacy and a flourishing German Civilization³⁰.

The Basel Mission Seminary in Buea taught ecclesiastical history, denominational history, religious doctrine, Bible study and educational training. The Baptist Mission School in Douala taught the following subjects: Bible History, History of Israel, Geography of Palestine, German, Arithmetic and other forms of Bible studies. The Catholic Mission Seminary near Buea taught the history of the church, the liturgy, and teaching practice in elementary schools so that at completion, pupils could either continue to the priesthood or become teachers³¹. This situation lasted until 1916 when the British and the French ousted the Germans after the First World War and took over Cameroon.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, p.95.

²⁸Fonkeng, *The History of Education in Cameroon*, p.39.

²⁹Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, p.95.

³⁰Gwanfogbe, "Changing Regimes and Development of Education in Cameroon 1886 -1966, p.56-57.

³¹Fonkeng, *The History of Education in Cameroon*, p.42.

Not ignoring the intention of the introduction of history education, its nature, and purpose, it was the Germans in collaboration with the missionary bodies who first officially introduced history education in Cameroon schools in general and post primary schools in particular. Even though it was taught in German, it was a good foundation for the subject subsequently. It should however be highlighted that the psychological impact of Germanic values in history education had gravely alienated the natives from their cultural identities towards a homogenous system for all those who had attended school during the German era. Missionary congregations championed education and the missionaries were out to evangelize. Evangelization was based on the Bible and the Bible was the word of God, and the word of God was the truth, and nothing but the truth. Consequently, whatever the colonial agenda in education curriculum and history education in particular, the natives imbibed these values.

COLONIAL AGENDA IN HISTORY EDUCATION UNDER THE FRENCH

Educational development in Cameroon took a technical twist which still lingers in the educational system of Cameroon today. The failure of the Condominium or the joint Anglo-French administration after the First World War in Cameroon led to the partition of the territory between Britain and France. Labeling former German Kamerun as a mandate “B” territory, article 22 of the covenant of the League of Nations internationalized and institutionalized European domination of Africa, referring to the Africans as colonized people, it entrusted them to the advanced nations³². This automatically paved the way for continuous establishment and implementation of colonial education systems in the territory, which was another subtle mechanism of cultural alienation and psychological domination.³³ Mandating Britain and France to administer former German Kamerun heralded the birth of rival mythologies of European imperialism and domination³⁴. In this light, educational developments and history education in particular will unfold separately in the British and the French sectors of Cameroon which passed from mandated territories of the League of Nations by 1945 to Trust territories of the United Nations Organisation.

In French Cameroon, education was left mainly in the hands of the missions³⁵. An adaptation education ordinance was passed on October 1, 1920. It stipulated that education in the territory will henceforth be adapted to the level of development of the territory, the needs of the society and the intention of the colonial masters. On July 25th, 1921 education charter was enacted in the

³² M. Asiwaju (revised), “Methods and Institution of European Domination”, in, *General History of Africa (Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880-1935)*, Vol. VII, Chapter 13, 314.

³³Ibid.

³⁴ M. A. E. Afigbo, “The Social Repercussions of Colonial Rule: The New Social Order”, in, *General History of Africa (Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880-1935)*, Vol. VII, Chapter 19, 487.

³⁵Ngoh, *History of Cameroon since 1800*, p.136.

territory which operated until 1945. Marcel Tezouin became the first inspector of schools. Schools in French Cameroon were organized in four categories: village schools which ran over four years, regional Schools with a three-year course, Adult school for those above regular school-going age and the Higher Primary and Professional Schools for a period of three years each. Spoken French, Hygiene, agriculture, animal husbandry, reading, writing, Arithmetic and the Metric system were taught in the village schools.

The Regional Schools had French Language, Arithmetic, the Metric System, physical and natural science, applicable Hygiene and Agriculture and notions of the history and geography of Cameroon and its administrative organization. Meanwhile the Higher Primary and professional schools had three sections; the pedagogical section for teacher training, the general education section for training of administrative staff and the technical education training for vocational professions³⁶. The higher primary and professional schools integrated aspects of moral and civic education, drawing and singing. Lessons in history and geography were oriented to the French colonial ideology and philosophy of presenting France as a rich and powerful country, capable of bringing peace and the advantages of civilization to the uncivilized people³⁷.

After the Second World War, there were some changes in education brought about by the change from the League of Nations to the United Nations Organization and from the change from mandated territories to trust territories with the objective of preparing the colonies for eventual self-rule and independence. In 1941, Felix Eboué, the then Governor general intimated that education focus on the training of the *evolue* who will eventually take part in colonial administration. The constitution of the Fourth French Republic of 1946 created the French Union and followed suit to encourage equality in education between the French people and the colonial people as promised during the Brazaville conference of 1944. In this effect a new educational law was passed in 1947 with new school programmes³⁸.

Following these reforms, the first secondary school which had been created in French Cameroon in 1944 and reserved only for whites, opened up admission to blacks in 1947. This school, which was gradually transformed into a modern and classical high school, was named after general Leclerc: that is *Lycée General Leclerc*. Another *Lycée* was opened in Douala with the same standards known as Lycée Jos. These schools prepared students for the French *Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle* (BEPC), *Probatoire* and *Baccalaureate* (BACC) examination. The programmes operating in these schools were the same as those used in schools in France, and History education was a major subject although it stressed on French and European History.

³⁶Fonkeng, *The History of Education in Cameroon*, pp. 48-53.

³⁷Ibid, p.61.

³⁸Ibid, p.66.

Other mission and public secondary schools were also set up in the territory, although limited to first cycle training. The French also setup pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training centres and other professional schools and post primary schools which all had elements of history education oriented to French colonial supremacy in their programmes.

COLONIAL AGENDA IN HISTORY EDUCATION UNDER THE BRITISH

When Cameroon was partitioned, the British further partitioned their own territory into British Southern Cameroons and British Northern Cameroons. Both were administered as integral parts of Nigeria. Consequently, all aspects of educational developments in Nigeria affected British Cameroons and were tele-guided from Nigeria. Since British Northern Cameroons voted during the 1961 plebiscite to join the Federal Republic of Nigeria at independence, we will focus on educational developments and the introduction of history education in British Southern Cameroons.

The British neglected social development in general and education in particular in Southern Cameroons. Education was in the hands of the government, Native administration and the Missions³⁹. The British aimed at training the natives as auxiliaries to colonial administration, clerks and business administration in the plantations. The Missions needed to train the natives to serve as pastors, catechists, teachers and clerks for evangelization. The native administration needed to train the natives to serve in the administration of the native clans and villages. This limited vision of education as a tool to facilitate colonial exploitation affected the curriculum in British Southern Cameroons. Initially the British prohibited vernacular languages in schools in favour of Pidgin English although their education philosophy was pegged to their policy of Indirect Rule⁴⁰. The regulations of Nigerian Education Ordinance of 1925 were applied in British Southern Cameroons.

Earlier on in 1919, the Phelps-Stokes Commission had identified the need to adapt education to the environment, the necessity for mass education of the indigenous population on their responsibilities and duties⁴¹. To achieve these goals, the schools in Southern Cameroons were organized under four categories: Government Schools, Native Authority (NA) schools, Mission schools and Hedge schools⁴². When the British took over from the Germans after the First World War, they classified all schools as elementary and these schools were made uniform. In the curriculum introduced by the British, were the following subjects: Hygiene, Agriculture,

³⁹Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, p.174.

⁴⁰R. N. Ndille. and A. Ngwa Canute, "Educational Harmonisation in Cameroon 1961-2011, Assessing Fifty Years of independent Policy Making", in, *Pan-TIKAR Journal of Histoty*, Vol. 1, N02, December 2013, p.4.

⁴¹Fonkeng, *The History of Education in Cameroon*, p.79.

⁴²Ibid, p.80.

Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Singing, and Religious instructions⁴³. In Standards one, pupils started preparing for the First School Leaving Certificate with an extended curriculum which included Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English Composition, English Grammar, English Dictation, Colloquial English and Physical Education⁴⁴. To achieve this, British school teachers used songs laden in British narratives and values to teach the natives. Below is (part of) one of these songs:

Now the flag we raise
The symbol of the free,
Gone are the evil days
Of German tyranny⁴⁵.

In 1922, H.H. Davidson, the inspector of education for the territory, visited Southern Cameroons. Based on the system operational in Nigeria, he published handbooks and schemes of work for the elementary schools. By this time, history education was not well developed. However almost every aspect of study in the elementary schools was very heavily charged with aspects of history education.

Let us analyse for a moment the title and content in 1928. The Atlantic Readers focused on English Language and African life; the West African Atlas with special maps of West Africa, Lives of Eminent Africans contained stories and biographical evidence of Africans who had written their names on the sands of time; A Physical Geography of West Africa which contained information on English West African colonies. It would be surprising to note that one of the books in use was an outline of Duala Grammar⁴⁶. With regard to the Nigerian system, Southern Cameroon was a rural area which required limited education. In village elementary schools of British Southern Cameroons, History was taught. However nothing about this subject was linked to Southern Cameroons. It was all focused on the History of Nigeria⁴⁷. Even though it valorised the African past history was taught to the Southern Cameroonians with the aim of Nigerianizing and not Cameroonizing them.

In 1932, the education cycle in British Southern Cameroons which was formerly nine years was reduced to eight years comprising Infants I and II, Elementary classes I, II, III, IV, Middle classes I and II which formerly followed the standards system⁴⁸. The school curriculum, the

⁴³Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, p.175.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ J. Lon Nfi, *Nigerians on Mission in the British Southern Cameroons*, Baron Printing House, Bamenda, 2015, p. 59.

⁴⁶ NAB, Ba/1928/1, Cameroon Province Annual Report for 1928, 1928, p79.

⁴⁷Nfi, *Nigerians on Mission in the British Southern Cameroons*, p. 61.

⁴⁸Ibid.

schemes of work and timetables of post elementary schools in British Southern Cameroons showed that by 1934, subjects like History, Nature Study, Geography, Drawing and Hand Writing, had been included in the curriculum⁴⁹. This was justified by the letter addressed to government school head masters in request for detailed schemes of work for particular subjects in 1935.

Between 1933 and 1963, a lot happened in the educational landscape in British Southern Cameroons. In 1932, an elementary teacher training college was created in Buea and transferred to Kake, near Kumba⁵⁰. By 1940, it was the sole elementary teacher training college in the territory⁵¹. Several others were later created by the Government and the missions. History featured as one of the subjects in these training colleges, especially as the subject was now taught in post-elementary schools.

In 1938, the first full scale secondary school was opened in the territory at Sasse, near Buea. An official letter of request for the opening of this middle school was addressed to the Senior Education officer for the Cameroons Province on the 20th of April 1938. This school was called Saint Joseph's College. Upon creation, history was one of the pioneer subjects included in the curriculum⁵². The mark sheet of the first batch of St. Joseph College as well as information on the course of studies and the curriculum of St. Joseph College contained History as a subject of study. In 1949, the Protestant Mission opened the Cameroon Protestant College (CPC) in Bali⁵³. By 1961, there was no High School in British Southern Cameroons. It was in 1962 that the government of the Federal Republic of Cameroon opened the first High School in the territory christened Cameroon College of Arts Science and Technology (CCAST) in Kumba, transferred to Bambui and today called CCAST Bambili⁵⁴. Among the subjects in the curriculum was history. This could be seen in the curriculum section on the report for the transfer of the college to Bambui. Thus all post secondary schools in British Southern Cameroon had history as a course of study. This certainly had to be the case because, earlier in 1958, the report for the year in British Cameroons was published. It showed that, in Class Five of the secondary school, the West African School Certificate (WASC) examination was taken and emphasis was laid on English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography⁵⁵. History at this time focused more on English history and the Commonwealth.

⁴⁹NAB, Sb/a(1934)2, File N°CM218, School Syllabuses, Schemes and Timetables.

⁵⁰NAB, Sb/d (1963)1, Teacher Training College Kumba.

⁵¹NAB, Sb/a 1975/1, Education in Anglophone Cameroon 1915-1975 by C. Courade.

⁵²NAB, Sb/h(1938)1, File No. CM 308/25, St. Joseph's College Sasse

⁵³Fonkeng, *The History of Education in Cameroon*, p. 90.

⁵⁴NAB, Sb/h (1963)1, File No. SS.129, Cameroon College of Arts and Science, p.4.

⁵⁵Report for the year 1958, Cameroons under the United Kingdom Administration, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1959, p.227.

POST COLONIAL STRIDES AND THE REINFORCEMENT OF FRONTIERS IN HISTORY EDUCATION

On the first of January 1960, French Cameroon gained independence and became the Republic of Cameroon. On the 11th of February 1961, British Southern Cameroonians voted in a United Nations organized plebiscite to gain independence by joining the Republic of Cameroon. On the 1st of October 1961, British Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon reunited and formed the Federal republic of Cameroon. The Federal Republic of Cameroon inherited in its wake, English and French as official languages and the English and French sub-systems of education went operational in the former states of West Cameroon and East Cameroon respectively.

The French colonial ideology and philosophy of presenting France as a rich and powerful country capable of bringing peace and the advantages of civilization to the uncivilized people was the backbone of French colonial education⁵⁶. The already identity-challenged Cameroonians under the Germans now had to take up new values of personal identification. On the other hand, the French went ahead deleting Cameroonian and German values from the natives and inculcating even by force French values and identity in more competitive and individual effort based attempts from the natives who evolved from *sujets* to *citoyens*. In the French schools, French and European History were the focus of history education. Thus the French assimilation tendencies were being systematically reinforced. A colonial hybrid elite class, neither African nor French yet with seemingly unalloyed French loyalty and dependence emerged at the wake of independence and negotiated reunification.

The British on their part had pegged education to the British policy of Indirect Rule⁵⁷. The initial mission of education after the First World War in British Southern Cameroons was to erase memories of Germany and implant images of Britain and Nigeria in the Southern Cameroonians⁵⁸. This more liberal and native sensitive system organized education under four categories: Government Schools, Native Authority (NA) schools, Mission schools and Hedge schools⁵⁹. History education was not emphasized in the elementary schools. However, frontiers in government, mission and Native Authority educational objectives were not absolutely assimilative, and so upheld a greater degree of the African personality and consciousness of the natives with self reliant tendencies born of British neglect of thereof British Southern Cameroons. Limited government interference in education gave room for the development of local government and rapid self-determination born out of a seemingly binary colonial heritage,

⁵⁶Ibid, p.61.

⁵⁷Ndille and Ngwa, "Educational Harmonization in Cameroon December 2013, p.4.

⁵⁸Nfi, *Nigerians on Mission in the British Southern Cameroons*, p. 59.

⁵⁹Fonkeng, *The History of Education in Cameroon*, p. 80.

first by the British and then the Nigerian Igbos domination scare. These frontiers hopefully would be annihilated in the wake of independence and reunification.

The 1961 federal constitution stipulated that; “the federal government was to organize and exercise control over higher education and scientific research, secondary general and technical education.” To this end, the first ministry of national education was created and this marked the beginning of a national policy on education⁶⁰. Therefore the French and the British systems of education were to come under scrutiny due to the challenge of coping or accommodating two systems of education.

Between March 10th - 20th1962, a UNESCO mission visited the Federal Republic of Cameroon so as to advise the young nation on how to cope with the bilingual and bicultural linguistic and educational system⁶¹. This gave rise to the federal law of 1963 regulating general and technical education⁶². It was this law which called for the harmonization of secondary school systems in both states of the Federal Republic of Cameroon to seven-year programs of two cycles: a first cycle of five years and a second cycle of two years which had to go operational in 1965⁶³. In 1966, the Higher Council of Education formed a joint committee of experts from the states of East and West Cameroon to work on the harmonization of the secondary school syllabuses and examinations. This committee met in Yaounde from January 13th- 15th 1966 to select from both systems what was “valuable, enriching and educationally good and which will provide a recognized standard⁶⁴.

The proposals brought up by this committee were quite interesting. It proposed that the London GCE Ordinary Level taken at the end of the first cycle in West Cameroon and the BEPC in East Cameroon be replaced by a new certificate to be called the Certificate of General Education (CGE) and the London GCE Advanced Level in West Cameroon and the Baccalaureate in the State of East Cameroon be replaced by a new certificate called Secondary Education Leaving Certificate (SELC). Consequently, candidates had to study the same programme content for these examinations in the Official language of the system of education under which they studied⁶⁵.

This was the initial vision of education in Cameroon at the wake of independence and reunification. This vision was quite interesting and optimistic. Its implementation was what all awaited. However, the evolution of the history programmes operational in Cameroon secondary schools between after Independence and Reunification have left very little to be desired while

⁶⁰Fonkeng, *The History of Education in Cameroon*, p.99.

⁶¹Ndilleand Ngwa, “Educational Harmonization in Cameroon” , p.11.

⁶²Law NO.1.63/DF/13 of 19th June 1963.

⁶³Ndille and Ngwa, “Educational Harmonization in Cameroon”, p.13.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid, p. 14.

consolidating the frontiers inherited from the colonial education systems. By 1961, there existed several secondary schools in the state of East Cameroon. We had *lycée General Leclerc and Lycée Jos* as the prominent ones with complete secondary education cycles.⁶⁶ These two high schools had the same programmes as those operational in France⁶⁷. At the end of the second cycle, the BACC was taken by students. It should be noted that history was usually combined with geography and taught as *Histoire et Géographie*. In this light, the evolution of the subject incorporated geography especially as a geography teacher had to teach history and a history teacher had to teach geography by professional obligation⁶⁸.

In 1963, the ministers of National Education of French-speaking African and Malagasy countries elaborated and adopted new programmes for history which were adapted to the needs of the newly independent states⁶⁹. In 1965, another conference of ministers of national education of French-speaking Africa and Malagasy states elaborated new history programmes. This new programme contained 272 lessons in history within the areas of European, World, American, Asian and African history, which carried the highest number of lessons⁷⁰. Cameroon History did not feature in this programme as an independent area of study. Thus the 1965 history programme for secondary schools in the state of East Cameroon intensified ideological frontiers through more westernized training in history.

In 1967, the Ministers of the French speaking states of Africa and Malagasy met in Paris and elaborated a new programme for secondary schools⁷¹. This programme had quite some interesting changes. Cameroon history featured in the secondary school history programme for the first time⁷². This programme experienced an increase in the number of lessons from 272 to 280 compared to that in the 1965 programme⁷³. This increase was paradoxical. This perhaps was due to the influence of the French curriculum experts who were brought in to design the programme⁷⁴.

⁶⁶Fonkeng, *The History of Education in Cameroon*, p.68.

⁶⁷E. Madiba, *Colonisation et Evangelisation en Afrique: Heritage Scolaire du Cameroun (1889-1956)*, Peter Lang, Berne, 1980, pp. 124-125.

⁶⁸When the Higher Teachers college in Yaounde was opened by the federal government of Cameroon in 1961, one of the pioneer departments was that of History/Geography which trained teachers to teach *Histoire et Géographie*.

⁶⁹S. Eyezo'o, "L'Enseignement de L'Histoire dans le secondaire au Cameroun", p.383.

⁷⁰AvotoEssindi, "Analyse du Contenu des Enseignements sur la Traite Negriere", p.13.

⁷¹AvotoEssindi. "Analyse du Contenu des Enseignements sur la Traite Negriere dans les programmes Scholaires: Cas de la classe de 4^e 1960-2015", p.13.

⁷²Eyezo'o, "L'Enseignement de L'Histoire dans le secondaire au Cameroun", P.383.

⁷³AvotoEssindi. "Analyse du Contenu des Enseignements sur la Traite Negriere dans les programmes Scholaires: Cas de la classe de 4^e 1960-2015", p.16.

⁷⁴Eyezo'o, "L'Enseignement de L'Histoire dans le secondaire au Cameroun", P.383.

In 1973⁷⁵, an independent commission was set up by the ministry of national education to readjust the programme for *Terminale*⁷⁶. The history programme was Cameroonized, that is made unique to Cameroon as opposed to that of the French speaking African and Malagasy states⁷⁷. Despite this Cameroonization, Cameroon history did not figure in the programme as an independent area of interest. From every indication, the scenario of the domination of other histories or areas of interest over Cameroon and African history still did not change despite the purported Cameroonization of the BACC programme in general and that of history in particular. These changes were contained in circular No. 70/G/49/MINEDUC/SG/SAP of October 10th, 1973.

In 1983⁷⁸, the general inspectorate of pedagogy published the programmes for general secondary education operational in Cameroon general secondary education⁷⁹. History certainly was among the subjects of study and featured the adjustments that had been made in the earlier programmes, except for *Terminale*⁸⁰. This programme assigned lessons in African history including Cameroon, world, European, American and Asian History.

Circular No.53/d/64/MINEDUC/IGP/ESG/IPN-HG of 15th November, 1990 of the Ministry of National Education on the amelioration and updating of the history programmes in Cameroon secondary schools⁸¹ modified the 1963, 1973 and the 1979 programmes for history⁸². Inspired by the length of former programmes, the socio-economic and political needs of the country⁸³, especially as the previous programmes relegated Cameroon and African history, Cameroon and African history had to be given a chance in the new programme. This circular ushered the new programme for history in Cameroon secondary schools that is operational in secondary schools of the French-speaking sub-system till date⁸⁴.

In the state of West Cameroon, the history education programmes took a different path. All through the colonial period there were very few secondary schools in the territory. The few that existed were all mission schools. The mission secondary schools included St. Joseph College

⁷⁵Documentation of the General Inspectorate of of pedagogy for general secondary education (ESG), Ministry of Secondary education.

⁷⁶The last class or last year of study in secondary school for the French sub systeme of education.

⁷⁷AvotoEssindi. "Analyse du Contenu des Enseignements sur la Traite Negriere", p.16.

⁷⁸Documentation of the General Inspectorate of pedagogy for general secondary education (ESG), Ministry of Secondary education.

⁷⁹ Programmes de L'Enseignement Secondaire General, Ministere de l'Education Nationale, Inspection Generale de Pedagogie , Edition 1981-1982.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p.p. 247-264.

⁸¹Authors Translation of the circular.

⁸²Eyezo'o, "L'Enseignement de L'Histoire dans le secondaire au Cameroun", P.384.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Interview with Eyene Marcel, PLEG/Histoire-Geographie, National Pedagogique Inspector/Geographie, age 50, Yaounde, May 11th, 2018.

Sasse, Queen of the Rosary College Okoyong, and Cameroon Protestant College Bali, among others. These schools took the Cambridge Certificate exams, then the WASC after five years of secondary Education and, later, the London GCE. It was in 1962 that the Cameroon College of Arts Science and Technology (CCAST) Bambili was created in Kumba⁸⁵. To gain admission into CCAST, students had to have a pass in the Teacher Grade I and Grade two certificates or must have passed the London GCE O/L⁸⁶. Upon creation, the arts section of CCAST went operational and among the subjects in the curriculum was History⁸⁷. In 1963, the WASC was replaced by the London GCE and so, students had to take the GCE A/L examinations organized and controlled by the University of London⁸⁸. The history syllabus at this time included History A/L 268-Syllabus "C" (English and European History), and A/L 269-Syllabus "D" (World Affairs From 1919)⁸⁹.

It is worth noting that Cameroon and African History did not feature as major areas of interest in the syllabuses "C" and "D". In 1977, the GCE was Cameroonized⁹⁰. The syllabuses "C" and "D" did not change; only some aspects of the syllabuses changed. Topics like British Commonwealth and Empire History, British Economic History, The British Constitution, British Government and Political Systems⁹¹ were taken off the syllabus. Equally, the centre of control shifted from the University of London to the Directorate of Examinations and Organization of the Ministry of National Education⁹². This took effect from the January 1978 session of the GCE⁹³. In effect, this change meant that the setting of the GCE will be done in Cameroon under the supervision of the Directorate of Examinations and Organization, and then sent to London for moderation⁹⁴. These changes still did not factor Cameroon and African History.

In 1983, precisely on the 27th of September 1983, the Ministry of National Education issued a circular which aimed at restructuring the GCE examinations both for the O/L and the A/L⁹⁵. This circular sought to transform the GCE which hitherto had a unique syllabus and scheme into

⁸⁵ NAB, Sb/h(1963)1, File No. SS.129, Cameroon College of Arts and Science, p.4.

⁸⁶ Those who enrolled in to CCAST Bambili who were not from the regular mission secondary schools in West Cameroon had taken the GCE O/L externally while they were working.

⁸⁷ NAB, Sb/h(1963)1, File No. SS.129, Cameroon College of Arts and Science, p.8.

⁸⁸ Fonkeng, *The History of Education in Cameroon*, p.104.

⁸⁹ Teachers' Resource Centre, Bamenda, Regional Schemes of Work for History first Cycle, The History Pedagogic Office/NOWHCTA/TRC, Bamenda, August 2011, p.1.

⁹⁰ Interview with Nkempu Romanus, age 66, retired Regional Pedagogic Inspector for Citizenship Education, North West/Former Examiner, London GCE, Bamenda, December 29th, 2017.

⁹¹ Nyamjoh, *The Cameroon GCE Crisis: A Test of Anglophone Solidarity*, p.132.

⁹² Presidential Degree No. 72/381 of August 1973 on the reorganization of the Ministry of National Education creating the department of examinations and management.

⁹³ Interview with Ndifor Akepu William, age 73, Retired Teacher, Buea, December 07th, 2017.

⁹⁴ Fonkeng, *The History of Education in Cameroon*, p.122.

⁹⁵ Nyamjoh, *The Cameroon GCE Crisis: A Test of Anglophone Solidarity*, p.19.

group certificate schemes⁹⁶. The GCE subjects had to be organized in groups of subjects. This was to go operational for the O/L in 1985 and A/L in 1987. This was vehemently rejected by the Anglophone community in Cameroon. This led to the 1983 riots and boycotts by students of Anglophone background in the University of Yaounde, Parents and Teachers Associations of Anglophone Students in Yaounde and in the North West and South West provinces at the time.

This circular was finally cancelled, and this inspired the idea of a Cameroon GCE Board to cater for the needs of the English-speaking sub-system of education in Cameroon. Following presidential decree No. 93/172 of July 1st 1993, the Cameroon GCE Board was created⁹⁷. The creation of the Cameroon GCE Board inspired reflections on the inherited syllabuses from the University of London in general, and the London GCE in particular.

In 1995, the board general for education were convened. It was this education conference that ushered in changes in education in Cameroon through the 1998 law on the orientation of education. However, before this law was promulgated by the parliament, the Cameroon GCE board had unleashed procedures for the amelioration and adaptation of subject syllabuses to Cameroon realities in general and to the English-speaking sub-system of education in general. In 1997, the syllabus "A", "B" "C" and "D" of the O/L and A/L were scrapped off and replaced with the O/L History 560 and A/L History 760 syllabuses which were unique syllabuses⁹⁸. This change brought Cameroon, Africa and World History as areas of interest in the GCE Syllabuses. Thus, so much has been scrapped off the History 760 syllabus since 1997 to give priority to Cameroon and African History which make up at least 75% of the History 760 syllabus.

CONCLUSION

The subject history which we find in the school programmes in post colonial Cameroon has a long history. It was first introduced by the Germans in their schools. It continued with the missionaries, and later the British and French colonial administrators. The course of study and curriculum were not the same in the different institutions. The introduction of history education was quite purposeful and had intended objectives. In the elementary and post-elementary schools, teacher training colleges, seminaries, secondary schools and later high schools, each colonial master and education authority introduced history education to serve its colonial interests in the territory. First of all, colonial interest aimed at exploiting and dominating the colony economically, politically and culturally. In the course of dominating the colonised, purported national civilization values were formally transmitted to them through the history

⁹⁶Ibid p.42.

⁹⁷Nyamjoh, *The Cameroon GCE Crisis: A Test of Anglophone Solidarity*, p.179.

⁹⁸Interview with Ntungwe Catherine Ahone, age 59, National Pedagogic Inspector, History/Citizenship Education, yaounde, May 5th, 2018.

curriculum in schools. The outcome was the creation of rifts, cleavages, frontiers and conflicts among the different peoples who negotiated independence and reunification.

The German colonial policy instilled a solid heritage for a united territory which lingered through the Pan-Kamerun Idea within the framework of the pre-1916 legacy of the German protectorate⁹⁹. The imposition of Germanic values, through the German Language and the promotion of the history of Germany invented conflicts of personality. Although intangible, this created personality conflicts¹⁰⁰. Natives under the German protectorate developed conflicting tendencies of self. Not allying with the colonial master was resistance and shifting from indigenous worldviews was cultural perversity. While the government controlled schools under the Germans emphasized Germanic values, especially after the 1907 education conference and the 1910 education law in the territory, the missions equally nursed their own objectives and intended behavioural and psychosocial loyalties. The British and the French colonial administrations stratified the colonised people and their missionaries cemented the religious cleavages through the creation of denominational faith-based spheres of influence.

The Basel Mission Seminary in Buea focused on Ecclesiastical and denominational history. The Baptist Mission School in Douala envisaged Bible History and the History of Israel. The Catholic Mission Seminary near Buea taught; the history of the church¹⁰¹. This was not only a missionary invention of denominational spaces, but also Christian faith based on frontiers and loyalties. Thus different localities and peoples upheld different Christian religious tendencies with unimaginable competitive tendencies. Through British Commonwealth history, British Southern Cameroonians turned West Cameroonians became unequivocally liberal and self-reliant with expressed tendencies of social liberties of their African personality, although tinted with Nigerian colours. On the other hand, French Cameroonians, that is the Republic of Cameroon, turned East Cameroonians through French History, demonstrated cultural, political and economical assimilation and over-arching centralized tendencies. After independence and reunification, these cleavages and conflicts seemed to have resurfaced, and amplified intangible unconscious frontiers and resistances to internal cohesion, national integration and *vivre ensemble* in post-colonial Cameroon.

The unalloyed continuation of French colonially-inherited modes of operation in the educational landscape and the over insistence on the Anglo-Saxon values and perpetual fear of the domination of the educational space in Cameroon by Cameroonians of English and French-

⁹⁹ W. Dze-Ngwa, "Fiftieth Anniversaries of independence and Reunification and the Challenges to internal cohesion in Cameroon: A Historical Analysis, 1960-2014", in, *HABARU*, Nouvelle Serie, Vol. I, No. 2, Juin 2014, p. 294.

¹⁰⁰ E. S. D., Fomin, "The Intangible Slavery Heritage of Douala", in, *HABARU*, Nouvelle Serie, Vol. I, No. 2, June 2014, p.310.

¹⁰¹Fonkeng, *The History of Education in Cameroon*, p.42.

speaking backgrounds respectively has been manifested on several accounts by contending educational stakeholders. Attempts at educational harmonisation as proposed by UNESCO in 1963 were stifled. Between 1961 and 1993 when two separate examination boards were created for Cameroon, separate examinations in general and for history education in particular, were run by separate educational boards of both Cameroon educational sub-systems using different syllabuses. In 1983, attempts to reform the GCE programmes in general and that of history to include Cameroon and African history were rejected by Anglophone Cameroon parents and teachers' associations vehemently. The 1995 conference on education in Cameroon validated a bicultural educational system that is the English and French-speaking sub-systems of education in Cameroon. These frontiers inherited out of colonial education in general and history education in particular were corroborated and consolidated by the 1998 law on the orientation of education in Cameroon which authorised and validated the English and French-speaking educational sub-systems.

The introduction of the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) to education in 2013 experienced stiff resistance due to its harmonisation tendencies, which was not in tandem with the 1998 laws of the orientation of education in Cameroon. In 2016, violent protests erupted in Cameroon, partly because of the bi-cultural educational and legal histories, especially as reinforced through different curricula objectives and history education syllabuses, and the absence of a unique or identical national narrative for learners which imbibed and bequeathed uncompromising mentality constructs among Cameroonians. These mutations have unequivocally consolidated and remodelled civic differences through educational policies resulting in the resurfacing and prolongation of these uncompromising mentalities constructs in post-colonial Cameroon.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Besides early authors and research institutions, the author would like to thank sincerely Arnold Nchamaze Akepu, my student, history teacher and research collaborator for all his varying commitments to see this paper get mature. I remain forever thankful to him. Nevertheless, all interpretations and conclusions reached here are, of course, the authors' responsibility.

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