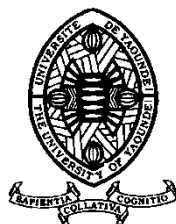


THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I

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UNIVERSITE DE YAOUNDE I

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**MAMFE DIVISION IN CAMEROON'S REUNIFICATION
PROCESS, 1922-2017**

THESIS SUBMITTED AND DEFENDED ON THE 14TH MAY 2024 FOR THE
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SPECIALISATION: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

BY

JOHN ENOW TABE
B.A., M.A., (HISTORY)



JURY

President: DONG MOUGNOL Maxime Gabriel, Pr; Université de Yaoundé I

Rapporteurs: VERKIJIKA G. FANSO, Pr; Université de Yaoundé I

ENOKENWA Anderson T., MC; Université de Yaoundé I

Members: TAKOR KAHJUM Nixon, Pr; Université de Bamenda

MOUSSA II, MC; Université de Yaoundé I

KUM Georges FUH, MC; Université de Yaoundé I

MAY 2024

To

Andreas Tabe Ako

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ABSTRACT

The study traces the evolution and impact of the unification of the British Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon on Manyu (formerly Mamfe) Division. Emphasis is laid on the political, economic, and socio-cultural impact. It also accounts for the challenges of unification in Manyu. The study dwells on the main objective of reunification, which was to protect and preserve the existing political, economic and social values of both the Cameroons. As far as tools of data collection are concerned, this research work made use of primary and secondary sources of data. In terms of secondary sources, I made use of an extensive literature that offered some general and specific information about the study. After a critical analysis of archival data and interviews, tangible evidences emerged to buttress the fact that the reunification arrangements positively and negatively affected Manyu Division. To ensure an easy understanding of the study, the study adopted a conventional analytical pattern. I used both chronological and topical approaches. These approaches, illustrated how changes in the forms of government: from the federal to unitary state and to a Republic were against the original aim of the unification agenda. Our findings reveal three central issues: firstly, unification retarded political, economic and socio-cultural progress in Manyu Division. Secondly, unification distorted chieftaincy institutions and intensified chieftaincy disputes in the division. Above all, the unification arrangements have been highly challenged in Manyu because its demerits outweighed its merits. The study opines that, for reunification to be largely accepted by many, especially among Manyu people, there is a great need for a return to a federal system of government in Cameroon. In addition, some negative reforms introduced in Cameroon following reunification should be reviewed for the sake of peace. The study ends with a perspective view for better governance in Cameroon.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude retrace l'évolution et l'impact de l'unification des British Southern Cameroons et de la République du Cameroun sur le Département de la Manyu (jadis appelé Mamfe). L'accent est mis sur l'impact politique, économique et socioculturel. Elle rend également compte des défis de l'unification dans le Département de la Manyu. Le travail s'attarde sur l'objectif principal de la réunification qui était de protéger et de préserver les valeurs politiques, économiques et sociales existantes des deux Camerouns. En ce qui concerne les outils de collecte de données, cette étude a eu recours aux sources primaires et secondaires. Pour ce qui concerne les sources secondaires de l'étude, d'importantes informations d'ordre général et spécifique ont été puisées dans la littérature abondante y relative. De l'analyse critique des données d'archives et des entretiens, ont jailli des preuves tangibles pour étayer l'argument selon lequel l'accord d'unification a eu un impact positif et négatif sur le Département de la Manyu. Pour garantir une compréhension facile du travail, nous avons adopté un schéma analytique conventionnel. Nous avons usé des approches chronologiques et thématiques. Ces approches ont montré en quoi les changements intervenus au niveau des formes de l'État de l'État fédéral à l'État unitaire et à la République, étaient à l'encontre de l'objectif initial du programme d'unification. Nos résultats révèlent trois problèmes centraux: premièrement, l'unification a retardé le progrès politique, économique et socioculturel du Département de la Manyu. Deuxièmement, l'unification a entraîné le dérèglement des chefferies traditionnelles et a exacerbé des conflits de chefferie dans le Département de la Manyu. Par-dessus tout, il ressort de l'étude que l'accord d'unification a été fortement contesté dans le Département de la Manyu parce que ses méfaits l'ont emporté sur ses bienfaits. L'étude a alors posé que, pour que l'unification rencontre un large consensus, en particulier parmi les Manyu, il y a une nécessité impérieuse et urgente d'un retour à l'État fédéral au Cameroun. Aussi, certaines réformes négatives introduites au Cameroun après la réunification devraient-elles faire l'objet d'une révision pour le bien de la paix. L'étude s'achève par une mise en perspective en vue d'une meilleure gouvernance au Cameroun.

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DISCLAIMER

This thesis is the outcome of meticulous, methodical, painstaking and time-consuming research and drafting, which has been accepted by the defence jury and made available to the extended university and academic community.

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The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author/candidate and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or official stance of the Postgraduate School for Human, Social and Educational Sciences of the University of Yaounde I.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAC	All Anglophone Conference
AG	Action Group
AMTW	Association of Motor Transport Workers
CAM	Cameroon Anglophone Movement
CAMASA	Cameroon Anglophones Students Association
CAPSU	Cameroon Anglophone Public Servant Association
CAPTAC	Confederation of Anglophone Parents and Teachers Association of Cameroon
CCC	Cameroon Commoners' Congress
CDC	Cameroon Development Corporation
CINTRACO	Cameroon International Trading Company
CIP	Cameroon Indigenous Party
CMTU	Cameroon Moto Transport Union
CNF	Cameroon National Federation
CNU	Cameroon National Union
COREC	Committee for the Reunification of the Cameroons
CRTV	Cameroon Radio and Television
CUC	Cameroon United Congress
CYL	Cameroon Youth League
D.O	District Officer
DAM	Divisional Archives of Mamfe
ESDA	Eyumojock Sub- Divisional Association
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GRA	Government Residential Area
HRH	His Royal Highness
KNC	Kamerun National Congress
KNDP	Kamerun National Democratic Party
KPP	Kamerun People's Party
KS	Kamerun Society
KUNC	Kamerun United National Congress
KUP	Kamerun United Party
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
MA	Master of Arts
MACEFCOOP	Mamfe Central Farmers' Cooperative Union
MCC	Mamfe Chiefs Conference

N UD	National Union for Democracy and Progress
NA	Native Authority
NAB	National Archives of Buea
NAY-	National Archives of Yaounde
NCNC	National Council for Nigeria and Cameroon
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOWEDA	North West Development Association
NOWEFU	North West Fon Union
NPMB	National Produce Marketing Board
NUKS	National Union of Kamerun Students
ODCA	Ossing Development and Cultural Association
OK	One Kamerun
PWD	Public Works Department
SC	Southern Cameroons
SCHA	Southern Cameroons House of Assembly
SCHC	Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs
SCNC	Southern Cameroons National Council
SCUF	Southern Cameroons Consortium Front
SCYL	Southern Cameroons Youth League
SDF	Social Democratic Front
SDO	Senior Divisional Officer
SWELA	South West Elites Association
TAC	Teachers Association of Cameroon
TICUDA	Tinto Cultural and Development Association
UPC	Union des Populations du Camerounaise
VDA	Village Development Associations
VIKUMA	Victoria, Kumba – Mamfe
WADA	Wum Area Development Authority
WCHC	West Cameroon House of Chiefs

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The First World War that broke out in Europe in July 1914 was extended to Kamerun in August 1914, which was a German colony¹. When the war ended in February 1916, the Germans who caused it were defeated and ousted from the colony. After the War, Kamerun was temporally passed over to Britain and France for joint administration. The territory was soon partitioned between the two powers into British and French Cameroons. Each territory adopted the language, law and, tradition of their colonial master. The partition was not evenly done as four-fifths of the territory went to the French and became known as French Cameroon while the British took one-fifth, which was administered as an integral part of their protectorate of Nigeria. In 1920, the League of Nations confirmed the partition when Articles 22 and 23 of the Covenant officially handed the two parts to Britain and France as Mandate 'B'² territories of the League. Britain further divided British Cameroon in 1922 into two, that is, British Northern Cameroons and British Southern Cameroons.

In order to avoid the experience, they had had during the abolition of the slave trade during which they come to know that Cameroonians were hostile against it; the British concluded that the best way to administer its Southern Cameroons territory was to use their traditional rulers in order to avoid direct confrontations with the people. This led to the implementation of the policy of Indirect Rule. By this policy, the British used the services of traditional rulers in administration owing to insufficient trained colonial administrators. There was therefore need for the available British administrators to work in close collaboration with the local institutions they met on the ground.³The policy ushered in modern administration in the Southern Cameroons with the establishment of the system of Native Authorities.⁴

To further ensure the smooth running of the territory, Southern Cameroons was administered as integral parts of Nigeria, and Northern Cameroons was administered as an extension of three Northern Nigeria Provinces of Bornu, Benue and Adamawa while Southern Cameroons was a single province on its own right known as the Cameroons Province and was administered together with the Southern Provinces of Nigeria. An official Resident at the Capital in Buea headed the Cameroons Province. The Resident was directly under the

¹ V.G. Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges Vol.2*, The Colonial and Post-Colonial Periods, London, Macmillan Cameroon, 1989, p.54.

² Mandate 'B' were the League of Nations' territories in less advanced regions with no immediate prospect of independence.

³ V.G. Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges Vol.2*, 1989, p.84.

⁴ A Native Authority was a person appointed, or a traditional ruler recognized by the British as agent of administration.

Lieutenant Governor of the Southern Provinces. The Lieutenant Governor was under the Governor General in Lagos.⁵ By 1922, the British created four administrative divisions in the Southern Cameroons, namely Victoria, Kumba, Mamfe, Bamenda. A District Officer (D.O) headed each of the divisions.⁶

Against this background, the study has selected one of these divisions, Mamfe Division to constitute the focus of the study. With the introduction of the policy of Indirect Rule, traditional rulers of the divisions became very prominent in modern administration. As said earlier, the British had few administrators to assist in the process of effective administration; it therefore became imperative to use the services of traditional rulers to fill this deficit. Thus, traditional rulers of Mamfe Division and those of the rest of Southern Cameroons were initiated into modern politics through this policy of Indirect Rule.⁷ They played important roles when (former) Southern Cameroons struggled for independence from Britain.

Indirect Rule was a true reflection of the general belief that every government, if it had to be permanent, progressive, or long lasting needed to have its roots buried deep into the fabrics of the indigenous society. The chiefs or agents became the cornerstones of politics during the colonial period, especially all through the Mandate and Trusteeship periods until Southern Cameroons achieved independence in 1961. Eventually the educated elite of the territory criticized the system because it gave much political responsibilities to traditional rulers and relegated them to the background. The British administering authority used natural rulers because of their belief that they mastered the traditional set-up better. The British believed that chiefs could share with them their knowledge of the indigenous peoples without them necessarily being part of the traditional community. By 1960, the chiefs constituted the legislative arm of government as members of the Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs (SCHC).⁸

Outside the legislative structures, traditional rulers made their voices heard through the periodic holding of chiefs' conferences. They became a liaison between their chiefdoms and the government and held close consultations with other indigenous officials like chief Besong, Chief Mukete and Galega II. Traditionally, the office of the *Nfor* or chief was the centre of cohesion and unity in every Chiefdom or Village in the Mamfe area. This system

⁵ Ibid. p.96.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ V. J. Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884-1885: A Hundred Years of History*, Limbe, Navy Group Publication, 1987, p.198.

⁸ Ibid. p.199.

went on until 1939, when the Second World War broke out.⁹ The Second World War ended in the 1945 with the creation of the United Nations Organisation (UNO).¹⁰ The organisation created the Trusteeship Agreement as one of its main organs to replace the League of Nations Mandate Commission to continue with the responsibility of taking care of territories of the defeated powers of First World War. In one of the Articles of the Charter of the UN, the organisation adopted the principle of equal rights and self-determination¹¹ of people which was enshrined as a basic objective. In the decades that followed, more than eighty colonial territories became independent because of the principle of self-determination. Other territories chose free association with an already independent state such was the case of Southern Cameroons in 1961. Southern Cameroons had all that was necessary to be qualified as an independent entity, but the UN did not give it. In 1961, the UN decided to impose a plebiscite with two questions for the people to choose the country with which they wanted to associate at independence.

Prior to 1961, both neighbouring British Nigeria and French Cameroon attained their independence leaving Southern Cameroonians in a dilemma about which of these two nations they would join to gain their own independence. The independence of the territory was complicated by the Borlough Economic Report, which stated that “Southern Cameroons would be economically unable to maintain itself if it gained independence on its own right”¹². This statement shattered all hopes of the territory to achieve independence on its own right. That is why at the United Nations, the only two questions proposed to feature at the plebiscite were for Southern Cameroonians to choose to gain independence by joining either the Federal Republic of Nigeria or the Republic of Cameroon which had all gained independence in 1960.

British Southern Cameroonians voted in a UN organized plebiscite to gain their independence on 11th February 1961. The plebiscite was conducted in the six administrative divisions of the territory. The divisions were Victoria, Kumba, Mamfe, Bamenda, Wum and Nkambe. A final UN plebiscite was soon organised in the Trust Territory on the 11th and 12th February 1961. The two questions asked were the same in the Southern and Northern Cameroons in the plebiscite: Whether they wished to achieve independence by joining the

⁹ Fanson, on BBC Witness History. May 2018.

¹⁰ Idem.

¹¹ Self-determination means that the person of a colony or a dependent territory decides about the future status of their homeland.

¹² Idem.

Independent Republic of Cameroun or by joining the Independent Federation of Nigeria.¹³ This study centres on the struggle in Mamfe Division for the independence of Southern Cameroons.

Southern Cameroonians were led into the plebiscite by Prime Minister, John Ngu Foncha who had agreed, beforehand, with the French Cameroon Prime Minister, Ahmadou Ahidjo that the two countries shall unit as a federation which would preserve the autonomy of either territory. This made Foncha to campaign for unification on the basis of two equal states and that in the federation nothing much would change in the Southern Cameroons. Southern Cameroons would still be running her internal affairs. This assurance made many electorates to vote for reunification thinking that they too were gaining the independence they much cherished.¹⁴

Uniting with the Republic of Cameroon had its advantages and disadvantages. To start with, the Republic of Cameroon was in a midst of a civil war. The nationalist militants of the *L'Union des Populations du Cameroun* (UPC) fought for independence against the French colonial rule and was continuing even against the newly independent state government that maintained close ties with France. These same reasons were used by Southern Cameroonians to vote against unification and in support of the main opposition leader, E.M.L. Endeley, led the pro-Nigerian campaign. Endeley campaigned using the slogan that “Going to French Cameroon was suicidal and that the territory will lose everything and eventually become French”. One of the Southern Cameroons influential rulers, Fon Achirimbi of Bafut said, “Going to Nigeria was drowning and coming to French Cameroon was to be roasted in fire”. For him, Southern Cameroons would not be better either way.¹⁵ So, he stood firmly for the third option that was denied, that is, the total independence without joining either state. This was to avoid domination from the Nigeria or the Republic of Cameroun which numerical were more Southern Cameroons.

However, the campaign was very peaceful, as people came out to listen to the manifesto of their political leaders. The people of Southern Cameroons came out non-violently and voted their choices. Evidently, the majority of the people would have voted to join Nigeria where they had similarities in everything, including inherited colonial culture, education, the political system and the democratic nature of the country. However, there was one factor that deterred

¹³ Fanzo, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, Macmillan Publishers Ltd, Kumbo, 2017, p.328.

¹⁴ Interview with V. G. Fanzo, 82 Years, Professor Emeritus, Yaounde, 23 May 2021.

¹⁵ T.M. Eyongetah, R. Brain and R. Palmer, *A History of the Cameroon*. London, Longman, 1988. p.141.

them from voting to join Nigeria, the Igbo factor.¹⁶ According to the 1953 population census, there were 83,000 Nigerians in the Southern Cameroons and a majority were in trade and trade related activities. By 1959 they were controlling 85 per cent of the trade. They were hawkers, petty traders, drug distributors, liquor vendors, itinerant tailors and restaurant operators.¹⁷ In fact, they were found in all economic life of the territory and they dominated it.

The Igbo were the third largest ethnic group in Nigeria, which dominated political activities in the eastern part of that country. In addition, over the years, the Igbos crossed to Southern Cameroons and settled in major towns such as Mamfe, Kumba, Tiko, Victoria, Bamenda and Nkambe. The fear of continuous Igbo tyranny and domination in the territory became a major feature that characterized the campaigns for the plebiscite. The Igbo community in Southern Cameroons was larger and very dynamic, they were found in every sphere of the economic life of the territory. They occupied land here and there, farms and farming, were in the markets where they controlled stalls and trading. This early experience of the Igbo domination created fear amongst the majority of indigenous people who believed that if they went to Nigeria, the Igbo would have every right in the Southern Cameroons and it would be suicidal. This discouraged the electorates from voting to join Nigeria.¹⁸

In February 1961, Southern Cameroonians went to the polls to choose between joining the Federal Republic of Nigeria or Republic of Cameroon. The electors turned up massively and voting was very peaceful: no struggle, no fighting, no enmity between those who were for unification and those who were for integration with Nigeria. Northern Cameroons voted to join the Federation of Nigeria and was integrated into a much larger country and Southern Cameroons voted to join the Republic of Cameroon in a new federation of two independent states. The majority of Southern Cameroons thought the future would be bright, that the union would indeed be a federal one and that the new country would be an example in the world in general and Africa in particular. A federation with two official languages, English and French; a country with two systems, English and French judicial systems, education, land tenure and

¹⁶ It referred to the dominant position the Nigerians occupied in Southern Cameroons. The Nigerians occupied senior post like the District Officer and head of services such as Customs, Public Works, Post and Telecommunications, Education, Labour, Health, Forestry and Agriculture, In the 1940s, the first African Assistant District Officer appointed in Mamfe was a Nigerian.

¹⁷ J.L. Nfi, *Nigerians on Mission in British Southern Cameroons*, University of Buea, Buea, p.52. Fanso, on BBC Witness History. May 2018.

chieftaincy. All the things that were promised were believed would come to be true in the unified Cameroon.¹⁹

Unfortunately, in 1972, the authorities of the federation decided to abolish the federal system in a referendum which was conducted on 20th May, 1972. This referendum made the former British Southern Cameroons to become part of the former Republic of Cameroon. Over the years, lack of development, poor governance and loss of autonomy and identity led to protests that exploded against union with the Republic of Cameroon in November 2016. The protest started peacefully as the protesters carried peace plants but got out of control when the protesters were not given the due attention they deserved.²⁰

Largely, the study emphasizes on the contributions of different political actors of Mamfe Division in the independence process of Southern Cameroons. In other perspectives, the work examines a number of concerns. Why the people reject continuous integration with the Republic of Nigeria even when the inhabitants of the Division had very close socio-cultural ties with Nigeria? What reasons explain their decision to vote against Nigeria? What were the reasons for the choice of Mamfe to host very important Southern Cameroons independence conferences such as, the Mamfe Eastern Regional Crisis Conference of May 1953, Mamfe Plebiscite Conference of August 1959, and the KNC/KPP Convention of 1960? The work examines the impact and challenges of Southern Cameroons independence with Cameroon in general and Mamfe Division in particular since 1961. The next section will introduce the analytical framework used in the study.

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this section is to throw light on some key terms and concepts that abound and how they fit into the study. These include; Mamfe\Manyu, “The Southern Cameroons”, “unification and reunification. “The definitions will enable us to better understand our subject and whatever else we intend to examine. This is because different authors and political institutions give varied definitions to the same terms used to suit their contexts.

Mamfe Division

Mamfe Division was one of the six (6) administrative divisions that the British created in Southern Cameroons during the Mandate and Trusteeship periods. The division is located in

¹⁹ J.T. Tabe,” Chiefs at the Cross Roads of Politics and Development”, Ph.D. Thesis, History Department, University of Yaounde I, 2016, p.50.

²⁰ Eyongetah, Brain and Palmer, *A History of the Cameroon*, p.141.

the present day South West Region of Cameroon that shares boundary with the eastern part of Nigeria. It should be recalled that in 1922, the area became Mamfe Division when the British changed the name from Ossidinge to Mamfe Division. Mamfe division was later named after the River Manyu (Cross River). The modification was done under decree no. 03/DF250 of 3rd July 1968 and included in the administrative map of Cameroon as Manyu division.²¹ The division is divided administratively into four sub-divisions namely; Akwaya, Eyumojock, Upper Banyang and Mamfe Central. Besides, the division has few towns and semi-towns, several villages which do constitute the sub- divisions. In 1992, the division lost one of its sub-divisions (Fontem) that was transformed to a new division called Lebialem in the then South West province. The division was later maintained as Manyu Division after the unification of Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon in 1961. Manyu Division today has its Headquarters in Mamfe. It constitutes one of the 58 divisions of the Republic of Cameroon.

Southern Cameroons

The choice of the name and the spelling of Southern Cameroons needs some explanations to understand why Cameroon is spelled with an 's'. The name given to the whole territory by its first colonisers (the German) of which part is the subject of this study was Kamerun. After the partition of that German colony in 1916 between Britain and France, the French called their own portion Cameroun and the British called theirs the Cameroons, probably because it was divided into Northern and Southern Cameroons. From then, the British section was referred to as the mandated and later, the trusteeship territory of the Cameroons under the United Kingdom administration.²²

The entire world refers to the Anglophone section as the British Cameroons, which would be constantly used in the study. It is worth noting that the original British version of Cameroon had an 'S' at the end, which is why the English speaking Cameroonians pronounce it as Cameroons until today. Southern Cameroons came after the partition when the British took the western part and the French took the eastern part. The British later on divided their own portion of Cameroon into Northern and the Southern Cameroons. Due to the linguistic, cultural, historical and geographical background, they decided to administer the two territories separately. Northern Cameroons was administered as an appendage of Northern Nigeria, while

²¹ National Institute of Statistics, Cameroon Statistical Year Book (Yaoundé: CEPER 2009, 129, in James Ndip Tabi; "Women and the Economic Crisis in Manyu Division of Cameroon, 1986-2000: A Historical Evaluation" (Ma Dissertation University of Buea, 2014), p.33

²² B. Chem-Langhë The Kamerun plebiscites 1959 -1961 perception and strategies, Ph.D. Thesis, University of British Columbia, August 1975, P.1.

Southern Cameroons was administered as an appendage first of Southern and later of the Eastern part of Nigeria. From that time, the territories of the former Western part of Kamerun became known as Northern and Southern Cameroons respectively.²³

Unification and Reunification

The two words, unification and reunification were used in the process of Southern Cameroons nationalism. The words are used in different periods in the history of Cameroon in general and Southern Cameroons in particular. At first Southern Cameroons leaders used unification in relations to Northern and Southern Cameroons because they wanted the two territories, which were administered separately first to unite and be administered together and later to unite with French Cameroon after independence. Reunification was used in relations to bringing together all the parts of the former German Kamerun that ceased to exist in 1916, such as the French Equatorial Africa which Germany gained from France during the Duck Bill Agreement of 1911.²⁴ However, as time went on, the politicians began to use the two words interchangeably as if they meant the same thing. Thus, they were responsible for the confusion in the use of the two words²⁵ However, in the course of this study, we shall use the two-word unification and reunification interchangeably.

Anglophone(s)

The term Anglophone originated in reference to people who speak English either as a mother tongue or as a member of a community that has acquired that language and chosen to link culturally and linguistically with the native speakers of it. The term Anglophone is used to distinguish the inhabitants of the former colonial state of British Cameroon from those of French Cameroon. This began to be used from when the Federal Republic of Cameroon was created in October 1961. Anglophone in the Cameroonian context rightly refers to the people who originated from the North West and South West Regions, any Cameroonians who lived his or her first experience for long in the former British Cameroon and Nigeria, or people who were culturally exposed to and became accustomed to the Anglophone ways, that is colonial language, education, political philosophy, freedom of speech and unarmed police and many others²⁶. In addition, the last category of Anglophones in this context refers to any Cameroonian whose ethnic group of origin is located in the territory of former British Southern Cameroons

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Falso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, Kumbo, p.175.

²⁵ Langhëë, "The Kamerun plebiscite 1959 -1961 perception an strategies" , p.42.

²⁶ Falso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges revised* and updated, Macmillan Publishers limited, Kumbo, 2017, pp. 385-386.

and to the descendants of such a person even if they rose as francophone; they are still regarded and treated as Anglophone by Francophone Cameroonians.

Parliamentary Democratic System

A parliamentary system is a system of democratic governance of a state where the Executive derives its democratic legitimacy from its ability to command the confidence of the legislature; typically, a parliament is also accountable to that parliament. It is a form of governance in which the party (or a coalition of parties) with the greatest number of seats in parliament (legislature) form the government, its leaders becoming prime minister or chancellor.²⁷ This democratic system was applied in Southern Cameroons in the 1950s and 1960s. It allowed for checks, balances and proper follow up of social, economic and political activities. Parliamentary system helped to check the many case of corruptions and embezzlements in our country.

Bi-Cameral System

Legislative system in which the power of making the law is vested in two Chambers or Houses both of which must approve a bill before it becomes law. In general, the Upper House is composed of members selected on a territorial basis, representing state or other political subdivisions rather than the people directly, and usually serving for longer terms than members of the Lower house. In principle, the Upper House provides the Legislative experience necessary to control unwise legislation. The Lower House is generally composed of members selected on the basis of population, each member representing an equal number of citizens because of more frequent elections and closer identification with the districts they represent, members of the Lower House reflect more strongly the contemporary mind of electorates. Typical of the bi-cameral system is the US Congress 'which consists of a Senate constituting an Upper House, and a House of Representative constituting of a Lower House.'²⁸

Federal System

Federal system refers to a government, a national or international political system in which two levels of governments control the same territory and citizens. The word federal comes from the Latin term *fidere*, meaning 'to trust'. Countries with Federal political systems having both a central and regional governments based in smaller political units usually states, provinces or

²⁷ R. M. Pious, Microsoft Encarta, 2009, p.14.

²⁸ Ibid.p.34.

territories.²⁹ A federation is made up of a number of states. An example is the present Community of Independent States CIS of the former Soviet Union, Other include Switzerland, the USA, Nigeria and Canada just to name a few. In 1961, Cameroon adopted a federal system at Fouban Constitutional Conference to take care of the bi-cultural, bi-judicial, bi-educational and political system of the Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon inherited from Britain and France during the mandate and trusteeship periods. To address the present socio-political crisis which the country is undergoing, would be nice for us to go back to the federal system. This system united us since everyone was doing he or her own thing following the constitution of the federal republic.

Confederation

Confederation is defined as a league of sovereign states with a loose political arrangement in which autonomous states come together to form a union. There is a weak Centre. It is a voluntary association of sovereign states with a recognized authority in certain matters affecting the whole union. In a confederation, there is no effective and viable central authority e.g. America regional governments based in smaller political units usually states, provinces, or territories.³⁰ It is a less elaborate form of the Federal system. The states that come together co-operate in some limited domains or areas only. This could be in the field of international relations or in the military sector. A confederation is created through an international treaty signed by the partners wishing to co-operate.

It is equally a voluntary association of sovereign states with a recognized authority in certain matters affecting the whole union. In modern times, the term confederation is applied to joining of formerly independent states to create a single political unit. E.g. the New England confederation, formed in 1643 and lasted for more than 40 years, is the earliest, example of confederation in America. Experience had demonstrated that this form of organization was too weak. Based on the experiences Southern Cameroons had while they were administered as part of Nigeria, in order to guard against future Republic of Cameroon domination of the union. In June 1961, at the Bamenda All Party Conference, the Delegates proposed a loose federal system as one of their proposals to be taken to the Fouban conference in 1961.

²⁹ W.A. Microsoft Corporation, Microsoft Encarta, 2009, p.21.

³⁰Ibid. p.23.

Theoretical (Analytical) Framework

The analytical framework of a study brings to the limelight a number of theories linked to it. The choice of some of these theories discussed in this study was made following the factors that influenced the political systems of both Southern Cameroons and Republic of Cameroon. These theories are diverse and controversial in nature. The various models of political system that have influenced most of the changes over time have been discussed. Likewise, the principle of unity in diversity coming from the scripture says that “it is good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity. Unity is as precious as oil poured on the head, running down on Aaron’s beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is like the dew on Mount Hermon, falling on the hills of Zion. That is where the Lord has promised his blessing-life that never ends.” These words from the scripture were one of guiding principles to the people of Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon.

In this light, the researcher was pushed to deploy systems theory as our theoretical framework. A system is a set of interrelated entities connected to each other either directly or indirectly. The interconnectedness of each part (sub-system) is central to the functionality of the whole system. Systems theory sees society as complex and one whose parts function together with a few to promoting enduring stability and pre-determined goals. Systems, according to Fisher³¹ are classified by the nature of relation with their environments and the search for the laws regulating the interest articulation, interest aggregation and political community.³²

In the context of history, system means the type of political organization that can be recognized, observed or otherwise declared by a state.³³ It defines the process for making official government decisions; it usually comprises the governmental legal and economic system, social and cultural system, and other state and government specific systems.³⁴ However, this is a very simplified view of a much more complex system of categories involving the questions of who should have authority and what the government influence on its people and economy should be. The main types of political systems recognized are democracies, totalitarian regimes and sitting between these two, authoritarian regimes with a variety of

³¹ M. Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is there No Alternative?*, Britain, Zero Book, 2009, p.34.

³² D.H. Alan, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2023., p.4.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ B. A , *Power, Politics and society : An introduction to political, Sociology* Taylor and Francis p.47. ISBN978-1-317-34529-9. 2015, p.24.

hybrid regimes. Modern classification system also includes monarchies as a stand-alone entity or as a hybrid system of the three.³⁵

Onifade & Imhonopi³⁶ observed that unification can only be successful when different groups in a political entity achieve integration by means of consensus, social structure and function in society. They added that this will inevitably go a long way to foster social order and cohesion. It means a formal agreement of opinions, views, norms, and in ways of life. For emphasis, unification is often a goal-directed exercise.³⁷

Social structure, in the words of Farkas³⁸ betokens the totality of individuals in similar social positions in any given society. It is the specific whole of the social classes comprising the given social groups and typical social relations between them. It further expresses the relations and social positions of members in a simplified way detailing the most crucial attributes of these relations and positions. By function, it means the action for which a person is specifically fitted or for which a thing exists. The choice of this theory is particularly premised on the belief that unification is never accidental but a conscious effort deliberately designed by political architects and various groups aimed at ensuring peaceful cohabitation within a given political sphere in spite of the differences between and among the people.

This brings the study to the first political theory called the Republican system of government which is a form of state based on the concept that sovereignty resides in the people, who delegate the power to rule in their behalf to the elected representatives and officials. In practice, however, this concept has been variously stretched, distorted, and corrupted, making any precise definition of the term republic difficult. It is important, to begin with, to distinguish between a republic and a democracy. In the theoretical republican state, where the government expresses the will of the people who have chosen it, republic and democracy may be identical (there are also democratic monarchies). Historical republics, however, have never conformed to a theoretical model, and in the 20th century the term republic is freely used by dictatorships, one-party states, and democracies alike. Republic has, in fact, come to signify any form of state headed by a president or some similarly titled figure, and not a monarch.

³⁵ J. J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, Lynne Rienner Publisher, p. 143

³⁶ C. A. Onifade, and D. Imhonopi, "Towards national integration in Nigeria: Jumping the hurdles".. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(9), 2013, pp. 75-82.

³⁷ C. Furio, *Conceptualizing Politics: An introduction to Political Philosophy*, Routledge, 2017, p 17.

³⁸ Z. Farkas, *Analysing social structure: A chapter for the outline of social theory* 2017, p.6..

Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319130073_Analysing_social_structure_A_chapter_for_the_outline_of_social_theory

Still concerning the republican system of government, Plato and Aristotle considered it as the fathers of classical theories, in their works, described the existing power structure of the Greek states and made prescription for the best form of government. Aristotle's politics provides another republican concept, one that prevails in most of the Western world. Aristotle categorized governments on the basis of who rules: the one, the few, or the many. Within these categories he distinguished between good and perverted forms of government-monarchy (good) versus tyranny, aristocracy (good) versus oligarchy the main difference being whether the rulers governed for the good of the state or for their own interests.

Most relevant to republicanism in the Western world, however, is Aristotle's distinction between democracy, the perverted form of rule by the many, and its opposite polity, the good form. He believed that democracies were bound to experience turbulence and instability because the poor, who he assumed would be the majority in democracies, would seek an economic and social equality that would stifle individual initiative and enterprise. In contrast, polity, with a middle class capable of justly resolving conflicts between the rich and poor, would allow for rule by the many without problems and chaos associated with democratic regimes.

James Madison, known as the father of the U.S. Constitution, defined a republic in context similar to those of Aristotle's polity. In his view, republics were systems of government that permitted direct or indirect control by the people over those who govern. He did, however, warn against the effects of "majority factions" and emphasized the rights of minorities. The Madison concept of republicanism parallels Aristotle's vision of polity in many important dimensions, and both are essentially different from Plato's.³⁹

Madison and Aristotle were concerned with the means by which just and stable rule by the many could be secured. To this end Aristotle relied on a predominant middle class, Madison on an "extended" republic, in which varied interests would check and control one another. Madison also emphasized election of representatives by the people. These representatives, he believed, would be less likely to sacrifice the "public good" than the majority of the people. "Pure democracies," in which the people ruled directly, Madison wrote, "have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention."⁴⁰

³⁹ D. Patrick and O. Brendan. *Theories of the State*, London, Macmillan Press LTD, 1987. p.10.

⁴⁰Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2009. © 1993-2008 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

This takes us to examine the second theory which is the system of democracy. Democracy is a theory based on the assumption that mathematicians and peasants are equal and can never work. Better still, democracy is a political system in which the people of a country rule through any form of government they choose to establish. In modern democracies, supreme authority is exercised for the most part by representatives elected by popular suffrage. The representatives may be supplanted by the electorate according to the legal procedures of recall and referendum, and they are, at least in principle, responsible to the electorate. In many democracies, such as the United States, both the executive head of government and the legislature are elected. In typical constitutional monarchies such as the United Kingdom and Norway, only the legislators are elected, and from their ranks a cabinet and a prime minister are chosen. In Cameroon, the United Nations Organization used one of democratic processes called plebiscite to unite Southern Cameroons with the Republic of Cameroon.⁴¹

Moreover, although democracy and republic are often used interchangeably, the terms democracy and republic are not synonymous. It is true that both systems delegate power to govern to their elected representatives. In a republic, however, these officials are expected to act on their own best judgment of the needs and interests of the country. While the officials in a democracy more generally and directly reflect the known or ascertained views of their constituents, sometimes subordinating their own judgment.

The third theories to discuss are Capitalism and Communism. To begin with, Capitalism is based on economic system in which private individuals and business firms carry on the production and exchange of goods and services through a complex network of prices and markets. Although rooted in antiquity, capitalism is primarily European in its origins; it evolved through a number of stages, reaching its zenith in the 19th century. From Europe, and especially from England, capitalism spread throughout the world, largely unchallenged as the dominant economic and social system until World War I (1914-1918) ushered in modern communism (or Marxism) as a vigorous and hostile competing system.⁴²

The term capitalism was first introduced in the mid-19th century by Karl Marx, the founder of communism. Free enterprise and market system are terms also frequently employed to describe modern non-Communist economies. Sometimes the term mixed economy is used to designate the kind of economic system most often found in Western nations.

⁴¹ Ngoh, *History of Cameroon since 1800*, Presbook, Limbe, 1996, pp. 227.

⁴² H.S. Parmet, "Encarta Microsoft Cororation," 200, p129.

The individual who comes closest to being the originator of contemporary capitalism is the Scottish philosopher Adam Smith, who first set forth the essential economic principles that undergird this system. In his classic an inquiry into the nature and causes of the Wealth of Nations (1776), Smith sought to show how it was possible to pursue private gain in ways that would further not just the interests of the individual but those of society as a whole. Society's interests are met by maximum production of the things that people want. In a now famous phrase, Smith said that the combination of self-interest, private property, and competition among sellers in markets will lead producers "as by an invisible hand" to an end that they did not intend, namely, the well-being of society.

On the other hand, Communism is a theory and system of social and political organization that was a major force in world politics for much of the 20th century. As a political movement, communism sought to overthrow capitalism through a workers' revolution and establish a system in which property is owned by the community as a whole rather than by individuals. In the theory, communism would create a classless society of abundance and freedom, in which all people enjoy equal social and economic status. In practice, communist regimes have taken the form of coercive, authoritarian governments that cared little for the plight of the working class and sought above all else to preserve their own hold on power.⁴³

The idea of a society based on common ownership of property and wealth stretches far back in Western thought. In its modern form, communism grew out of the socialist movement of 19th century Europe. At that time, Europe was undergoing rapid industrialization and social change. As the Industrial Revolution advanced, socialist critics blamed capitalism for creating a new class of poor, urban factory workers who labored under harsh conditions, and for widening the gulf between rich and poor.⁴⁴

The Federalism is the next theory to be discussed. Federalism also referred to as federal government is a national or international political system in which two levels of government control the same territory and citizens. The word federal comes from the Latin term *fidere*, meaning "to trust." countries with federal political systems have both a central government and governments based in smaller political units, usually called states, provinces, or territories.

⁴³ Laursen, Finn. Theory and Practice of Regional Integration. Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series Vol. 8, No.3. 2008, pp.18-21.

⁴⁴ Colton, Timothy J. "Communism." Microsoft® Student 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.
Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2009. © 1993-2008 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

These smaller political units surrender some of their political power to the central government, relying on it to act for the common good.

In a federal system, laws are made both by state, provincial, or territorial governments and by a central government. In the United States, for example, people who live in the state of Ohio must obey the laws made by the Ohio legislature and the Congress of the United States. In Canada, residents of the province of Québec follow the laws made by Québec's legislature and those made by the Canadian parliament. In addition to the United States and Canada, countries that are considered federalist include Australia, Brazil, Germany, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, and Switzerland.⁴⁵

Federal political systems divide power and resources between central and regional governments. The balance of power between the two levels of government varies from country to country, but most federal systems grant substantial autonomy to state or provincial governments. Central governments decide issues that concern the whole country, such as organizing an army, building major roads, and making treaties with other countries. Federalism varies in practice, however, and in some countries with federal systems the central government plays a large role in community planning, schools, and other local issues.

Federal political systems are relatively uncommon around the world. Instead, most countries are unitary systems, with laws giving virtually all authority to the central government. The central government may delegate duties to cities or other administrative units, but it retains final authority and can retract any tasks it has delegated. The central government in a unitary system is much more powerful than the central government in a federal system. Cameroon, France, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Morocco, South Korea, Sweden, and Uruguay are examples of unitary systems.⁴⁶

In almost the vein, a confederation is similar to a federal system but gives less power to the central government. The loose alliances of countries or other political entities that make up a confederation seek to cooperate with one another while retaining ultimate control of their own internal policies. Unlike federal systems, confederations usually give each member nation absolute control over its citizens and territory. The central government decides only issues that affect all members of the confederation. In the 18th century the United States was founded as such a system under the Articles of Confederation. More recently, the Soviet Union dissolved

⁴⁵ Ismail and Sharif. *Unification in Yemen: Dynamics of Politics Integration*, 1978/2000. P.15.

⁴⁶ H.S. Parmet, "Encarta Microsoft Corporation," 2009, p.12.

in 1991, and many of the former republics formed a confederation called the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to coordinate domestic and foreign policy. Confederations tend to be weak and unstable because member nations often resist relinquishing final authority on any matters and insist on their right to withdraw from the confederation at any time. Confederations are uncommon; most are international bodies with limited and specific responsibilities, such as the European Community (EC) and the British Commonwealth.⁴⁷

By and large, the collapse of Communism in the world inspired political theorists to develop new models of democracy and political scientists studied the role of citizenship and citizen education in democratic governments. By the end of the 20th century, many independent countries in the world adopted governments that embodied some of the principles of democracy.⁴⁸ Although the ideals of democracy have been widely professed, their implementation and fulfilment have been different in many countries.

With the triumph of democracy over communism in the 1990s, a number of African nations adopted democratic systems of governments in order to gain favour from top Western Democracies like America, Britain and France. The major features of modern democracy included individual freedom which entitled citizens to liberty and responsibility of shaping their own careers and conducting their own affairs, equality before the law, universal suffrage and education took prime position. Such features have been proclaimed in historic documents, for example, the U.S. Declaration of Independence, which asserted the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.⁴⁹

Moreover, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen which affirmed the principles of civil liberty and of equality before the law; and the Atlantic Charter, which formulated the four basic freedoms. Which included; first, to ensure all-inclusive national defense; second, to give full support of all the resolute peoples, everywhere, who are resisting aggression, and are thereby keeping war away from the Hemisphere, and strengthen the defense and security of our own nation; third, to promote the principles of morality and considerations for our own security will never permit us to acquiesce in a peace dictated by aggressors and sponsored by appeasers.; and the fourth is freedom from fear which, translated into world terms, means a worldwide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any

⁴⁷ E .Tefu, "World History for Secondary Schools and College," *Bamenda, Peaceberg Printers*, p.192

⁴⁸ Tefu, "World History for Secondary Schools and College," p.195.

⁴⁹ A. Samah, "Skill in Research Writing," Wivan Publisher, Yaounde, 2010, p.23.

neighbor anywhere in the world.⁵⁰ The structural change models stress the transformation from unacceptable traditional governance to democratic governance in all areas of administration.

The last system of government examined in this study is the unitary system of government. A unitary state is a sovereign state governed as a single entity in which the central government is the supreme authority. The central government may create or abolish administrative divisions (sub-national units) such units exercise only the powers that the central government chooses to delegate. Although political power may be delegated through devolution to regional or local governments by statute, the central government may override the decisions of devolved governments, curtail their powers, or expand their powers. Today most of the government systems in the world are based on unitary system of government. It is slightly different from federal model of government. United Kingdom, Afghanistan, Italy, China, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Cameroon etc., are the important examples of unitary government. The unitary government system is based on the concept of consistency, unity, and identity explains why the centralization of power and authority system remains at the top priority.⁵¹

The proponents of a strongly unitary theory argue that the president possesses all of executive power and can therefore control subordinate officers and agencies of the executive branch. This implies that the power of Congress or Parliament to remove executive agencies or officers from presidential control is limited. For instance, the unitary executive theory of United States constitutional law holds that the President possesses the power to control the entire federal executive branch. The doctrine is rooted in Article Two of the United States Constitution, which vests “the executive power” of the United States in the President. Although that general principle is widely accepted, there is disagreement about the strength and scope of the doctrine. Some favour a “strongly unitary” executive while others favour a “weakly unitary” executive. The former group argue, that Congress’s power to interfere with intra-executive decision-making is limited, and that the President can control policy-making by all executive agencies within the limits set for those agencies by Congress.

The decision-making power rests with the central governments that are shared by the government with the lower level government when needed. There are not so many options for change and new innovation as the people have a very limited voice in this government system. There are many merits and demerits of unitary government. It is useful in the term that rules

⁵⁰ R.M. Pious, *Political Science. Microsoft Student 2009 [DVD]*. Redmond, W.A. Microsoft Corporation, Microsoft Encarta, 2009, p.21.

⁵¹ R.M. Pious, *Political Science. Microsoft Student 2009 [DVD]*, Microsoft Encarta, 2009, p.21.

and regulations in this government systems remain consist and equal throughout the country. Moreover, it is less expensive as compared to the federal government because the number of powerful people remains very low. In a time of emergency, it makes timely decisions as compared to the federal government system. But at the same time, the concept of freedom of speech and expression always remains at a low priority that's why most of the principles of unitary government are much similar to that of dictatorship system of government.

Hence, the theories raised shall enable us to better enhance the centrality of our study; based on the system of government adopted by the country after unification. In which the focus is on the evolution, impact and challenges of the unification of the Southern Cameroons with the Republic of Cameroon. It should be recalled that after the unification of Southern Cameroons with the Republic of Cameroon in 1961, the newly created country adopted a federal system of government as the form of state called Federal Republic of Cameroon. In 1972, the form of state was changed from federal system to a unitary system called United Republic of Cameroon. In 1984, the name of the country was modified from United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon. The form of state was again changed to decentralized unitary state. This section introduces us to the definition of some key terms and concepts given that these will give more meaning to the analytical pattern and also enable us better understand what we intend to examine in the study.

Significance of the Study

Almost all recent studies concerning reunification are concentrated on Southern Cameroons in general. However, this study lays much emphasis on the contribution of the actors of Mamfe Division in the nationalist struggle in the territory. The study explains in a more comprehensive manner the involvement of these actors in the achievement of reunification. This is because the division played an important intermediary role in the struggle. For example, S.A. George of the division once said, "If UN does not grant independence to Southern Cameroons, Southern Cameroons should join French Cameroon". It was this first call that motivated many reunification activists to come up.

The study shows various conferences that took place in Mamfe before reunification and how each paved the way for more discussions about reunification. To the people of Mamfe and the politicians, the study will contribute to understanding the present trends and the level of interests the people of the division have taken in the politics of the Republic of Cameroon today. Notwithstanding, it shows how politics have affected their role in protecting and

defending the cultural and economic developments of the division since the advent of reunification. It further reinforces the awareness that development is not the sole responsibility of the state but a collective responsibility whereby both the state and the people participate fully in the construction of the communities.⁵²

The study equally provides background information to foreign non-governmental organisations (NGO) and political agents like National Democratic Institutes (NDI), Transparency International that are instrumental in promoting legitimate leadership through free and fair elections. Notwithstanding, some big democratic nations like Britain, France, USA that played an important role in the 1961 plebiscite in the Southern Cameroons will use the data provided to assist young countries of the world, especially those on the verge of disintegrating.

In this study, we have decided to talk about Mamfe/Manyu Division from 1961 to 2017 as the focus of our research. Mamfe division has been known since the time of the Richard Constitution in Nigeria the name was changed after its reduction in size to Manyu Division.

The study begins in 1961 and ends in 2017. The year 1961 is significant because it was the year both the historical UN conducted plebiscite was organised in the British Southern Cameroons and British Northern Cameroons. This ended the political and international boundaries between French Cameroon and the Southern Cameroons. When the two territories reunited and formed the Federal Republic of Cameroon in 1961, also became important because it marked the beginning of the decline of economic and political activities in Mamfe. The year 1961 somehow laid the foundation of the backwardness of the division in general and Mamfe town in particular. Before the town was a melting pot of economic and political activities but was reduced to 'a ghost' town⁵³ after reunification.

The study ends in 2017 when widespread political agitations began in the English-speaking regions of the North West and South West of the Republic of Cameroon. The uprisings were led by the jobless youths, technicians, taxi drivers, women old and young, and

⁵² Eyongetah, Brain and . Palmer, *A History of the Cameroon*. London, Longman, 1988. p.98.

⁵³ Ghost town, a formerly or usually inhabited place that is deserted or a town with little or no economic activities and no inhabitants. Ghost town came into limelight in Cameroon in the 1990s when multiparty politics was reintroduced and many Cameroonians who did not understand it resorted to opposition to the ruling government requesting for the organisation a sovereign national conference to redress the political, economic and social problems in the country. During ghost town periods, people were restricted from carrying out certain activities or going to certain areas. Life was very hard during ghost town moments; this led to untold suffering, high crime waves such as stealing, promiscuity and many more. Ghost town phenomenon intensified in Cameroon in 2016 following the outbreak of socio-political crisis in the English Speaking regions of the Country.

others. The people demonstrated in their numbers with peace plants chanting patriotic songs demanding freedom and the restoration of the state of West Cameroon. These peaceful demonstrations were interrupted by brutality of the National Security and Defence Forces of the country. Some Manyu elements and other Southern Cameroonians in Diaspora demonstrated in front of the United Nations headquarters in New York City, United States of America. In November 2017, armed separatists in the village of Kembong located in the Manyu Division of the South West Region attacked and killed at least six state forces, changing the narrative of the Anglophone crisis. What began in the last quarter of 2016 as peaceful protests by Anglophone Lawyers and Teachers against perceived marginalization by Cameroon's Francophone-dominated elite turned out to be a protracted armed conflict. The secessionists declared an independent state called Ambazonia on October 1, 2017.

Scope and Delimitations

In this study, we have decided to talk about Mamfe/Manyu Division from 1922 to 2017 as the focus of our research. Mamfe Division has been known since the time of the Richard Constitution in Nigeria the name was changed after its reduction in size to Manyu Division.

The study begins in 1922 and ends in 2017. The year 1961 is significant because it was the year the British divided her own portion of Cameroon into two British Southern Cameroons and British Northern Cameroons.⁵⁴ The British decided to administer Southern Cameroon and Northern Cameroon as part of Nigeria. This ended the political and international boundaries between French Cameroon and the Southern Cameroons. When the two territories reunited and formed the Federal Republic of Cameroon in 1961, also became important because it marked the beginning of the decline of economic and political activities in Mamfe. The year 1922 somehow laid the foundation of the backwardness of the division in general and Mamfe town in particular.⁵⁵ Before the town was a melting pot of economic and political activities but was reduced to 'a ghost' town⁵⁶ after reunification.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ V.G . Fasns, *Cameroon History for Secondary School and Colleges*, vol 2, p. 152.

⁵⁵ Interview with, Njock Simon Enow, 79 years Teachers of Ntenako, 27th May 2018.

⁵⁶ Ghost town, a formerly or usually inhabited place that is deserted or a town with little or no economic activities and no inhabitants. Ghost town came into limelight in Cameroon in the 1990s when multiparty politics was reintroduced and many Cameroonians who did not understand it resorted to opposition to the ruling government requesting for the organisation a sovereign national conference to redress the political, economic and social problems in the country. During ghost town periods, people were restricted from carrying out certain activities or going to certain areas. Life was very hard during ghost town moments; this led to untold suffering, high crime waves such as stealing, promiscuity and many more. Ghost town phenomenon intensified in Cameroon in 2016 following the outbreak of socio-political crisis in the English Speaking regions of the Country.

⁵⁷ Ibid. p.154.

The study ends in 2017 when widespread political agitations began in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon.⁵⁸ The uprisings were led by the jobless youths, technicians, taxi drivers, women old and young, and others. The people demonstrated in their numbers with peace plants chanting patriotic songs demanding freedom and the restoration of the state of West Cameroon. These peaceful demonstrations were interrupted by brutality of the National Security and Defence Forces of the country. Some Manyu elements and other Southern Cameroonians in the Diaspora demonstrated in front of the United Nations headquarters in New York City, United States of America. In November 2017, armed separatists in the village of Kembong located in the Manyu Division of the South West Region attacked and killed at least six state forces, changing the narrative of the Anglophone crisis. What began in the last quarter of 2016 as peaceful protests by Anglophone Lawyers and Teachers against perceived marginalization by Cameroon's Francophone-dominated elite turned out to be a protracted armed conflict. The secessionists declared an independent state called Ambazonia on October 1, 2017.

Literature Review

A review of existing literature on the politics of Mamfe/Manyu Division and that of Southern/West Cameroon(s) acquainted us with different methodologies, approaches', conclusions arrived at by different researchers and scholars on political history of Cameroon during the period under study.

Nfi, examines the role French Cameroonians played in the birth and evolution of the idea of reunification in Southern Cameroons. He explains that some French Cameroonian settlers were very influential in the political development of the territory because some of them were among the most successful business men and others held high positions in the church and civil service in Southern Cameroons. He further explains that in 1990 following the advent of multiparty politics, French Cameroonians living in the South West region were excluded from the South West Elite Association (SWELA). This frustrated many of them so much so that one of them Prof. Beltus Bejanga decided to create the "Eleventh Province Elite Association"⁵⁹. This association brought together some French Cameroon ancestry. They began questioning their exclusion from politics of the region which their parents had developed before and after reunification. He added in his work that the politics of belonging or "*autochthonization*" that

⁵⁸ Interview with Ayuk Besongnyor, Retired Head teacher, 80 years , 15th August 2021.

⁵⁹ J. L. Nfi, "French Cameroon and Reunification of Cameroon." Ph.D., Thesis, History Department, University of Yaounde 1, 2014.

started in Cameroon since 1990 has systematically created tribal systems and ethnic differences. He questions the place of English speaking within the English speaking minority with the Republic of Cameroon and the extent to which Anglophones have benefited from the reunification of 1961 and much talk about Anglophones Problem.

Fanso on his part stresses on the strong ethnic relations between the border peoples of Southern Cameroons and French Cameroon. He goes beyond identifying the economic and cultural links between French Cameroon and Southern Cameroons. He developed the social and cultural trans-frontier inter course amongst the Africans from the two territories. This indicates that the ethnic relations between the border peoples of the territories were stronger than in the other divided ethnic groups in West Africa due to the unity by the 32 years Germans rule.⁶⁰ He concludes that it therefore was impossible for French Cameroon to remain separate from Southern Cameroons.

Tata also stresses on the impact of Anglo-French boundary that divided ethnic groups claiming that the artificial boundary gave rise to several national loyalties. This, to him explains why the four runners of active nationalism were mostly the inhabitants of the border regions. E.g., the Bangwa of the Mamfe Division, which share close boundary with Dschang, were interested to see the two territories united than to see Southern Cameroons continue with integration with Nigeria⁶¹. Thus, they voted to join French Cameroon in a plebiscite of 1961.

Tabé traces the origin and involvement of Manyu chiefs in politics with emphasis on how this influenced the political, economic and socio-cultural evolutions of the Division. He delves into the advent of multi-party politics in Cameroon in early 1990's which open new political page. It gave the Chiefs the right to belong to any political party of their choice even against the wishes of their subjects. This made them to lose their role as the custodians of their tradition, unifiers and power brokers in their villages. Some of their subjects questioned the legitimacy of these chiefs. This caused some chiefs to align with the government to maintain and consolidate their positions as chiefs. Many became ardent supporters of the ruling party the CPDM. They became like the warrant chiefs of the mandate period. They were hated and disgusted. This resulted to serious conflicts in Manyu Division between the chiefs and their

⁶⁰Fanso, "Trans-Frontier Relations and Resistance to Cameroun-Nigeria Colonial Boundaries, 1916 - 1945", Doctoral. D'état Thesis, Yaounde University, 1982.

⁶¹S. N. Tata, "The Evolutions of the Re-unified Cameroon 1961 – 1982", PhD Thesis, University of Lagos, 1991.

subjects. Takor, concludes in his work that the conflict resulted to a slowdown in the development of an already backward division due to misunderstanding among the parties.⁶²

Welch⁶³ in one of his essays on the political reunification of the two Cameroons examines the “Kamerun idea” saying that the German 32 years rule helped them to achieve more in uniting ethnic groups in Cameroon. He added that the 1916 partition came to shatter this unity. The Anglo-French colonial policies during the mandate and the trusteeship periods helped to provoke the birth of “Kamerun Idea” which caused many French Cameroonians to migrate to Southern Cameroons. French Cameroonians started flaming the ideas of reunification because they wanted to meet their brothers and sisters on the other side.

Ngoh, in a general study of the history of Cameroon presents an overview of major developments during the period of German annexation, the mandate and the trusteeship periods. In one of the works, Ngoh examines the constitutional development in Southern Cameroons since 1946, Macpherson constitution of 1951, Lyttelton’s constitution of 1954, Lancaster House Constitutional conference in 1957 / 1958 and the Foeman constitutional conference of 1961. This identifies the political debate and the division that characterize the political class on the eve of independence and reunification⁶⁴.

Ngoh⁶⁵ has also made an overview of the political situation in Cameroon from 1960 to the reintroduction of multiparty politics in 1990. To him, the inability of African governments to set up vibrant democracies after independence was because the colonial masters fashioned African constitutions to promote their interests and not effectively address the needs and aspirations of the African masses. He makes an overview of the internal and external factors that favoured the rebirth of democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa in general and Cameroon in particular. He added by saying that the success of this venture rested on the weight, vigour and voice of the masses. Ngoh finally examines the role of Opposition parties during the early years of transition in Cameroon.

Kale, who took an active part in the decolonization politics in Southern Cameroons wrote an account of the events in 1967. He narrated the major political development, the stages of decolonization and the important role chiefs, western educated elites and students played in

⁶²J.T.Tabe, *The Chieftaincy Institution of Manyu Division (1922-2011)*,

⁶³C. Welch, *Dream of Unity, Pan-Africanism and Political Unification in West Africa*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1966.

⁶⁴Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, Limbe, Presprint, 2002.

⁶⁵Ngoh, “Democracy and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Cameroon, 1960,” in *Epasa Moto: A Bilingual Journal of Arts, Letters and Humanities*, Vol.1, No. 5, Buea, 2001.

the formation of political parties in the birth of different ideologists, which led to different shades of opinions in the Southern Cameroons in the 1950s.

Wolfe examines political activities especially in the USA and Europe. He says, it generally takes place within an Economic System that encourages private property toward making profits, follows the logic of accumulation and consequently creates division between rich and poor, powerful and powerless. He explains that if the class struggle cannot be washed away, it can be whisked away; both attitudes express a desire to abolish social class, not in the real world but in the study of politics and history. He highlights the view of John Locke that “Primitive” societies symbolised the state of nature and should be preserved as such in order to remain a foil to the beneficence of the liberal world order, under twentieth century conditions the primitive must be incorporated in the “civilised”. He adds that governability of democracy is dependent upon the sustained expansion of the economy. He further argues that the only way to make people content with political apathy is to increase their income and this task is too important to be left in the hands of market mechanisms.

Dunleavy and O’Leary, examine organisational definitions regarding the state as a set of governmental institutions of relatively recent historical origin. They explain that government is the process of making rules, controlling, guiding or regulating. They identify five characteristics of a state, the state is recognizably separate institution or set of institutions, the state is sovereign or supreme, the state supremacy extends to all the individuals within a given territory, modern state’s personnel are recruited and trained for management in a bureaucratic manner and the state has the capacity to extract monetary taxation of financing its activities from its subject population. They equally discuss functions of the state. They define the state as that set of institutions, which carries out particular goals, purposes or objectives. An obvious contract with the organizational approach is “the state” may be empirically identified with a range of institutions not normally classified as part of the public sphere. Any organization whose goals or purposes overlap with “state function” automatically becomes part of the state. A second ex post approach defines the state by its consequences e.g. the maintenance of social order. The state is identified with those institutions or patterns of behaviour that have stabilizing effects. Again, this approach enlarges what can count as a component of the state e.g. if we say that a key function of the state is to produce social cohesion.

Abang, traces the British administration of Southern Cameroon as part of Nigeria for over a period of 40 years. He explains that the people left Nigeria to join Republic of Cameroon for a better life. But the way in which the Anglophones were marginalised in the union made

1986 CIA Intelligence note to describe the union as a time-bomb.⁶⁶He continues that in order to concretise the union, on the 1st of May 1961, the foreign minister of La Republic du Cameroun Charles Okala invited the British government into a secret deal over Southern Cameroons. He ends by saying that the union that started eroded as two proxies of equal sovereign status soon transformed into a partnership of the horse and the rider.⁶⁷This was the plebiscite presented to Southern Cameroons did not constitute a right to self-determination. Prof. Carlson Anyangwe argued that; “the phraseology of the plebiscite question was itself a deception and an unconscious fraud on an illiterates population who, as the Plebiscite Commissioner rightly pointed out, may not have fully grasped the full implication of what they were invited to vote on”⁶⁸

In a more global study on the role of regional and tribal associations in the rise of nationalism in the two territories, David Mokam adds that in the Southern Cameroons, French Cameroonians formed pressure groups to mobilise and educate the masses on the evil of colonial rule and the idea of reunification. He identifies the SOLIBABI or Bassa Tribal Union which brought together the people of Babimbi (French Cameroon) in Mpoudou, Messelele, Penja, Likumba, Ekona, Muyuka, Victoria, Sasse and other parts of the Southern Cameroons.⁶⁹ His findings were mostly on the contribution of regional associations in the struggle of independence of the two Cameroons. He continues by looking at regional and ethnic associations through which French Cameroonians participated in Southern Cameroons politics. This enables them to create French Cameroon Federal Union, and the Kamerun United National Congress, which were out to promote reunification, and later fought for the independent of the territory.⁷⁰

In the bibliography of John N. Foncha, one of the key political actors of the period under examination, Pius Soh traces John N. Foncha’s path to greatness from his humble birth, his teaching career, his involvement in KNC and his contribution to the struggle for independence and reunification of the two Cameroons. He concluded that John Ngu Foncha finally endorsed independence and reunification with French Cameroon because the UN rejected the idea of secession as a third option during the plebiscite conferences. In the same

⁶⁶K.Abang, *Southern Cameroon Negotiating an Existence*, Bamenda Writivism 2019.

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ Abang, *Southern Cameroons Negotiating an Existence*, pp.176-177.

⁶⁹ D. Mokam, “Les Associations Regionales et le Nationalisme Camerounaise”, Ph.D., Thesis, History Department, University of Yaounde I, 2006.

⁷⁰J.L. Nfi., *French Cameroon in the Unification of Cameroon.*, Ph.D., Thesis, History Department, University of Yaounde1, 2012.

vain Ndeh Ntumanzah of the One Kamerun (O.K) Party recounts his political struggle and involvement in the reunification debate. He traces his contact with French Cameroonians and the Union des Populations du Cameroon (UPC). He concluded that it was this contact with the principal architects of reunification that made him to develop love to join his brothers of the French Cameroons.

Nchong, in one of his works on E.T. Egbe traces the role E.T Egbe played for reunification of Southern Cameroon with Republic of Cameroon. E. T. Egbe under the group called the Kamerun Society advocated for an evolutionary reunification instead of immediate reunification. He was equally a secretary general of Kamerun Society in which they drafted a petition, which KNDP addressed, to the United Nations in 1959. The Kamerun society equally presented a memorandum, which analysed the shifting program of various parties in the territory in 1954. The program showed that majority of political party's cherished secession from Nigeria but were still undecided about integration with French Cameroons.

Abwa⁷¹ examines the efforts of nationalists in nation building of Cameroon that he considers as a progressive issue. He also pays tributes to the Portuguese who discovered the Coast of the Wouri River and the Germans who subjected Cameroonians under their authority and administration. From his analysis, he identifies two powerful realities; firstly, that national unity in Cameroon is a result of nationalism of Cameroonians. Secondly, that the independence of Cameroon was not a gift from the French or the British, but the fruit of Cameroonian nationalism. In other words, that the independence of Cameroon was fought for and not given and he challenges other stakeholders to stand up as one person and demand for their rights.

Amazee, looks at the politics of Southern Cameroons from the dimensions of Igbo factor. He demonstrates how the administration of Southern Cameroons as part of Nigeria exposed the territory and its inhabitants to Igbo domination, tyranny and exploitation. According to him, what changed the political destiny of Southern Cameroon was the massive movement of the Igbos in the territory and their atrocities they committed scared the people from any continue integration with Nigeria and made them to embrace the idea of reuniting with French Cameroons. He also explains the love for reunification by the activities of the Igbo's who treated Southern Cameroonians as second-class citizens. He concluded by saying that Igbo domination and exploitation of Southern Cameroons were more influential than any other factor that promoted the reunification.

⁷¹D. Abwa , Cameroun Histoire d'un nationalisme 1884-1961, Yaounde, Edition CLE, 2010.

Le Vine in a similar view concerning Igbo factor in the British Southern Cameroons presents the rule of the UN in the decolonization and emancipation of the two Trust territories. He researches on the evolution of the British especially French Cameroons from the Mandate to Trusteeship territories. He highlights the rule of the UN especially the UN visiting missions in the political changes that occurred in the territories.

Chem-Langhëë, in another work bases his investigation on the UN organized plebiscite of 1959 and 1961 bringing out the role of this organization and the campaign strategies of the protagonist in the outcome of the plebiscite. He recognizes other factors, which were also instrumental in shaping the plebiscite result among which inter-ethnic relations from French Cameroon and Southern Cameroons, the Igbo domination and the need for Southern Cameroons to gain their sovereignty pure and simple.

Ebune, in his work “the growth of political practice in southern Cameroons”. He identifies the events and people that gave birth to parties like the Kamerun National Congress (KNC), Kamerun People’s Party (KPP), Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP), Cameroon Commoners Congress (CCC), Cameroon People’s National Convention (CPNC) and many others⁷². The study reveals that it was some of these parties, which fought for the reunification of French Cameroon and British Southern Cameroons during the first half of 1960s.

Chem-Langhëë, in one of his work says since 1884, the rest of what is now the Cameroon was inhabited by multiplicity of tribal groups having little in common with one another, but sharing a general suspicion of and hostility to strangers. Only in the tropical rainforest, was there any sense of political cohesion, but it was a cohesion imposed in by the Fulani conquest to the early nineteenth century. He claims that neither Nigeria nor Cameroon Republic was interested in acquiring Western Kamerun between 1959 and 1961. Adding to this uncertainty is the publicly optimistic, privately pessimistic Attitude of responsible Nigerian and Cameroonian politician publicly; they favour integration or unification⁷³, depending on whether they speak from a Lagos or Yaoundé rostrum. Privately, they admit that anyone who gets the Southern Cameroons acquire an economic, financially liability, and almost come to wishing it one someone else. From this assertion, one would expect to see no Nigerian or

⁷²J.B. Ebune, *The Growth of Political Parties in Southern Cameroons 1916 – 1960*, Yaounde, CEPER, 1992.

⁷³Chem-Langhëë, “The Kamerun Plebiscite 1959-1961; Perceptions and Strategies”, British Colombia, 1976.

Cameroon authorities involved in anything they would secure any part of Southern Cameroons for either Nigeria or Cameroon.

The assertion makes John N. Foncha, one of the earliest Southern Cameroons nationalists, the rallying point of the Reunificationists. When the U.P.C, and Eastern Kamerun political party was banned in 1957, the UPC left “unification behind as the rallying cry of the Kamerun national democratic party (KNDP) Foncha’s political party. If the KNDP was the rallying cry of the Reunificationists, and Foncha and the KNDP pursuing a very vigorous reunification policy and secondly, one would not expect to find another political party claiming and convincingly demonstrating it was rely the only reunifications party⁷⁴. Chem concludes that reunification as a political idea and objective cause nationalism to be imported into Southern Cameroons from French Cameroons.

Fomin⁷⁵ also focuses on the contribution of the Southern Cameroons Chiefs and Fons to the politics of Southern Cameroons, he examines their role in modern politics through the Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs, later West Cameroon House of Chiefs, abolished in 1972. In his work, one can clearly see the prominent role of Bamenda grassland chiefs towards nation building. According to Fomin, the decision to abolish the House of chiefs in 1972 was unwise. He adds that the elite politicians in the post-independence administration used the cover of nation building to side line traditional rulers, accusing them of progressiveness. He says it is perhaps more of greed for absolute power on the part of elite politicians than the validity of their accusations.

On his part, Chiabi⁷⁶ examines how the British colonial system of Indirect Rule empowered traditional rulers of the Grassland region and gave them a solid base in the politics of Southern Cameroons. He goes further to examine the role played by Fon Galega II of Bali-Nyonga and chief Manga Williams of Victoria in the political development of Southern Cameroons from the early 1940s to 1954. He also highlights the power conflict that developed during those years between the traditional rulers and the educated elites and says that open conflict was averted because the new elite accepted and supported the creation of a house of Chiefs.

⁷⁴ Ibid,

⁷⁵E.S.D. Fomin, “The Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs, 1960-1972,” Post Graduate Diploma Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde, 1979.

⁷⁶E.M. Chiabi, “Chieftaincy: Traditional Rulers in National Politics” in Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences University of Yaoundé, 1-2 January-July 1990, pp. 23-44.

Meanwhile, Ruel⁷⁷ in his book centres much on the Banyangs and establishes that they have quite a lot in common with their Ejagham neighbour. He examines the political organization and their common values. In another book,⁷⁸ he examines the Banyang of Mamfe Division in the Plantation village in the Cameroons. He focuses his historical study on the origin and migration of the Ejagham and Banyang tribes. He also emphasizes the cultural history that has been neglected and the political evolution of the area.

Okpu⁷⁹ compiled a study on the culture of the Ejagham people. The work was prompted by the demand of the Cameroon government through the delegate of information and culture. The study therefore dwells essentially on the cultural heritage of the Ejagham and briefly highlights the aspects of migration. He underscores the fact that chieftaincy in the Ejagham tribe is not hereditary, but rotative. Similarly, Ojong⁸⁰ underscores the importance of Ejagham culture and migration history of the people that has affected the culture, custom and tradition of the Banyang and Ejagham groups. He concludes that these people have a similar culture with the people of the Cross River state of Nigeria and there is every reason for them to cooperate in every aspect of life until they recognize themselves as one. Enow⁸¹ in his study surveys the prehistory of the people of Ejagham and discusses the major secret associations in the area. He mentions and highlights briefly the political organization of the people but concentrates his study on their social organization and further brings out the socio-political role of these associations in a regulatory society.

Ashu⁸², in *Lebialem story* highlights that in 1961, the parents of Lebialem voted highly in Mamfe Division in support of reunification which was supported by the KNDP of John Ngu Foncha. That the people of Bangwa (Mamfe East) cast 5761 votes as against Mamfe West (4004), Mamfe North (2001), and Mamfe South (3024). This shows that the Bangwa were in high support of reunification because they wanted to join their brothers in west Cameroons.

Sources for this study reflect the fact that there were many groups of actors at the plebiscites. Basically, the sources are from the National Archive Buea (NAB), statement made

⁷⁷ Ruel, *Leopards and Leaders Constitutional Politics among a Cross-river People*, London, Harper and Row Publishers, 1964, p.345.

⁷⁸ Ruel, *Migration in two Southern Cameroons Tribes (2): The Banyang of Mamfe Division in Plantation Village in the Cameroons*, London, Oxford University Press, 1960.

⁷⁹ W.A.Okpu, *The Ejagham People, our Cultural Heritage*. London, Athlone Press, 1959, p.240.

⁸⁰ S. Ojong, *Ejagham and Ejagham Nation in the Cross River Region of Nigeria*, London, Oxford University Press, 1926, p. 356.

⁸¹ B. E. Enow, "Major Traditional Associations of the Ejagham People," *Maîtrise Dissertation in History*, Department of History, University of Yaounde, Yaounde, 1990.

⁸² M.N.F. Ashu, *Lebialem Story*, Menji, Anucred, 2002, p. 3.

by British official in Southern Cameroons. Still other sources came from the Southern Cameroons political leaders consisting mainly of their policy statement in Southern Cameroons in Nigeria, London and United Nations. Originally, this study was to use interview as a means of obtaining information at the grass-root level while making allowance for human inability to recollect feeling and ideas held many years earlier and for human tendency to colour the facts the event. We have to confine ourselves to the opinion and information which actors at the grass-roots gave the researcher. They are the main source of our information.

Nevertheless, there are a number of problems involved in this source. Many of them are direct translation of phrases and idioms from the various western Kamerun languages into English. Other sources included in the study are secondary materials. These include mainly books and journals.

After a proper review of the literature, we realized that many scholars examined several aspects of politics in Southern Cameroons such as the impact of the British neglect over the territory, the UPC activities and their demand for independent and reunification, the role of chiefs, the Igbo factor, the role played by politicians such as E.T. Egbe, S.A. George, John Ngu Foncha and the 1961 UN organized plebiscite. The above reviewed works are by no means exhaustible. There are many more which have not been reviewed but will be used in analysing aspects of our study. While some of the works might not have a direct impact on the core of the study which is unification and its challenges in Mamfe/Manyu Division, they nevertheless serve as a framework on which issues that treat the themes of this study were analysed. So far, no intellectual work completely and critically investigated into the role the Mamfe division played during the reunification of British Southern Cameroons and French Cameroons. The work is therefore aimed at updating the investigation of some scholars who had attempted to look at this topic. The study therefore adds more new facts and evidence in the following areas; the contributions of different political actors of Mamfe division in the independence process of Southern Cameroon. In addition, the thesis strives to respond to the following concerns: why the Mamfe Division very close to Nigeria failed to vote for continue integration with Nigeria but voted to join the Republic of Cameroon which was about 500km from the Division, the reasons for the choice of Mamfe to host very important pre- independence conferences such as Mamfe Eastern Regional Crisis conference of May 1953, Mamfe Plebiscite conference of August 1959 and KNC/KPP convention of 1960.

Statement of the Problem

When the First World War started in Europe in July 1914, Britain and France decided to extend the war to Africa in order to seize German colonies, including Cameroon. The British and French forces and some Belgian troops attacked Cameroon. In February 1916, the war in Cameroon ended. During the war, sharp differences arose between the British and French over the issue of the proposed condominium. The failure to resolve these differences led to the partition of Cameroon between Britain and France.

In the face of this disagreement, an official of the British foreign office, Lancelot Oliphant met with the French diplomat, George Picot, in London. In the course of the meeting, Oliphant presented a map of Cameroon to Picot and asked him to determine the boundary between Britain and France in Cameroon. Picot used a ruler and traced a line from North to South. This became known as the Picot line. Picot decided to choose the area east of the line and gave the British the area to the West. This provisionally partitioned Cameroon into British and French Cameroons. In November 1918, the First World War ended in Europe and the rest of the World.⁸³

The Paris Peace Conference that was convened imposed the Treaty of Versailles on Germany. Under article 119 of the treaty, Germany had to surrender all her overseas colonies, including Cameroon to the victorious Powers. Furthermore, according to article 22 paragraph 5 of the Covenant of the League, ex-German colonies were to become mandated territories of the League. By this same agreement, the Anglo-French occupation and partition of Cameroon was confirmed. Consequently, on July 10th, 1919 the British Colonial Secretary, Lord Alfred Milner on behalf of Britain and the French Minister for colonies, Henri Simon, on behalf of France agreed to sign the famous Milner-Simon Agreement, which gave the green light for the League of Nations to adopt the final partition of Cameroon on July 1922.⁸⁴

In the partition, France was given about 4/5 of the territory as compared to only 1/5 acquired by the British. Following this agreement therefore, the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations was given the responsibility to supervise the administrations of Britain and France in Cameroon. Britain divided her share of Cameroon into two parts: - the British Northern Cameroons and the British Southern Cameroons. British Northern Cameroons was administered as parts of different provinces in the east of the Northern Region of Nigeria, while

⁸³ Abwa, *Cameroon Histoire d'un nationalisme 1884-1916*, Yaounde, Edition CLE, 2010, pp.146-147.

⁸⁴ Eyongetah, Brain and Palmer, *A History of the Cameroon*. London, Longman, 1988, p.97.

the British Southern Cameroons was administered as a full province of the Eastern Region of Nigeria with headquarters at Enugu. The Southern Cameroons was initially divided into four divisions namely Mamfe, Victoria, Kumba and Bamenda. Mamfe Divisions is one of the divisions that this study is researching on.

The attachment of Southern Cameroons to the Eastern Region of Nigeria complicated the political future of Mamfe Division in particular and the territory as a whole. In 1959, the most delicate issue in Southern Cameroons was under what form the territory would achieve independence. A plebiscite became an obvious answer to this worry. The origin of the idea of a plebiscite in the Southern Cameroons could be traced to the differences that existed between the two major political plate forms in the decolonization struggle of the territory during the final phase of the trusteeship. Therefore, on the 11th February 1961, the United Nations Organization (UNO) conducted plebiscites in the two parts of British Cameroon to decide on the political future of the territory on whether the people wanted to vote to join Nigeria or the Republic of Cameroon.⁸⁵

Our study investigates the role Mamfe Division played in the reunification process of Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroun and argues that although unification was a welcome effort, its terms were nevertheless ignored as time went by. From the foregoing, the fundamental question is: what evolutionary pattern did reunification take and how far did this conform to the people's expectations? The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How was Mamfe/Manyu Division before reunification?
2. What were the contributions of Mamfe/Manyu actors to the reunification of Cameroon?
3. How did the Mamfe/Manyu Division prepare for reunification?
4. How did the change from federal to the unitary set-ups in Cameroon affect the political, economic and social activities in Mamfe/Manyu Division? And
5. What were the impact and challenges of reunification on Mamfe/ Manyu Division?

Aims and Objectives of the Study

Mamfe Division was located in British Southern Cameroons. These guided objectives attracted our interest to carry out an historical investigation on the objectives below:

The fundamental objective is to evaluate the reunification pattern that took place, and how it conformed to the people expectation.

⁸⁵ Ibid.p.152.

1. The study traces the geographical setting and human background of Mamfe/Manyu Division.
2. The study examines the contributions of Mamfe /Manyu actors to reunification process.
3. The thesis intends to expose on the preparation the Mamfe/Manyu people had for reunification.
4. The work is aimed at relating the position of Mamfe/Manyu Division in the federal and unitary set-ups in Cameroon.
5. And lastly the work evaluates the impact and challenges of reunification on Mamfe/Manyu Division.

The main theme of our research centres on the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the independence of Southern Cameroons and the reunification; this celebration took place at Buea on the 20th February 2011. The work equally investigates why the son of the division like Chief Ayamba spearheaded the tendency of secession from the Republic of Cameroon under the pressure group known as the Southern Cameroons National Council (S.C.N.C.). This leads to another questions: why the Mamfe people voted in 1961 to join the Republic of Cameroon in the first place and what make them to challenge that decision fifty years after in the second place? The work examines whether the reunification was worth the celebration or toleration in the division. This is because just a few years after the reunification, Mamfe Division which was considered the melting pot of Southern Cameroons economy in the 1940s and 1950s was transformed to ghost town due to the declining nature of its economic activities.

The work examines the role played by French Cameroon settlers in the Southern Cameroons in general and Mamfe Division in particular. It also looks at the importance of the conferences that were held in Mamfe and the political impact on the people of Southern Cameroons in general. It dwells as well on the answers to a number of questions that came up: the role-played by the division, the relationship that existed between Nigerian settlers and Southern Cameroons politicians and the position of Nigerians in the destiny of the territory at the time of decolonization.

The research was based on the premise that Mamfe Division was one of Southern Cameroons six administrative units created by the British during the mandate their administrative period. The division played an important role in paving the destiny of Southern Cameroons. The fact that it hosted many important conferences made it important to investigate its actual contributions to the independence or reunification of the Cameroons. The research is equally based on the argument that the Igbo factor provoked the inhabitants of the division to

vote for the reunification because they did not want anything with the Nigerians again. The division played an important part in the origin of the idea of reunification of the two Cameroons in the 1950s, an idea that was very strange to Southern Cameroonians. S.A George of Mamfe Division made it very popular in his seven points.

Sources, Research, Method and Data Collection

To effectively investigate the propositions made above in order to achieve the aims and objectives of this work. We consulted and exploited several historical sources both primary and secondary. This work was done between 2015-2022.

The study started by collecting classifying relevant literature on the politics of Mamfe Division in particular and Southern Cameroons in general. This included published secondary sources such books, articles and newspaper reports. Unpublished secondary sources such as cases, dissertations, long essays were all exploited. The reading of these abundant literatures enabled us to have an appraisal on what actually existed for the study. The different arguments and approaches taken by other researchers and scholars on the decolonisation politics of Southern Cameroon played an important part in the study.

This task was accomplished thanks to enrich documentation in the libraries of the University of Yaoundé 1, Buea National Archives Mamfe Divisional Archives, University of Buea, Institute of Human Science in Yaoundé also have the Bamenda Regional archive and many others. After going through the secondary sources, the primary sources were equally a vital area for the collection of primary data that constituted the foundations of this Thesis. Given the importance of the primary data, the main repositories of colonial documents were visited. These were the National Archives of Buea, Yaoundé and the Provincial Archive of Bamenda. The personal collection of D.M. Frambo family library, V.G Fanso were consulted, from these archive reports on the role of Mamfe Division, and the part played by the political actors were collected.

Since oral sources remained very vital and indispensable to African historiography, we went to the field to conduct interviews; efforts were made to identify political actors, chiefs and elites of the period or those who were knowledgeable to give information on the subject we were investigating. They included off springs from Mamfe, Akwaya, Fontem, Nguti, and Eyumojock. A total of 55 face-to-face interviews were conducted of which Oben Godson the chief of Mamfe, son of D.M Frambo were of great important to the study. We equally organised interviews to cross- examine some declaration and ideas given by some of our informants. We

did this by repeating some of the questions in order to weight the credibility of some of the answered that our informants provided. These interviews and other findings provided valuable information that forged the work.

Information on data collected from the published and unpublished sources were examined critically and given adequate attentions and an interpretation which was consistent with the evidence provided. Historical objectivity was applied and conflicting views examined with extra care to avoid loopholes and historical imaginations and misinterpretations. This was in line with our view that a history thesis is the product of pain taken efforts in which the raw data of oral traditions and other sources are weighted against one another and interpreted.

Problems Encountered

Research of this nature at the doctorate level certainly requires enormous sacrifices, given that it coincided with the socio-political crisis that began in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon that was the main area of investigation. However, we put every effort at our disposal to collect data, process, interpret, print and edit, even though there were obstacles at each of the stages. Other sources quite important for our investigation were not fully exploited due to the socio-political crisis just mentioned. One problem we encountered was that some of our informants were not free to sit openly to express their mind because of the rampant gunshots here and there. However, we were able to look for better solution to manage the problem. At times we sit in their parlour and not outside as is normally done were we had good discussions with the informants.

Equally, it was difficult to have collective interviews because many people were afraid to assemble for the fear of the unknown. Those we actually met were reluctant to share their information, fearing that it might have political implications that might take them to prison or rate them as black legs.⁸⁶ To solve this problem we reduced the number of group informants. To encourage them to speak, many at times a bought a jar of palm wine which encouraged them to speak without being afraid. This allowed the free flow of the discussion.

It is worth noting that the socio-political crisis in the North West and South West that characterised the period of our research helped to delay the completion of the study because any attempt to move in the two regions was disturbed by “ghost town” operations or complete

⁸⁶ Black legs, refers to betrayal either through information or not collaborating with a particular group of people who hold a certain view or opinion. It could also mean, dealing with two parties; hearing from one party and reporting or revealing pertinent secrets to the other for personal benefits. There is nothing positive or good about black legging. Each time it is practiced, it leads only to negative impacts.

shutdown of economic activities, which made movement quite difficult. We therefore resorted to trekking from one village to the other. Even when we met the informants many of them suspected us and were not willing to speak even after we insisted and demonstrated to them that our findings were only scientific and academic and had nothing more than that. We presented our research authorisation from the University of Yaounde 1. Thereafter, we obtained assistance from the traditional and administrative authorities in some areas of our research. It was only after this that many informants accepted to receive us because of the traditional and administrative orders.

Another problem that we must talk about was the advanced stage of depreciation of some valuable documents in the national archives of Buea and Yaounde. Some files could not be traced, some were not actually visible because of cold and some were worn out. It is in this that we wish to call on the government to computerize all the archives in national territory; we equally send a serious appeal to other researchers to handle the documents they meet in our archives with a lot of care.

By the time we were about to print this work, we were told that the faculty authorities in the university insisted on the strict respect of the faculty manual in the presentation of a thesis. We have to rearrange the work to suit the new faculty format. This called for the displacement of some tables, plates and sketched maps. This of course delayed the work and even deprived us of our initial plan of presenting it to the Ecole de Doctoral. Despite these problems, we had the vigour and determination to complete the research and to explain our findings to the jury and the public today. This determination was further re-enforced when the president launched the recruitment of assistant lecturers into the eight (8) state universities in Cameroon. In addition, the relevance of our study lies in the on-going challenges, which Anglophone crisis has posed on the reunification of Cameroon.

Organization of the Work

The work is divided into five (5) chapters. The general introduction, which examines the concepts involved in the study, presents the aim and objective of the study, literature review, research problem, scope and limitations of the study, research propositions and the problems that were encountered in the course of the research. The introduction identifies the scientific characteristics of the study.

Chapter one presents an indispensable background study of the research area. It handles Mamfe Division from 1884 to 1916 during the German protectorate over Cameroon and from

when Britain and France partitioned Kamerun into two uneven parts. The chapter reveals that the people of Mamfe Division occupied a central point in the Southern Cameroons, given that it was the gateway into Nigeria and to the other parts of Southern Cameroons. The chapter identifies various ethnic groups, communities, and historical connection of the people of Mamfe with the Nigerians and French Cameroons.

Chapter two discusses the contributions of the Mamfe actors to the reunification of Cameroon. It examines the role played by some politicians of Mamfe Division such as S.A. George, E.T. Egbe, D.M. Frambo, W.N. Effiom and others during period of the plebiscite that led to reunification in 1961. The chapter also reveals that ethnic and improvement groups had a lot that influenced the plebiscite vote in the divisions, especially in favour of the reunification option. The chapter examines the role played by traditional rulers in shaping the destiny of Southern Cameroons in general and the Mamfe division in particular. The chiefs did not constitute any political party, but were a strong force to reckon with in the Southern Cameroons politics. They supported politicians who bought their opinion of secession from Nigeria pure and simple. The chiefs were equally ready to abandon any politician that betrayed them. Chapter three looks at the various conferences held in Mamfe from 1948 to 1960 and how they acted as a springboard for the advancement of the Southern Cameroons search for self-government and independence. The chapter also investigates why Mamfe was constantly chosen to host these important pre-reunification conferences.

Chapter four focuses on the UN conducted plebiscite of 1961 in Mamfe. The chapter explains that like other five divisions of Southern Cameroons where the plebiscite was carried out, Mamfe Division was not left out. It also explains that the electorates in the division were divided into integrationist (those who wanted the territory to join with Nigeria), secessionists (those who wanted outright separation from Nigeria) and those who wanted to achieve self-government and reunification. The last were, those who supported that Southern Cameroons should join the Cameroon Republic to return to pre-1916, German Kamerun. The chapter investigates and concludes that integration was not popular in the division because close interactions with the Nigerians living in the Southern Cameroons brought a lot of discontent among the inhabitants of the division which became known as Igbophobians or the Nigerian factor.

Chapter five examines the impact and challenges of the reunification on Cameroon in general and Mamfe Division in particular. The chapter explains that Mamfe town, which was a centre of economic activities before reunification was relegated to the background and

subsequently nicknamed ghost town due to the serious decline in its economic activities. Mamfe became a forgotten area in Cameroon. Mamfe, which has occupied a central area in Southern Cameroons before 1916, which was the nerve centre of economic life and the political pivot of the British Southern Cameroons, suddenly lost its position due to reunification. Regrettably, Mamfe became an orphan child and almost disappeared from the political and economic map of West Africa. The study also goes further to explain that following the recent tarring of Mamfe-Kumba road, Mamfe-Bamenda road, Mamfe is gradually regaining the position and past glory it occupied before reunification. The town has started making newspaper headlines in Cameroon and other African countries. The trend to this new rejuvenation is seen from the creation of the Mamfe seminary in the late 1990.

The study ends with a general conclusion of a synopsis of the entire work. It states the results of the findings based on the premise that there is no house without a problem, and when they do come up they should be solved through dialogue since conflicts are inevitable to human existence, the solution is for parties to carry out a sincere and genuine dialogue and not to take up arms. There is an appendix composed of relevant significant text and a bibliography of the sources.

CHAPTER ONE

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING AND HUMAN BACKGROUND OF MAMFE/MANYU DIVISION BEFORE THE RISE OF NATIONALISM IN THE SOUTHERN CAMEROONS

Introduction

This chapter examines the geographical setting and historical background of Mamfe Division. In the geographical setting, the study shall look at some of the physical and natural features of the Division that were conducive for political activities that took place in the area, including the lowland of the area, moderate rain falls and sunshine. That is, the researcher shall examine the relationship between the people and their natural environment in line with the politics of the time. The researcher's interest is to relate the physical features with the human activities, including socio-cultural, religious and economic life styles. The historical background provides a brief ethnographical survey of the study area. It gives an account of the lives of the people of Mamfe Division of which were more traditionally oriented from the time of their ancestors. It gives a comprehensive understanding of the elements of the Mamfe Man's culture. This background will enable us to make an appraisal of the impact of the colonial masters on the political life of Mamfe Division vis à vis the reunification process. A historical perspective of the chieftaincy office from the pre-colonial times to the period of colonization under the Germans will be examined below.

Geographical Setting

It is very important to locate Mamfe Division for a better understanding of the study. The territory that was carved out Mamfe Division is found in the south-western portion of Cameroon's equatorial rainforest region, precisely in the cross-river basin along the modern Cameroon-Nigeria border which was fixed but not demarcated.¹ The division lies between latitudes 5°15' and 6°30' and covered a belt of country extending over the width of Cameroon the province of the protectorate of Nigeria on the west to the Anglo-French boundary of the mandated territory on the east. To the North of latitude 5°45', the eastern boundary merged with that of former Bamenda Division in a westerly northern –direction until it meets the Nigerian

¹ A.S.Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon*, Second Edition, New Jersey, Neba Publishers, 1987, p.30.

boundary. To the south lies the former Kumba Division boundary that was not clearly defined but ran roughly east to west to the Mbo and Obang Ekwe clans.²

The headquarters of Mamfe Division was Mamfe town situated at the confluence of the Manyu and Bali Rivers, which formed the Cross River. The Division covered 9,565km² as of 2005. The cross-river and its eastern confluence formed the rough diameter of the Division. It had a total population of about 398, 000 as of 2005 population census living in scattered hamlets over some 4300square miles of mountainous, wooded and heavily watered territory.³ Mamfe division has been known by different names at different times. From 1884 to1916, it was called Ossidinge, 1922 to 1945 during the mandate period and from 1946 to 1961 during the trusteeship, it was called Mamfe Division. During the post-colonial era, the decree N°63/DF/250 of July 1968, it was known as Manyu Division. The division is divided administratively into four sub-divisions namely Akwaya, Eyumojock. Upper Banyang and Mamfe Central. Besides, few towns and semi-towns, several villages do constitute the sub-division. In 1992, the division lost one of its sub- divisions (Fontem) that was transformed to a new division called Lebialem in the then South West Province.⁴ Manyu Division still has the enviable distinction of the largest division west of the mungo in terms of surface area (maps 1 and 2).

² Ibid, p.35.

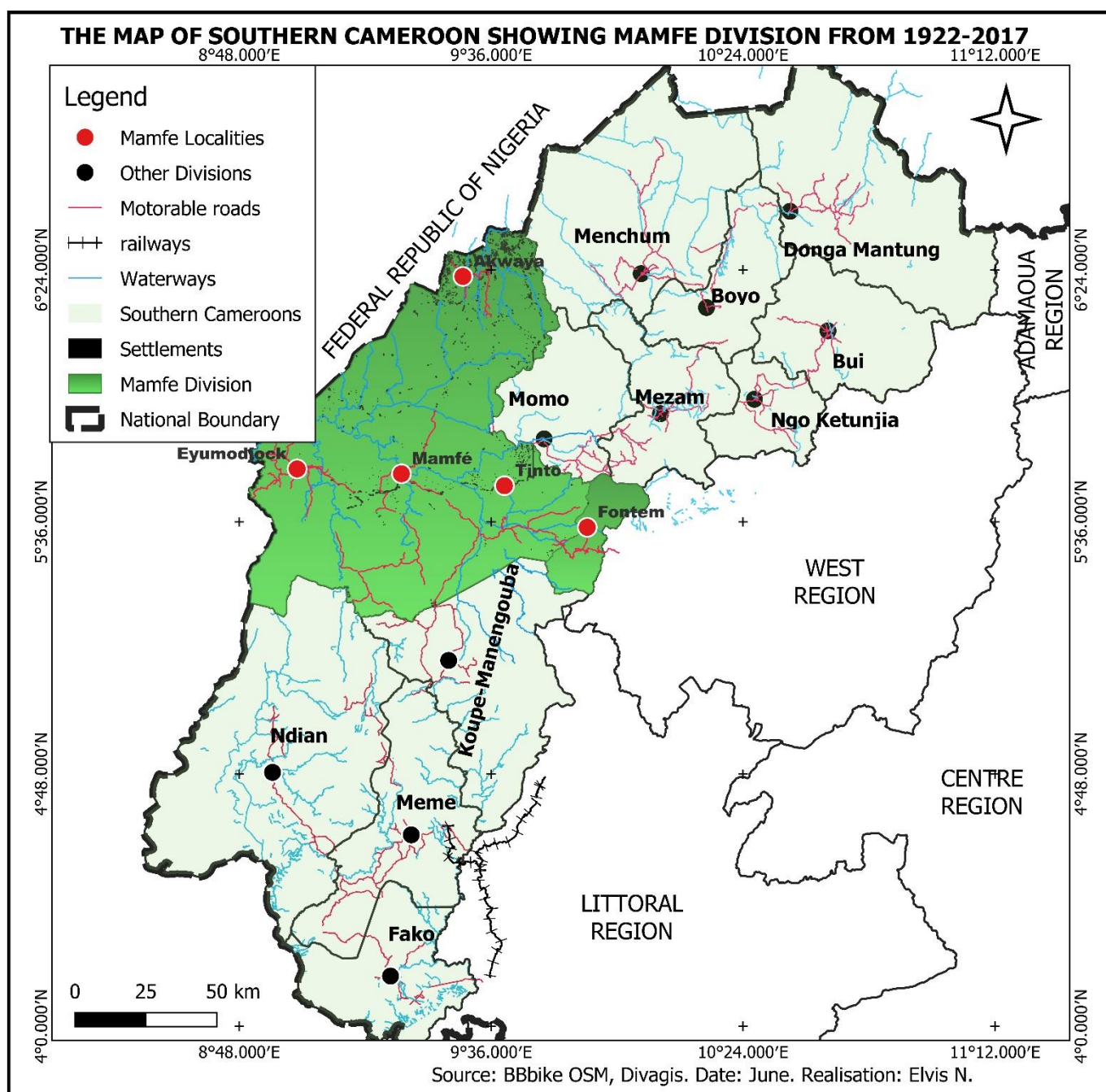
³www.lucy.ukc.ac.uk/Chilver/Paudema/Setting.html, September 2009, p.25 .

⁴H. G. Ngwane," The search of a Cameroonian Identity," vol. No.7 ,1992, p. 23.

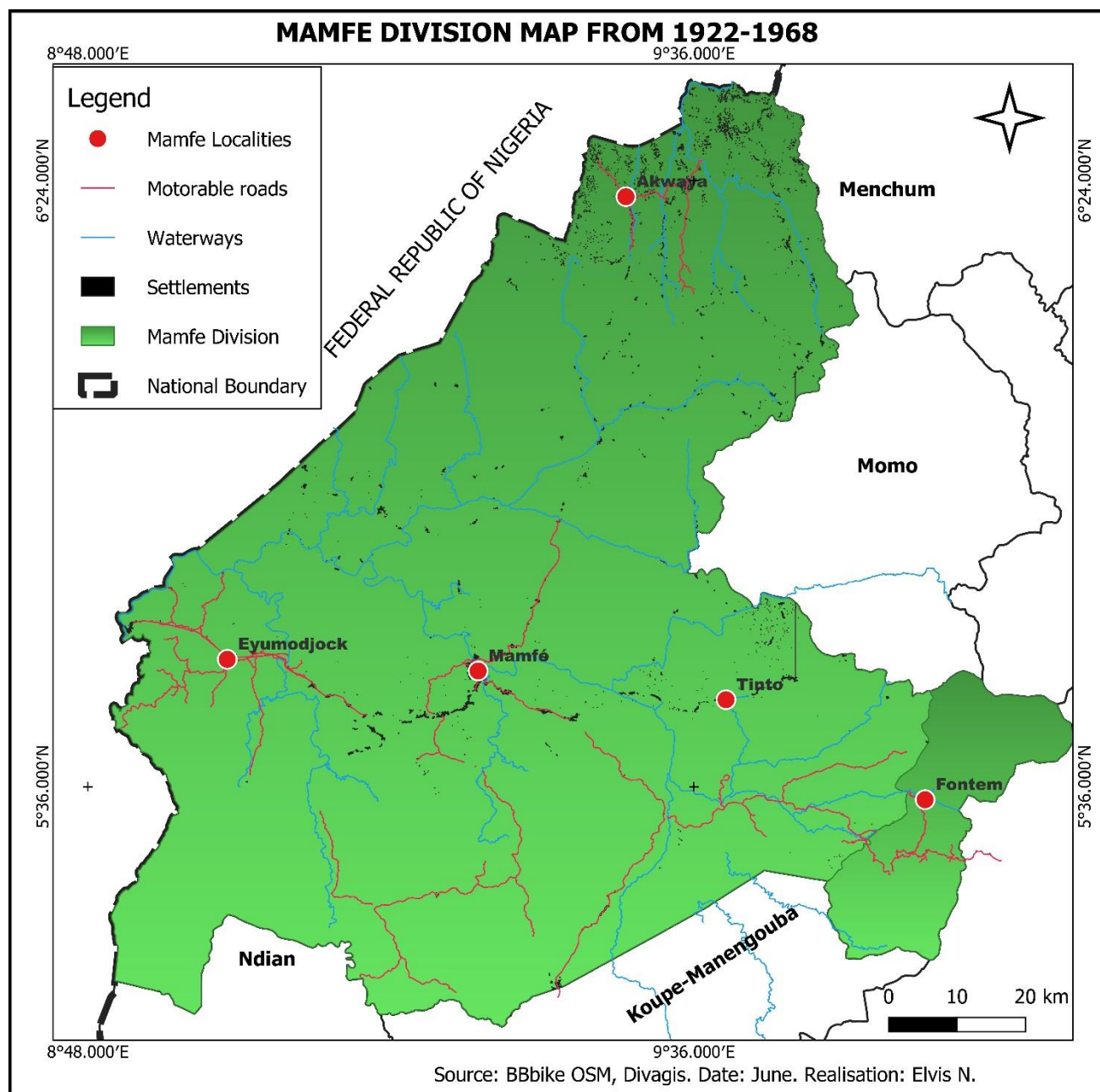
Map 1: The Republic of Cameroon locating Manyu Division in the South West Province in 1980



Map 2: The Map of Southern Cameroon Showing Mamfe Division from 1922-2017



Map 3: Mamfe Division from 1922 – 1961



Source: Adapted from Ministry of Territorial Administration (MINAT) Library, Yaounde, 2017. P.5.

Physical and administrative

Mamfe Division has the equatorial climate with a long rainy season that lasts from March to October with the wettest months in August and September and a short dry season, which runs from November to February. The rainy season is characterised by heavy down pours and humid conditions with average yearly temperature varying from 20°C to 28°C.⁵ The dry season on the

⁵ Neba, Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon, p.24.

other hand experiences hot sunny days with temperatures, usually rising to 33°C. Rainfall is conventional with a mean annual range of about 2700mm to 3600mm.⁶

The division has numerous important tributaries in the north of River Munaiya and the west and those of the Badi and Manyu Rivers in the east. There are also important tributaries of the Cross-River that serve as the means of transportation of the people and property in and out of the division. Villages like Nsanakang and Aborkem, which were situated at the banks of the Cross River where German stations were built, were only reached through the river.⁷ It should be noted that the European occupation and consequent interference in the traditional systems in this area was made easy by these tributaries and rivers.

The Manyu Division lies in a lowland area known as the Mamfe depression. It falls within the dense Equatorial Forest of the Biafra type with evergreen forests and undergrowth. This is owing to the fact that sunlight hardly reached the underneath due to continuous canopy formed by several species of trees like Iroko, mahogany and ebony, to name but a few. Alongside these species, others do exist like the non-timber forest products: bush mango and *eru* that are of great economic value to the people. The thick equatorial forest is also a good habitat for many animal species like the elephant (which is a totem to some of the people), monkey, chimpanzee and porcupine. The physical features in the division provide better opportunities for human settlement that attracted many Nigerians such as Igbo, Ifik and Yoruba because they were conducive to farming and trade. The influx of Nigerians to the division facilitated the forging of the nationalistic tendencies of Southern Cameroonians who hated the tyrannical and domineering character of Nigerians. For any political activity to be carried out, the relief and climate of the area needed to be appropriate.⁸ The next section examines the historical background of the division.

Historical Profile of Mamfe Division

In this section, we shall examine the origins, migration and settlement, ethnic composition and distribution of the communities of Manyu Division. We shall illustrate how human factors in a way influenced political activities among Manyu Chiefs. As a result of several viewpoints

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ V. E. Oben, "Politics Power and Authority among the Stateless Societies of Manyu Division: The case of the Banyang and Keaka under German and British," Post Graduate Diploma Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde, 1984, p.1.

⁸ Interview with James Enow Agbor, teacher, 58 years, Bachuo -Ntai, 31st August 2017.

concerning the linguistic and historical aspects, we have tried to come out with a consensus about the early history of the groups.

From 20th July 1922, the mandate system came into force officially; the British applied the Nigerian laws of Indirect Rule in the territory and by the British Cameroon order in council of 1923, placed the Cameroon province under the governorship of the lieutenant – governor of the southern provinces of Nigeria. The British in order to facilitate the administration of their portion of the partition of Cameroon divided the Cameroon province into four administrative divisions, which included Victoria, Kumba, Mamfe and Bamenda. These divisions were head by District officers (DOs). The DOs were directly answerable to the Resident in Buea for the local administration in their districts.⁹

Southern Cameroons continued to constitute only one province until July 1949 when Bamenda division was broken down into three, that is Bamenda, Wum and Nkambe. The number of divisions in Southern Cameroons increased to six by 1951 when the newly created divisions obtained their full divisional status following the putting of John Macpherson constitution. Bamenda became a province and had its own Resident until 1954 when Southern Cameroons attained a Quasi-Federal status.¹⁰

The District Officers appointed to the different divisions were instructed to reorganise the native authorities in their divisions by encouraging the formation of Federal native authorities. These Federated Native Authorities were to continue with the responsible of maintaining of law, order and good governance in their areas of command. They were equally to advise, assist and improve the efficiency of the local administration and to form a control that was to be progressively relinquished power to the people. In Mamfe division like other divisions of Southern Cameroons, to bring administration closer to the people, the British divided the division into Four administrative units; Mamfe west (Mamfe Central, Eyumojock and today Upper Banyang), Mamfe north (Akwaya), Mamfe South (Nguti) and Mamfe East (Fontem and Widikum). Each of these had its own specificities on how it was organised, Mamfe

⁹ For the purpose of this study, I have decided to call the Cameroon Province which is the subject of our study from 1922 to 1961, Southern Cameroons, although it was only in 1957 that the appellation was constitutionally recognized. By 1922, Southern Cameroons was attached as a province to Southern Nigeria. When the Richards' Constitution was promulgated in 1946 and Nigeria divided into three regions, the territory Southern Cameroons became a province of Eastern region. However, from 1949 when the Bamenda Division was raised to a full province and became known as the Bamenda Province, the coastal region of British Southern Cameroons, which is today the South West Region, became known as the Cameroon Province. Bamenda Province, the coastal region of British Southern Cameroons, which is today the South West Region, became known as the Cameroon Province.

¹⁰Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, pp. 293-294.

West, it comprised the present day, Mamfe central, upper Banyang and Eyumojock sub-Division in Manyu Division. Geographical Background (See Maps 2 and 3 source)

Historians interested in the geography of an area believe rightly or wrongly that the historical evolution of a population or group takes place within a geographical milieu. This supports the view that man cannot be cut off or separated from his natural environment. The indigenous population of Mamfe Division who today constitute the principal communities like the Banyang, Keaka, Anyang and Boki all originated from Ekoi in South Eastern Nigeria. The real factors responsible for their movements remain clouded because much of it is based on speculation. The first theory claimed that the Banyang and Ejagham ethnic groups migrated originally from East Africa; moving southwards then broke up. A section moved westwards to Angola and the other section settled in the Manyu basin. Some possibilities of the theory being true are the similarities in folklore of the Zulu people and those of the Banyang and Ejagham communities; secondly the similarities of names of place. For example, there is an ethnic in Angola called Djagham.¹¹

In their southward movement from Nigeria, the people were led by a hunter, Akwen, who took them through the forests crossing rivers and streams and trekking through hills and valleys. They subsequently arrived at the Ekok border and eventually settled in the area known as Eyumojock where internal dissension led to splits within the group. Due to the fact that the leader of the group, Akwen, began raiding and selling some of his able men as slaves to Nigerian traders, those who separated from his group began new hamlets elsewhere for their settlement. It was believed that the villages of Kembong, Ndepaya and Mbakem came into existence as a consequence of the separation and the majority of the Ejagham speakers traced their origin from this historic movement.¹²

Banyang oral traditions traced the origin and migration of the indigenes of Mamfe from the waterside areas and not from Ekok borders. Sources here explain clearly that the Efik who have for long carried out fishing activities on the Cross River during one of their downward expeditions reached the famous River Manyu. Realizing that their fishing activities were more fruitful in the famous River, they saw no need going back to Nigeria. Having realized this, they began erecting permanent structures for settlement. With time, as other fishermen migrated towards the River Manyu, their numbers increased and new sites were cleared for settlement.

¹¹ National Archive Buea (NAB), File AF/27, No.115/Assessment Report on the Keaka speaking Area in Mamfe Division, 1972, p.19.

¹² Inter Ayuk Peter Agbor, 56 Years, Farmer, Ossing, 24th October 2019.

Most of the Banyang, Anyang and Boki speakers trace their history of origin to this migratory trend from this migratory trend.¹³

In spite of this controversy over the origin of migration and settlement of the indigenous Banyang people, a large majority of our informants held that the people generally came from two migratory routes. According to Chief Esim, while some indigenes came through land and across the border of Ekok because of slave raids, others who were involved in fishing activities came through the waterside, hence both sources are quite realistic in explaining the migration of the people. Worthy of note is this that, those who came across the land (Keaka speakers) later on trekked to join their brothers (Banyang, Anyang and Boki) who had settled along the banks of the river and were carrying out fishing activities.

Hence, in spite of this double trend migration, population concentration was around the River Manyu where the trade in smoked fish had developed and Egbekaw was the first village that developed out of it. This story of migration and settlement necessitated the practice of the parallel trade between people of Manyu Division and those of Eastern Nigeria who considered themselves as having the same historical background. Even after the erection of the national and international boundaries between the two colonies of Cameroon and Nigeria, the people of Mamfe in Cameroon and those in the Eastern Region of Nigeria still had many things in common.¹⁴

Linguistically speaking, almost all the ethnic groups in Manyu Division belong to the same linguistic communities especially as they have a common names and cultural norms as well as socio-political institutions. The slight variation in their tongues could be attributed to their separate social contracts with their different western and eastern neighbours as well as their different migratory contacts in time. The lower Banyang are closer to the Ejagham their western neighbour from whom they borrowed and derived most of their institutions and with whom they inter- married. This renders it difficult to establish a demarcation line between areas of pure Banyang, Ejagham, Anyang and Boki cultures.¹⁵

From the cultural point of view, it should be said that the Mamfe people migrated from the plateau area of Nigeria with the migrants moving firstly southward and then eastward to the area they occupy today. Although early European writers supported the view that considered

¹³Oben, "Political power and Authority among the stateless societies of Manyu Division. The case of the Banyang and keaka under German and British", Post Graduate Diploma Dissertation, University of Yaounde, 1984, pp.12-31.

¹⁵ P.A.Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Shadow of the Bush*, London, Heinemann, 1982, p.482.

the Mamfe groups to be of oriental origin, other Manyu writers of the 20th century like Talbot in 1912 who documented these people do not consider them to be of oriental origin, nor from East Africa. For Talbot, their ancient home was the Upper Cross River that extends from (salt mines) in Mbakang to Calabar on the coast and north of the Cross River to the ancient Akwanshi monoliths of Nigeria.¹⁶

Taking into consideration other salient facts like demographic and cultural traits and customs, one might be tempted to believe strongly that the phenomenal migration and settlement of the people began from their original home around the Upper Cross river. It is clear that the Ejagham that incidentally form part of Nigeria in what is called the Cross River State are more numerous than the Ejagham of Cameroon. More so, many people claimed that the Ejagham people of Cameroon brought the secret societies and the functioning mechanisms of important traditional associations like the *Ngwee* or leopard club from the Calabar people of Nigeria.

Fanso, holds that the Banyang and Ejagham main ethnic groups in the division traced their origin to a place called Emat, somewhere in the northeast of Lake Ejagham in Eyumojock Sub Division. From Emat, they spread in all directions and were still spreading long after the European partition of the region into Nigeria and Cameroon¹⁷.

Notwithstanding the above developments, it is important to note that though the famous legendary lake Ejagham had been recorded by history as the mythical origin of the name, language and some people called Ejagham they appear to have completely diverse origins and no common tradition of descent except at clan and village level, as explained above, any Manyu village have claimed to have settled in several other places before they came to their present sites. Migration of families or entire villages was often motivated by disputes or by natural disasters such as persistent crop failure, childlessness in several families and drought.¹⁸

The origin of the people of Manyu is equally related to the various clan histories of the region. The Baku clan accordingly claims that Eshobi, a village founded by their ancestor, Tabong Eyong, is their place of origin. The next clan Nfawtek claims that Nchang was their place of origin. The Bauchi clan traces their origin to Abu Angwa and mention Ndifor as their original ancestor. The Mbang clan is said to have been founded by Mbang who came from Nchang and settled in a place that became known as Tembong. The Nchumbere clan is uncertain

¹⁶ Ibid.p.484.

¹⁷Fanso, Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges Hong Kong, Macmillan, 1989, p.28., Vol. 1,

¹⁸ Interview with Egbe Tabi Nelson, 60 Years, Councilor, Kembong, 5th June 2019.

of its original ancestor. The Awanchi clan originated from Kendem and their ancestor was Efu. The Taiyong clan claims that their founder was Tanyi-Njok. The two Nkokenoks claim (though denying their close relationship) that their eponymous ancestor was called Nkokenok.¹⁹

The largest of the sub-groups was Ejagham Njemaya. Each sub-group was further divided into clans or village groups by virtue of their language, custom and above all, their common ancestral origin. Each clan is composed of several villages, each comprising several families living in separate residential communities. After the regrouping of lineages by the Germans, the Lower and Upper Banyang countries had fourteen clans and fifty-nine villages, while Central Ejagham and Ejagham Njamaya countries had twelve clans and sixty-five villages.

In the face of this, it should be recalled that the people of Manyu Division came from diverse backgrounds. Their chief town, Mamfe was a colonial junction town between Southern Cameroons and Eastern Nigeria. The town of Mamfe had a fair size with a population of some 2,000 persons. The indigenous Mamfe people were only a handful, and the rest were other natives from other ethnic groups from Nigeria and parts of southern Cameroons. Some of such people included the Igbo, Efik, Hausa and indigenes of from Bamenda and the French Cameroon. The original people of Mamfe were the Banyang. Banyang villages included Small Mamfe, Ekgbekaw, Besongabang, Nchang, Eyangnchang, Bachuontai, Etoko, Etemetek, Eyangntui, Okoyong, and Eshobi.²⁰

The majority of the settlers in Mamfe were traders. They traded in kernels, livestock while others were tailors, shoe repairers and shop keepers. A good number of the traders, especially those from Nigeria, helped a lot in shaping the destiny of the Mamfe people during the plebiscite of 1961, as shall explain in the chapters ahead. Mamfe town, as already mentioned attracted many traders because of its strategic location and the friendly nature of the Mamfe people. This made many of these strangers to settle in Mamfe permanently.

Mamfe Division had numerous chiefdoms, some of them as small as hamlets and others villages or towns. Each chiefdom was sub-divided into quarters. The quarters were administered by quarter heads who themselves were answerable to the chiefs. The underlying principle of all Mamfe land governmental processes was that, coercive authority was directly or ultimately a function of the community acting corporately. Of the four sub-divisions in

¹⁹ NAB, File, AF /37, No. 1460/1937, "Intelligence Report on the Kembong Area, Mamfe Division, 1937, p.13. Talbot, *In the Shadow of the Shadow of the bush*, p. 482.

Mamfe Division, Mamfe West was the most populated with 135 villages followed by Mamfe North with 99 villages, Mamfe South with 85 villages and Mamfe East with 79 villages.²¹ The total land surface occupied by the people was about 102 square miles with a low population density of 18 persons per square mile. Mamfe was and still is the headquarters of Manyu Division. In 1978, the division was comprised of the present day Nguti,²² Fontem, Widikum Akwaya, Eyumojock and Mamfe central sub divisions. But in 1992, following a presidential decree, Tinto was made a sub-division under Manyu Division while Lebialem Division was created with headquarters at Menji and Widikum was cut off from the division and made a sub-division.

Political Structures

Before the imposition of colonial rule, the people of Manyu were not united under one chiefdom. They were scattered throughout the forest in many small separate settlements with larger recognized political groupings likely to have exceeded more than 200 people and in many cases much fewer. These Manyu communities were having dotted hamlets until Alfred Mansfield, the first German explorer, came into the area when they were transformed, reflecting present day communities.²³ What were common with these communities were the characteristic qualities and attributes of the languages they spoke and their culture which united and distinguished them from other polities in the area.²⁴

The Manyu society was a stateless society with a system of democratic arrangement at the village level. The villages consisted of several lineages which were represented in the informal village council by lineage heads. There also existed clans with clan councils made up of the various village heads. It was by virtue of these that Manyu during and after the colonial period was administered as different polities with various villages and clans well mapped out.

Man as a social being needed systematic norms for his welfare; he was naturally forced to choose from among himself and for himself a responsible elder who commanded influence and respect to be his leader or ruler. Very often, the man chosen was from the quarter of founder's family or from a noble family. He was both the administrator of the village and the libation authority (*Nfor etak* or libation man).²⁵ As time went on, the village head or the traditional elder carried out functions pertaining to traditional rites and the internal

²¹ Fanso, Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges 1989, Vol. 1, p.28.

²²Ibid. 36

²³ NAB, File No.504,Vb/b1961/4, "Administrative District Office Mamfe," p.11.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Interview with Raymond Etang Arrey, 58 Years, Businessman and Chief of Ntenako Village, 14th August 2016.

administration of the village, whereas the external functions were the responsibilities of government agents.²⁶ In effect, this system introduced a sort of dual administration and authority in the village which from time to time slowed down the rate of progress. Naturally, occasions arose which generated conflicts and misunderstandings between the two authorities.²⁷

However, as the village administrative functions and those of the central government became enhanced, the power of the libational authority *Nfor etak* began to dwindle and this situation dictated a need for the fusion of the two authorities into one. For instance, in the Ntenako Village, chief Egbe-Achang and chief Eyong-erap in the early 1920s and late 1930s respectively gave a clear historical redress of this awkward situation when the two ruling authorities were amalgamated, thus marking the gradual end of the dual system in the villages. Hence, the system of ruling in the village was regularized by the people and by government instruments.²⁸

Under the government, a Chief of the village was unanimously presented by his people and of course, from a royal family or from a chieftaincy-line of decent and was appointed and installed by the government. He automatically became the voice and authority of the people and not only the government agent. Combining therefore the traditional functions of his village and that of the government as a rider on the auxiliary of the administration, he became a unified authority of the traditional authority in the village.²⁹ Under the same instrument, it was the chief that appointed and installed the quarter heads of his village depending on the category of the chieftdom and they were therefore answerable to him.³⁰

Following this constitutional structure therefore, the powers of the libation man (*nfor etak*) who later became quarter head appointed by the chief run parallel or superseded those of the chief of the village although it was an absolute abnormality. The quarter heads by this arrangement became responsible to the chief who was the head or chairman of the traditional council. The traditional council had a vice chair who assisted the chair who was the chief in his absence to preside at council meetings.³¹ As a matter of fact, in their respective and collective responsibilities in the village, each quarter head was a friend among equals and had no powers over the others unless by their own agreement endorsed by the chief. Their powers

²⁶ NAB, File No A1918/24, "Natives in British Sphere," 1924.p.4.

²⁷ Interview with, Joseph Tambe Takor, 69 Years, Retired Civil Administrator, Besongabang, 11th October 2017.

²⁸ Interview with Elizabeth Ayuk Besong, Businesswomen, 70 Years, Besongabang, 18th October 2017.

²⁹ V.B. Amaazee, "Traditional Rulers (Chiefs) and Politics in Cameroon History," 2002, p.86.

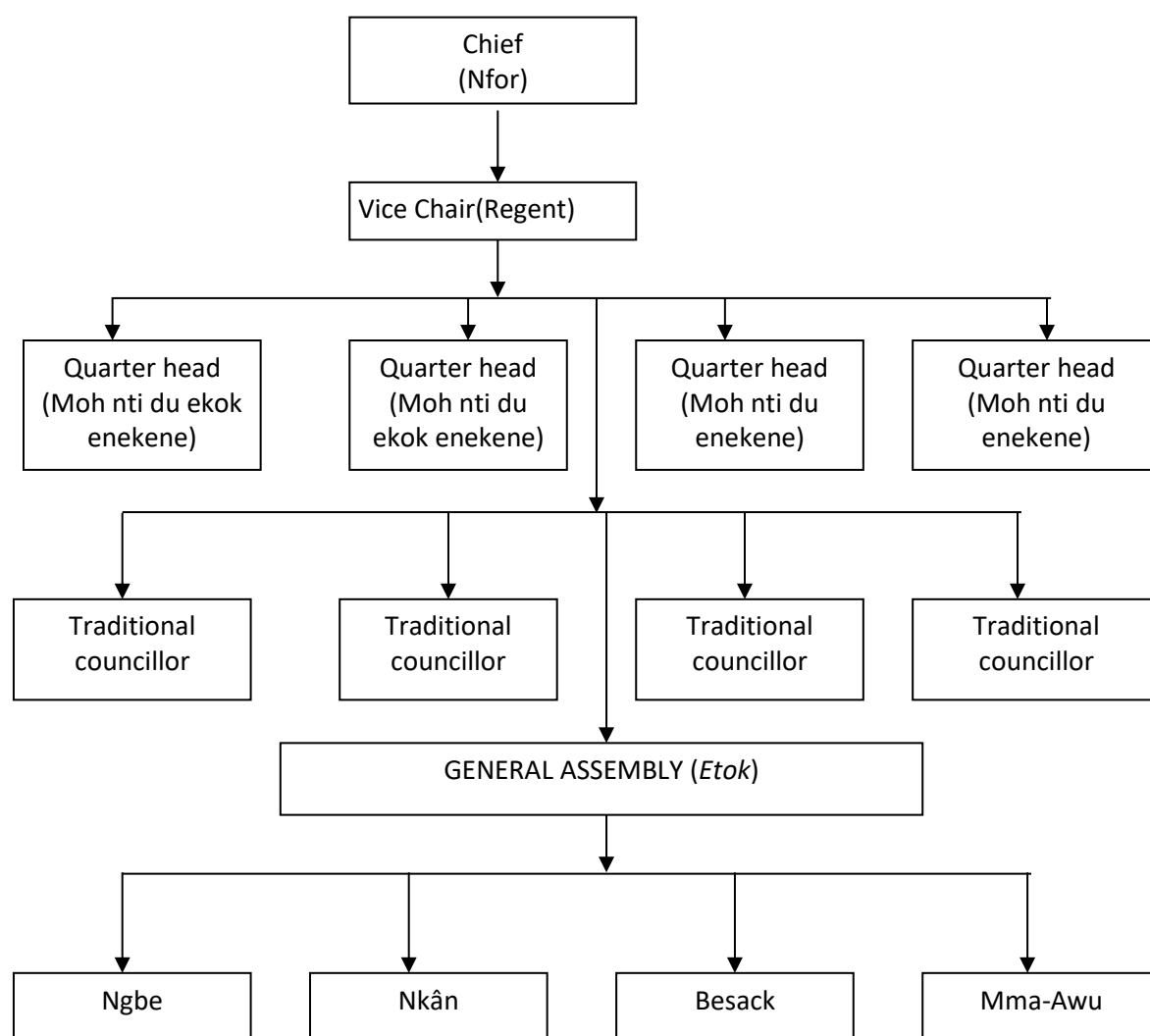
³⁰ Chem Langhëë, "The Question of Native Administration in Mamfe Division between the War," *Habary* 32, 1980, pp. 99-121.

³¹ Interview with Robert Tabot Nyenti, Farmer, 65, Years, Tinto, 19th October 2016.

descended from the chief to common people was worthwhile to mention that was one of the most important functions applied to assist the tax collector nominated by the chief to act as immediate advisers to him in the councils.³² The forgoing observations reflected the outlook of the village structure and administration in Manyu Division as seen on diagram 1 below.

A close look at the socio-political organization of the people of Manyu Division makes it clear that a study on Chiefs in politics in the division requires a good knowledge of the socio-political institutions of the people, traditions, customs and certain aspects of its regulatory societies especially in the pre-1922 days.

Diagram 1: The Socio-Political Structure of Traditional Authorities of Manyu Division in 1922



Source: Field Work, 27 January 2017.

³² B. P., Ayuk, "Besongabang Socio Cosmological Beliefs and Institutions in the Process of Change," Yaoundé, Post Graduate Diploma Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde, 1979, p.108.

The Ekpe or Mgbe Secret Society

Several political traditional associations existed in Manyu land having varying functions, activities and interests. Some of them like ekpe, njukanda and nkan combined both political and socio- economic functions. The Banyang acquired their associations from the Ejagham who had purchased them from the Balundou people of Ndian Division.³³ It was compulsory for a chief to belong to all the associations because it was natural for him to preside over traditional rituals, ceremonies, and festivals of the people, shrines and sacred places. The supreme ruler organization of these societies was the *ngbe* or the leopard club, which influenced the activities of members and the entire community. The place of *ngbe* in the village was more or less that of a “Gendarme.”³⁴ Apart from serving as a uniting force, Ngbe was also a competent judicial body that tried certain cases involving both their own members and non-members. For instance, the ekpe association played an advisory role in the affairs of and assisted the village authority (etok) and the traditional council on matters difficult to handle.³⁵

The ekpe was strictly against acts of disorder, lawlessness and brutality. When someone in the community committed such an act, the “invisible tiger” of *ngbe* escaped from the association’s chamber into the bush,³⁶ and would only be brought back to its chamber after the culprit had paid a fine levied by its members.³⁷ The ten grades of *Ekpe* that were bought by members were , *Bekundi*, *Esong*, *Ekwa*, *Akum*, *Mutunda*, *Nkanda*, *Mboko*, *Akuwa*, *Angbor* and *Sesekou*, last and the highest was bestowed on the chief of the land as *Sesekou*.³⁸ Members and even non-members who went against the rules and regulations of the association were severely punished.³⁹ The Insignia of a *ngbe* or *ekpe* injunction or restriction order was held by the chief who was the highest authority of the association and the land as a whole.

It is worth of noting that Ekpe played an important role in influencing the result of the 1961 plebiscite in favour of the KNDP. The hatred for the Nigerian domineering attitude caused some villages like Nchang, Etemek, Nfuni and Ossing to unite as one man to call for the authority of Ekpe. The association came in and put an injunction that no one should vote for

³³I.B.Ayuk, “A Survey of the Pre-colonial History of the Ejagham People in Cameroon and Nigeria up to 1914,” Nsukka, First Degree Dissertation in History, University of Nsukka, 1981, pp.5-7.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ The term Mgbe or Nyankpe literally means “Animal of Ekpe” which in Ejagham is said to form a section of the association, but in the Mamfe area is gradually used synonymously with “*ngbe*” as the general name of the association. It is a regulatory society in Manyu land. It helps the government in maintaining law and order. It performs the same role like Ngumba of the Bali, *Nwerong* of the Bafut and *kwifon* of the Nso.

³⁷Interview with Ayuk Peter, 61 years, retired driver, Yaounde, 25th September 2022.

³⁸B. Enow, “Major Traditional Associations,” p.41.

³⁹ Ibid.

CPNC during the plebiscite because it supported integration with Nigeria which was hated by the majority of people.⁴⁰

If anybody in Manyu was suspected committing grievous crime and with convincing evidence, even if he or she claimed to be innocent and not ask for clemency, he or she was asked to invoke the *mfam*. When it was invoked and performed on a guilty person, unmitigated repercussions on the person and his or her descendants were far reaching. This was highly dreaded by the entire population. Briefly, the traditional associations settled important cases while certain delicate ones like witchcraft were settled by certain (jujus) like the *obasinjom*.⁴¹

Meanwhile, membership into the association was opened only to all *Boh-Bakwa* (free born) in the community, while the *Boh- Bassems (slaves) and women* were not accepted as members. In Manyu community, any male who belonged to an association had an added advantage. For instance, to be a chief, the personality must be a member of *ekpe*. On the other hand, any male that is not a member of *ekpe* was considered a ‘woman’.⁴² Members also had moral and financial obligations to the associations that controlled their behaviour through specific rules and regulations apart from *Ekpe* where the membership of men had special privileges; there was the *Etokobi* association that restricted its membership to descendants of slaves.

Mamfe/Manyu had a traditional dance called *etokobi*. Those who were eligible to participate in this dance in the village were well known. Children and descendants of slaves were prohibited by law in the village from coming out at night to partake in the dance.⁴³ All the non-members of *Ekpe* were never expected to take part in *etokobi* dance. Members were expected to have their *Akparanja* (special clothes) that they tied round their waist.⁴⁴ The *Etokobi* dance of Manyu was not evolved in large-scale political organizations (like the *Nkwifor* of the Bafut in the Bamenda grasslands)⁴⁵. This made chiefs in Manyu indirectly responsible for the administration of the community. Ruel, remarks “administrative tasks are in general met as adjunct to a community’s other activities”.⁴⁶

⁴⁰Interview with Sese kou Besong Mershak Enow, 65 Years, retired Head Teacher, Ntenako, 21st February 2019.

⁴¹NAB, File 1291, Aa 1926/541, “Juju Society: Relation to Native Administration, Mamfe Division Cameroons,” 1926, p.32.

⁴²Interview with Emmanuel Agbor Ebot, 61 Years, Teacher, Fotabe, 19th October 2021.

⁴³Idem.

⁴⁴Idem.

⁴⁵ NAB, File 1291, Aa 1926/541, “Juju society,” p.32.

⁴⁶ Ruel, Leopard and Leaders, p.112.

The Economy: Agriculture

Youdeowe, defines Agriculture as the purposeful work through which the elements of nature are harnessed to needs. For him, it is a biological production process which depends on the growth and development of selected plants and animals within the local environment.⁴⁷ For Evans-Pritchards,⁴⁸ the agricultural evolution was the first and most important revolution on earth. According to him, agriculture transformed the human economy and gave man the control over his own food supply. Following this evolution, man began to plant, cultivate and improve by selection of edible grasses, roots and trees.⁴⁹

The economy of the Manyu people was principally agricultural. However, in the past the people also practiced other activities like fishing, hunting, poultry, animal husbandry and trading. Agriculture was subsistent some element of extensive agriculture was carried out because even the Sixty-year-old grandmother who grows *umkpong* (green vegetables) never consumed all of her produce. She either carried the excess to the local market for sale or displayed it on a stall in front of her home where would-be-buyers stopped by to make their purchase. On the other hand, the last thirty years have also witnessed an explosion in large-scale agricultural production. Cash crops like cocoa, coffee, coconuts (*tamagha*), oranges (*nsukuru*), palms and palm produce, bush mangoes (*nsenghe*), egusi (*nkwai*), plantains (*ekwa*) and banana (*nsureh ekwa*)⁵⁰ are now produced in large-scale. The proceeds from these endeavours are used to solve a variety of problems like payment of tuition fees for children, building of permanent residential homes and improvement in the standard of living.

The techniques of cultivation were generally crude and rudimentary as a piece of land was roughly cleared mostly at the beginning of the dry season by men who then allowed the rest of the work to be done by the women.⁵¹ The women then cleaned the ground, hoed it and planted crops except plantains which the men needed. The only implements put into use were the women's hoes and men's machetes. Shifting cultivation and crop rotation were also practiced. Rights to land ownership were based on the principle which established that whoever cleared a virgin bush laid the claim to it. This continued even after the land was left to fallow.

⁴⁷ A.Youdeowei et al, *Introduction to Tropical Agriculture*, London, Longman, 1986, p. 32. Cited in G.F. Kum, "Wum Area Development Authority (WADA), 1965-1994: Implantation, Economic and Social Conversions in Menchum Division," Ph.D. Thesis in History, University of Yaounde I, 2012, p.45.

⁴⁸ E. Evans-Pritchards, *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of the Nilotic People*, London, Longman, 1940, p.77.

⁵⁰ Interview with Robert Tabot Nkwai, 79 Years, Farmer and Notable of Bachuo-Ntai, Bachuo-Ntai, 27th July 2017.

⁵¹ Interview with Joseph Agboraya, 66 Years, Farmer, Ntenako, 13th August 2017.

In Manyu land, food crops were grown solely for consumption with the exception of the villages of Mbinjong, Bachuo-Akagbe, Bachuo-Ntai, Besongabang and Nchang where some of the crops cultivated were marketed.⁵² Use was also made of a number of bush products with the most important being palm kernels. The palm industry became very important to the Manyu people as a source of trade when the slave trade was abolished by the colonial powers in the 19th century.⁵³

Land Tenure

Once a man made a farm, the usufruct of that land was vested in him and on his death in his family, if a man died without a family; the land was reverted back to the community. At times happened that a man made a farm and then failed to use it again, in that case he could allow someone else to use it. But if he had a son afterwards the first one would claim the land reverted. All unclear land and forest belong to the village community. All sylvan wealth belongs to the community except that which took on cleared ground, when it became the property of the owner of the farm land on which he had been farming. It's applied also to palm trees. Any man might cut any tree he liked or took any fruit from the trees on uncleared land. There was no trace of any land having been sold, and boundary disputes in this area were rare, though in this year there was one between Ntenako and Besongabang (Banyangi).⁵⁴

Industries and Occupations, industrial pursuit in this area was fairly general and, in many cases, it was found that one man had as many as three or four occupations. Thus, a man may call himself farmer, hunter, trader and mat-maker. A large proportion of men gave as a second occupation that of farming, but it was understood that practically every man does have his share of the farming. Another secondary occupation was palm oil collection or in other words kernel-pickers, since the two occupations from the man's point of view were the same. The chief's occupation, as far as it could be judged, but in many cases, it was what the chief was doing at the time when he was enthroned.

Roads and Rest- House, the keaka country was extremely fortunate in its road system. Three main road passed through this area and the country was interlaced with other smaller roads, many of which were suitable for a motor-bicycle, and with bush paths. The Buea-Kumba-Mamfe road passed through this area and was motorable for 20 miles from Mamfe. At

⁵² Interview with Robert Tabot Nkwai.

⁵³ Interview with Mary Egbe Arrey, 49 Years, Typist, Mamfe, 2017.

⁵⁴ NAB, File 1292, Aa 1937/641, Intelligence Report on the Kembong area, Mamfe Division-Cameroons Province, P.30.

Talangayi the Ball River crossed by large bridges suitable for motor traffic. The Ikom-Mamfe road passed through Akwen, Tawo Aiyewawa, Ebinsi, Bakwelle, and Nkpot before joining the Mamfe-Buea road at Besongabang. This road was passable up to Akwen. There was a plan to make the road motorable right up to Aiyewawa.

The Mamfe-Calabar road passed through the central and most populated part of the area, and is composed of three roads which join at Ayukndip forming one road via Nkawaw to calabar. One route left the Mamfe-Ikom road at Nkpot and passed through Mbatop and Ogomogo to Ayukndip

The second road was from the Mamfe-Ikom road at Nchang and through Mfuni, Kembong and being motorable as far as Kembong to Ayukndip whilst the third left the Buea-Mamfe road at Ossing and join the second at Kembong. This route formerly went from Ossing to Mbinjong. And was the great trade route for slaves and livestock being brought to Kembong market, but today it is not used at all and all that could be seen of it is a hunter's track. A road follows the cross River from Mamfe to Mfum and Abokum, along which the telegraph lines at present run. The rivers on the latter road are crossed by Hammock bridges but nearly all the other road as far as Ayukndip river are crossed by rivers crossed by bridges, mad of trees thrown across the rivers and deck with plank. From Ayukndip to Nkawkaw and Bakut the bridges were either very bad or absent altogether. The roads throughout the central part of the area were nearly all partly dug by the Germans. And are all suitable for motor-cycles during the dry season.⁵⁵ The relative improvement in transport infrastructure such as roads caused the rise of nationalism in Southern Cameroons. It enabled Party Officials and agents to inter the villages with their Lorries and motor cycles and bicycles consequently, party slogans were widely spread and local branches of their parties were established. With this the rural masses were well involved in political activities of their territory.⁵⁶

Farming, the income derived by farmers from the activities they did vary largely. The difference in the fertility of soil on the basalt plain from the rest of the area was very great and was the cause of this variation. In the salt area the fertility of the soil was very poor and the average income derived in estimated at 95-0-0 per annum. At Kembong on the basalt plain, however, the average income derived by farmers was estimated at &13-0-0 per annum. This income based on sale of *egusi* and yams for Women and cocoa and coffee for the men who

⁵⁵Ibid.P.35.

⁵⁶Interview with Besong Ferdinand, 72 Years, councillor, Eyumojock, 14 th June 2019.

were the chief products grown for profit. The average income delivered from farming over the whole area was estimated at &7-15-0 per annum.

Salt Making, this was a whole –time occupation in the salt-area of Mbakang Ebinsi and Ebam which were the main producer of salt in the area. From this area, the salt was taken to the Kembong market and to other towns on the rich basalt plain where it was exchanged for food or sold. A man made about 24 balls of salt in a month and in nearly every case the woman made another 12. a ball of salt worth about 3d so that the average income is estimated at 9/ a month or &5-8-0 a year.

Hunting, this occupation is in many instances a par-time activities. Antelope and “Bush” –pig from the chief bags” but leopard is also not in small numbers an antelope is cut into four quarters which are dried and sold for 46d each, while the skin fetches 6d, making to tall received one antelope 6/6. Bush –pig are also sold by the quarter and also by the leg alone, a quarter fetches 3/4 and average income derived from hunting is estimated at &5-10-0 per annum.

The Maintenance of Law and Order

In pre-colonial Manyu societies, justice was administered through the various institutions like the councils and traditional political associations like *Ekpe*. These institutions which helped to keep the community united were generally supervised by the chief. All criminal and civil cases were handled and tried in the council under the chairperson of the chief, which served as the highest in the community court. The lowest courts were sub-lineage councils in Kembong, Mamfe Tinto, Agborkem, and Akwaya.⁵⁷ These handled minor sub-lineage disputes. The cases usually heard in the sub-village courts were principally farm and boundary disputes, minor conflicts, assaults and quarrels.⁵⁸

The judges were the elderly persons of the lineage who sanctioned the guilty by imposing fines and demanding apologies.⁵⁹ Fines and punishments included provision of palm wine, goats or chickens, just to mention but a few. At its best, litigation was limited to satisfactory settlement or apologies from the guilty party. If the parties in a case were not satisfied or when the case involved parties from different sub-lineages, it was taken to the lineage council or sub village court. All aggravated crimes like murder, manslaughter, theft, adultery and witchcraft were tried in the community council. The village chief presided at the

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ NAB, File, No. 1291/1926, Aa1926/54/ Juju Society: p.48.

village council as the chief judge.⁶⁰ At this level, a fee of a goat was usually paid for the hearing of the case. All crimes permitted atonement by payment and if the guilty party failed to pay, his family was liable to do so.⁶¹

However, in the pre-colonial days the penalty for settling a case for instance, murder, and the guilty party had to compensate the bereaved family with a member of his family or four to six slaves. If this was not paid, the murderer or member of his family was liable to be sold out as a slave. If a man committed adultery, he paid damages to the woman's husband or parents. However, adultery with the chief's wife was for the person to be sold as a slave.⁶² In the case of aggravated theft, the offender paid compensation and returned the stolen property. In some serious circumstances, the chief might have the first finger on the right hand of the thief cut off.

Pre-colonial Socio-Political Organisation of the Ejagham and Banyang

In the Ejagham and Banyang socio-political set-up, the village was the largest political unit. The village was made up of a group of people of common descent from an ancestral founder. In most cases, they were the sons of the descendants of the ancestral founder of the village. These groups of persons who shared a common descent maintained a corporate spirit among them and collectively conducted the affairs of that community.

The villages were autonomous and each village acted independently of the rest in regulating internal affairs. No village had authority over the affairs of the other. However, occasion could arise when villages within a clan would adopt a common political action in matters concerning the welfare of the entire clan. At the head of the village was a chief who was called "Ntuiifa" in Ejagham or Nfor in Banyang, who usually was the founder of the village or the eldest descendant of the ancestral founder of the village. Though the chief acquired his position by virtue of being the oldest descendants of the founder of the village maintaining that position depended on the support he got from his people. The support depended on the influence he had in the affairs of the community, which was also determined by his character and wealth. Thus, to be maintained as a chief needed hard work and bravery.⁶³

The Ntuiifa or Nfor did not exercise any formal authority alone. This task was a collective function of the corporate community, which was represented by the body of elders.

⁶⁰ Interview with George Atem,.

⁶¹ Interview with Lucy Tabe Ayuk.

⁶² Interview with George Atem.

⁶³ Interview with Elizabeth Enow Arah, 57 years, trader, Ossing, 27th March 2019.

The body of elders consisted of a group of elderly men who conducted the affairs of different lineage groups that formed the village. This group of elderly men was drawn from different sections of the village council. The village council provided an important forum where important matters affecting the village were discussed and action carried out.

When matters arose that affected the village community, the Ntuifa or Nfor was first consulted privately with the body of elders in order to get their different views and opinions concerning the matter. It was only after this that a consensus was arrived out. The matter could be presented at an open meeting of the village council for further discussion until an agreement or a consensus was reached. The Ntuifa or Nfor then announced the decision and everybody in the community was expected to respect it. It was through this same process that policies and law governing the village were enacted.⁶⁴ Violation against such laws became an offense, not against the council of elders who enacted the it but against the village or community. These offences attracted severe punishment. Laws enacted handled issues such as compelling all village inhabitants to attend and participate in cleaning village farm- to- market roads, stand taps, surroundings of salt pond, drinking water spring, regulating fishing and so on.

To ensure the effectiveness of the laws depended much on the mechanism put in place to enforce them. To this effect, sanctions were imposed upon those who violated or challenged the laws. Such sanctions were referred to as a “goat” because a goat was usually offered for most offenses or its equivalence in money or foodstuff. An important mechanism to enforce the law and to regulate the society in the village was Mgbe in Ejagham or Mgbe (Nyanpkeh). It enforced laws enacted by the councils of elders. It also collected the fines from the members of the village and shared to Mgbe members during festivals.⁶⁵ All the members of the councils of elders belonged to the Mgbe society. The sanctions meted by the Mgbe ranged from fines, to ostracism that caused the were ostracised by a Mgbe of one village could not be accepted in any society with a Mgbe. This meant that the offenders had to move out of the land and was exposed to insecurity and deprived of the social amenities and affection of his village. The overall head of Mgbe was called Sese kou.

The Ejagham and Banyang societies were divided into five main social classes. The first was the “Etok” translated as the people of the community. It also referred to the general assemble of the village. It handled general matters that concerned the village or a group of individuals. The second class were the nobles and ruling class. The members of class included

⁶⁴ Interview with Ayuk Jacob Achara, 67 Years, farmer, Nchang, 28th March 2019.

⁶⁵ NAB, File No. BA (1920),” Special Report on Cameroon Province,” 1920. Pp.2-9.

the very rich and close supporters of the Nfor or Ntuifa. The usually referred to as “Nem-Moh” translated as a “great child”. Men, who had acquired a lot of wealth through hard work, commended a lot of respect and support from the community. The development of the village was in their hands. They contributed lion share in major projects in the community. Such as water, electricity, road maintenance construction of market projects etc.⁶⁶

The third class was the chief priest of various religious societies and deities (Efongo) Obasinjom cult Ndem), business persons, this was the bourgeoisie class of the Banyang Ejagham communities. They had capital-employed labour, and more often than not were engaged in long distance trade. The fourth class was the commoners. They were mostly the poor, handicapped, under privilege. They were actually the free born of the community but not fortunate to be at the forefront of the decision making of their community. So, they were relegated at the background. The fifth and last group was composed of slaves. They were known by the Banyangs “*Basem*” slaves were persons who were forcefully uprooted from their home of origin through wars or related transactions, sale or kidnapping and were said to have no roots in any society.

Economic Institutions

The most prominent pre-colonial economic institution of the Ejagham and Banyang was slavery. The people possessed slaves for domestic reasons. They were also for economic benefits for their masters. The slaves in the Ejagham and Banyang were expected to perform difficult task for their masters such as transporting of salt in short and long distance trade. Salt was transported by head loads and the journey was done on foot. This made the salt trade very difficult. Success in the salt trade therefore depended on the availability of slave labour. For this reason, village struggled to acquire slaves as such as possible. The prominent salt markets were found in Ossing, Kembong and Tali. A major economic activity in Ejagham was the production of salts from salt spring and mines. Many salt springs existed in Mbakang, Nkimechi, Ayukaba, Ajayukndip, Ebinsi, Nsanakung, Mbenyan and Inokun. Brine was obtained from these springs and processed into salt in great qualities. Ejagham had about 190 people employed in the making of salts. This salt industry transformed the Ejagham community and brought significant development.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Ruel, Leopard and Leaders: Constitutional politic among the Cross River People, p. 134.

⁶⁷ Ibid

Besides salt, many trading activities took place in Ejagham such as palm wine, palm kernels, palm oil, mass, melon, basket ivory, elephant tusk. Trade was conducted in organised market. Each village or a group of villages had a market, which was organised. Care was taken to arrange the market on different days to avoid a clash. In this way, trade greatly flourish in the Ejagham and Banyang areas.⁶⁸

The effects of Trade on the Chieftaincy Institution

The underlying trade factor is based on internal and external production surpluses. The absence of such surpluses in production played down on the volume of trade as well as the role of the population to engage in it. Production, be it in agriculture or craft was considerably low in Manyu area before the advent colonialism. The Barter system was very much active. Women battered small quantities of foodstuffs, pots or baskets in their own villages and other nearby villages as the need arose.⁶⁹

The Mamfe people were equally engaged in both the long and short distance trades in addition to crop cultivation. The short distance trade, which was carried out locally, involved the sale of foodstuffs and dried meat.⁷⁰ The local people also participated in the long distance trade going through the grasslands of Cameroon to the lower Cross River Basin. They acted as intermediaries, handling items like European cloth, guns, salt, ivory and slaves from other areas in exchange for palm oil and palm kernels, which they produced.

Other items of trade included human beings (slaves); bush meat and dried fish. The popular slave markets were notably Ebuensuk, Fossongo, Mfaka and Kembong.⁷¹ Part-time hunting and fishing were also performed in the area. Hunting was done mostly during the rainy season with the use of Dane guns, spears, clubs, bows and arrows, and planted ‘traps’ in search of animals such as Antelopes, Porcupines, Deer’s, Elephants and many other species of animals.⁷² The meat was either consumed locally or sold in the local markets. Fishing too was done with the help of nets or ‘wicket baskets’ as they were known and the poisoning of water and the fish with a specially grown leaf.⁷³

Other economic activities carried out by the Mamfe people included the making of drums, the moulding of pots and the weaving of baskets and sleeping mats. Although the Mamfe

⁶⁸ Interview with Emilia Mbeng Tabe, Farmer, 58 years, Kumba, 25th July 2019.

⁷¹ NAB, File No. 275, 1039, Ba/1916, “Report on Chieftaincy Matters Relating to the Cameroon”, 1916, p.23.

⁷² Interview with Botela Orocnso, 54 year, accountant, Bachuo -ntai, 11th November 2017.

⁷³ Interview with Ayuk Lucy Tabe.

economy was subsistent in nature, they were generally considered to be lazy.⁷⁴ Worthy of note is that in the society, considerable emphasis was placed upon a man's wealth and upon the need to obtain wealth. One important aspect of community life was the individual quest for status, which was largely dependent upon the person's initiative and the qualities he exhibited together with the wealth he commended. The physical features in Mamfe land provided better opportunities. Table 1 depicts the measures and prices of some commodities in the division in the early 1920s.

Table 1: Price Situation of some basic Commodities in Mamfe Division in early 1920s

Commodity	Measure	Pound	Pound	Pound
		October	November	December
Gari	CC	16 for 35	14 for 35	14 for 35
Oranges	1 dozen	30	30	30
Bananas	1 dozen	10	10	10
Melons	1 CC	10	15	25
Dried Pepper	1CC	10	10	10
Palm Wine	G	10	10	10
Kola Nuts	Each	5	5	5
Kernels	1CC	5	5	5
Palm Oil	C B	50	50	50
Coconuts	Each	10	15	25
Bush Mangoes	1CC	10	15	25
Salt	1CC	10	10	10
Plantains	B	250	500	500

Source: NAB, File No.1921/1, "Economic, Political and Social Reports for the Period Ending 30/6/1921", p.4-6.

From Table 1 above, the following letters represent: "CC" for Cigarette Cup, "BB" for Larger Calabash Bottle, "B" for Bosch and "G" for Glass. We realised that commodities were sold at cost covering prices because goods were mostly produced and consumed only by the people of the region. Income from trade was also small because of the unproductive traditional system of farming and the absence of men in agricultural production. There was equally the lack of a good road network for easy evacuation of product, which could fetch them huge sums of money in other regions.

Slavery and slave dealings were important pre-colonial activities in the area. Slaves were mostly brought from the Eastern highlands, mainly from the Bangwa land. They got these slaves from Dschang area. They were sold in the important slave markets of Ebuensuk, Fossongo, Mfaka, Tali and Kembong from where they were exported to as far as Calabar in

⁷⁴Interview with Elizabeth Ebot, 56 Years. Teacher, Bamenda, 24 June 2016.

Nigeria in this continuous Westward trade movement.⁷⁵ Apart from this group brought from the grassland, some Mamfe people also who were captured as captives of war, debtors, thieves and people suspected of witchcraft and murderers were enslaved or sold into slavery.⁷⁶

In most of Mamfe villages, not everyone was born free and equal in dignity and rights even though they were all endowed with reason and conscience this made to act towards every other villager with the spirit of goodwill. Such was a gross violation that persisted and persists hitherto. Despite the assurances of the declaration of human rights, not everyone was entitled to have his or her rights and freedom simply because of the status that were given to them by birth as slaves *Boh-Bassem*,⁷⁷ or descendants of slaves *Boh-bassem*.⁷⁸ In some villages, they were quarantined while in other Villages, they were merely prohibited from dancing and integrating or even having rights as natural born of freeborn.⁷⁹ When the chief died, he was buried with a live slave in a total show of cruelty.⁸⁰ This was a violation of article 3 of the Declaration, which reiterated the right to life, liberty and security of everyone. Just the mere possession of slaves in any form was prohibited but still experienced in some Manyu villages like Kembong, Besongabang and Afap.

By the 1920s, the slavery was not yet completely eradicated Slaves in Mamfe were discriminated against the *Boh- Bakwa*⁸¹ (free born) in very community. Inter-marriage between the two groups was prohibited and there was residential segregation. Slaves lived in separate quarters at the outskirts of the village to check the penetration of enemies. In fact, apart from Nchang, Ntenako and to a lesser extent Mfuni and a few other villages, the rest of Mamfe kept and discriminated against slaves.⁸² It should be recalled that this consideration as to who was a slave or not in the communities led to serious problems between the two groups of people in the villages in the post-colonial era. A number of chieftaincy disputes in Mamfe Division were because of slaves ‘scenario.’⁸³

⁷⁵Chem-Langhëë, “The Banyang Slave System: Social Differentiation and Citizenship “in *Annals of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Humanities* Vol. 1, 1985, p. 165.

⁷⁶Interview with John Egbe Ebai, 58 Years, Administrator, Yaounde, 15th November 2019.

⁷⁷ Boh- Bassem are children considered as illegitimate which one of or all the parent were slaves, they were considered as strangers to the land and had nothing to do with the political and economic association.

⁷⁸ Interview with Elizabeth Ayuk Eta, 70 Years, Farmer, Besongabang, 18th October 2019.

⁷⁹ Fomin and. Ngoh, “Slaves Settlement in the Banyang Country 1800-1950 ,“ Buea, University of Buea, p.50.

⁸⁰Interview with Botela Enow. 56 Years, Teacher, Buea, 15th February 2019.

⁸¹⁸¹ Boh- Bakwa are legitimate children or free born children of the land in which none of their parent was a slave.

⁸² Interview with Cecilia Besong Besong, 59 Years, Teacher, Ossing, 27th October 2020.

⁸³ Ibid.52.

It should be recalled that most of the educated people in Manyu Division was linked to slavery because the slaves were the ones that were sent to school to be beaten by the teachers.⁸⁴ This explains why the first educated elites of the division were regarded as slaves. Meanwhile, the sons of the so called “free born” stayed at home without going to school. For fear that they should be beaten by the European teacher’s⁸⁵ anybody who identified as a slave would not to be enthroned as Chief. The Germans, and later the British abolished this practice. Yet, the discrimination remained in some places of Mamfe up to the present century.

Marriage

There were three types of marriage in Mamfe Division, love between a boy and girl, parent desire for girl for their son and vice versa and money woman ‘*ngoreh nkap*.’ Ngoreh nkap happened when an elderly man developed interest for a maiden. He would start by giving money to the parent or to the young girl herself. Equally, ‘money woman’ could happen in the case, where a man with female children and had the habit of always lending money from other men without paying back. More often, the man would lend the money and would have in mind not to pay it back. In addition, the only mean the money could be paid was through the exchange of his daughters with the money. This practice was also known as marriage of debt. In pre-colonial Banyang and Ejagham societies, marriage passed through two main phases. The first was engagement during which the “fiancé” offered a gift to the girl’s parent such as a jar of palm wine, which was shared by all and this was also known as the period of acceptance.⁸⁶

After this, was to ensure that, the man’s family was “witchcraft free” and were free from dangerous diseases like epilepsy or leprosy, which was believed would be inherited by their offspring. When the parents were satisfied with the outcome of their investigation, they gave their blessings to the couple. Marriage in Banyang or Ejagham like in most African societies was the collective responsibility of two families and not that of the boy and girl alone. Inter-ethnic marriage was also encouraged especially between ethnic groups in Southern Cameroons and that of Nigeria. The father of S.A. George of Nigeria got married to a Mamfe’s daughter. The marriage resulted to the birth of S.A. George of Mamfe Division. Samson Adeoye George became influential during the reunification struggle between Southern Cameroons and the

⁸⁴Interview with John Enow Mbi, 62 Year, Ndekwai, 12th July 2024.

⁸⁵ Interview with Lucy Asuagbor, 65 Years, Chief Justice, Yaounde, 11th June 2020.

⁸⁶ Interview with John Martins Akem, 79 Years Trader, Yaounde, 28th June 2020.

Republic of Cameroon. Divorce was a taboo and disgrace in the land. Families were called upon to put in place a number of measures to avoid it at all cause⁸⁷.

Mamfe Division during the British Mandate in Southern Cameroons

The defeat of Germany by Britain and France at the end of the First World War led to the partition of German Kamerun into British Cameroon and French Cameroon. By 1922, Britain created four administrative units in the Southern Cameroons one of which was Mamfe Division. British Cameroon was soon divided into Southern Cameroons and Northern Cameroons.

The British decision to administer Southern Cameroons as an integral part of Nigeria facilitated the movement of Southern Cameroonians to and from the eastern Nigeria. They went there as students, business persons, petty traders, journalists or employees in many of the several firms in Nigeria. Their interactions with Nigerians made them to develop a spirit of political consciousness and nationalism for Southern Cameroons from the 1940s onward. Among the prominent Southern Cameroonians who received education and political experience in Nigeria were S. A. George of Mamfe, E.M.L. Endeley, P.M. Kale, John Ngu Foncha, N.N. Mbile. They were enchanted or motivated by the political ideals of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwi and Prof. Iyo Ita, president and vice president of N.C.N.C. respectively. They borrowed political ideas that they began to implement in the Southern Cameroons politics. S.A. George also discovered that their stay in Nigeria was not beneficial to the Southern Cameroons. He also developed a liking for the French Cameroon, which led him to produce seven points for reunification⁸⁸.

The Southern Cameroons-Nigerian connection enabled many Nigerians, especially the Igbos, Hausas and Yorubas to migrate to major towns of Southern Cameroons. They settled in the urban centres of Mamfe, Victoria, Tiko, Kumba, Bamenda, Muyuka, and Buea. The Nigerian spirit of nationalism was greatly copied as Southern Cameroonians started forming pressure groups and, later, political parties⁸⁹.

The 32 years of German rule made the people to be aware of belonging to a political entity of Cameroon with a organised administration and defined boundaries. This made the country a single entity with the same system of administration, education, colonial language and culture. By the time the German rule ended, much progress had been made towards forging

⁸⁷ Interview with Frambo Gwendoline, 55 Years, administrative Attendant, Yaounde, 30th June 2020.

⁸⁸ E.A. Aka, *The British Southern Cameroons, 1922 – 1961*, Nkemnji Global Tech, Platteville Madison, p.183.

⁸⁹ Falso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, pp. 298 – 299.

a national identity. This of course explains why the people of Mamfe Division personally embraced reunification in 1961.

When the British took over their portion of Cameroon, they integrated it with Nigeria for reasons of administrative convenience. In fact, article 9 of the Mandate Agreement gave administering authorities full powers of administration, sovereignty and legislation over the territories. They could constitute the territory into customs, physical or administrative units with the adjacent territory under their sovereignty or control, if the measures adopted were in conformity with the mandate provisions. British therefore conveniently administered their own portion as part of Nigeria for a period of over 40 years.

During this period of over 40 years, the colonial administration passed Orders- in- Council on June 16th1923, which reconstituted British Cameroons along the lines of the Nigerian North-South principles. The Order- in- Council divided their portion of Cameroon into two; the British North Cameroon and the British Southern Cameroons. They made Southern Cameroons, a province that was put under the administration of the lieutenant governor of Southern Nigerian. He was assisted by a resident in Buea who in turn was assisted by the district officers in administrative units of the province⁹⁰.

The Anglo-French partition of Cameroon along the picot petitionary line did not take into consideration many ethnic groups that were located along this line of partition. An example is the Bangwa territory in the Mamfe Division, part of this territory was found in the Western Region and part in the Mamfe division. During the mandate period, many French Cameroonians migrated and settled in Mamfe and even in some major towns of Southern Cameroons. These immigrants from French Cameroon settled with their kith and kin and participated in socio-economic and political development of Southern Cameroons. While in Southern Cameroons, they created associations and pressure groups to help them, militated in political parties, participated in elections and constitutional conferences, petitioned the administering authority of the UN trust territory and occupied important political positions... The period 1922- 1961 was characterised by the rise of nationalism, the search for identity within Nigeria and the struggle for independence and reunification of Kamerun⁹¹.

The Southern Cameroons had ethnic, historical, colonial, traditional and even geographical links with both the British protectorate of Nigeria and the French Cameroon. Thus

⁹⁰ Ibid, p.161.

⁹¹ NAB, File No. A1918/24 "Native in British Sphere" 1924, p.10.

the plebiscite of 1961, was quite a dilemma for the people of Mamfe Division, given that they had relatives on both sides; the people of Ejagham, the Banyang, and the Boki had close relations with Nigerians while the Bangwa community had ancestral relations with the Dschang community in French Cameroon. It was therefore very difficult for the population of the division to decide between gaining independence by joining Nigeria or French Cameroon. However, they made their choice to join French Cameroon because of their hatred for some Nigerians.

Health Domain

In the domain of health, the Germans had constructed hospitals and other medical service in different parts of Cameroon. German personnel had managed these units up to the time of the First World War in Cameroon. Following the defeat of Germany in this war, the retreating German medical corps took over temporal control of the medical facilities in the Southern Cameroons. To continue where the Germans ended the British administration began by establishing medical posts and later it created hospitals in the four divisions of Southern Cameroons. In Mamfe, there was a resident doctor available as early as 1925 medical services were hindered by the isolation of villages and difficult communities. To solve the problem of attending to distant patients, the doctor in Mamfe decided to establish wayside Clinic along the Mamfe Kembong in places like Besongabang, Mfuni, Mamfe -Tali and Mamfe – Widikum roads. In all, there were eleven wayside clinics, which the doctors visited regularly on specific days of the month⁹².

The Establishment of Native Authority

Once the British decided to apply the policy of Indirect Rule in the Cameroons Province, they began a thorough investigation of the traditional society. The main aim of this exercise was to discover the socio-political organizations and institutions of the people on which the native administration would be based. The information gathered made the British to create three categories of Native Authority in Mamfe Division, first the sole Native Authority in the Bangwa area and Mamfe. In this category, a number of villages recognised a single clan chief as their traditional ruler, second the Composite Native Authority in some areas where some big chiefdoms or fondoms existed side by side with or closer to other smaller chiefdoms and all of them having political organisations. For instance, Kembong, Widikum and Ngie had composite

⁹² NAB, File No. A1918/24 “Native in British Sphere” 1924, p.10.

Native Authorities. In addition, there was the Native Court System in areas where the units of organisation were smaller than a clan, such as Ossing, Bakebe and Tinto.

The Application of Indirect Rule Policy in Mamfe Division

The application of Indirect Rule was elaborated in the handbook titled “The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa.” The book that was published in 1922 by Lord LUG later became a reference text for all British administrators in Tropical Africa.⁹³ The policy involved the use of traditional or native authorities and institutions in the administration of their territory. Indirect Rule as a policy meant that the British had recognized the need to work in close collaboration with the local institutions they met on the spot. This explains why the system of Indirect Rule gave birth to the governments that were established in certain localities in British Southern Cameroons where chieftaincy structures existed. The heads of Native Authorities (NAs) were usually the chief or the *Nfor* in the locality.⁹⁴

Once the British decided to apply the policy of indirect rule in the Cameroons Provinces, they began a thorough investigation of the Cameroon traditional society. This assignment was carried out by British officials who were assisted by Clerks, Interpreters and very experienced station Messengers. Theirs was to discover the socio-political organisations and institutions of the people on which the Native administration could be based. The exercise involved a study of people, their historic origins, the demarcation of their political areas and their kinship system. They studied the main features of their political and economic organization, their customary laws and land tenure system. The results of these studies were very useful for the administration of Southern Cameroons and based on the information gathered, the British created three categories of Native Authorities namely:

The Sole Authority: This type existed when a number of villages recognized a single clan chief as their traditional ruler. Such chiefs or *Nfors* were appointed to run a Native Authority in a local administrative area. A council of elders was put in place and recognized as the direct advisory council to the chief. This council also helped to check the excesses of the chief power. It existed in places like Mamfe, Buea, Victoria, Bamenda, Nkambe, Wum and kumba.

⁹³Oliver and Atmorey, *Africa Since 1800*, Fourth Edition, New York, Cambridge University Press, p.154.

⁹⁴L.C .B. Gower, *Independent Africa: The Challenges of the Legal Profession*, Cambridge, Harvard University, p.8.

The second Native Authority was the Composite Native Authority. This was found in some areas where some big chiefdoms or fondoms existed side-by-side or closer to other smaller ones with all of them having political organizations. Such groupings were considered to offer convenient and finally viable units of administration. Such administration existed in areas like Fontem, Ndop and Ngemba. In this type of Native Authority, a court was erected for the district.

The last category of Native Authority was the Native Court System. This existed in areas where the unit of organization was not higher than a clan or where the units were smaller than a clan. The Customary Court areas in Mamfe Division at the time included: Tinto, with sitting at Tinto, Bachuo-Akagbe, with sitting at Bachuo-Akagbe, Kendem, with sitting at Kendem, Obang, with sitting at Bakogo, Keaka, with sitting at Kembong, Ekwe, with sitting at Inokun, Takamanda, with sitting at Assam, Boki, with sitting at Kekokesem 1, Assumbo, with sitting at Tinta and Akwaya, Mbulu, with sitting at Bantakpa, Massaga, with sitting at Ballin and Nchemti-Mamfe, with sitting at Mamfe.⁹⁵

To implement the policy of Indirect Rule, though supervised by the colonial agent, the *Nfor* was looked upon as the local governing authority with legislative functions and as a colonial agent to carry out institutions. As such, the British tried to foster local government with the creation of Native Authorities. The Native Authority Ordinance of 1916 defined N.A. as, “any chief or other native of Nigeria or other person or any native council or group of such natives or other persons appointed to be a Native Authority under the Ordinance for the area.”⁹⁶ The N.As had the responsible to collect taxes of which a percentage was retained, controlled a budget established to spend the retained taxes, which were then used for local development projects, building and maintenance of N.A schools and dispensaries, building and operating permanent markets and the construction of local feeder roads to join up with central government roads.⁹⁷

The appointment and dismissal of NA. Officials was the duty of the NA, though, the colonial authority had to sanction these decisions. The political officer acted as an adviser. In addition to the NA area and NA Treasury, there was also the NA court. The NAs were to

⁹⁵E.B.Taboko, “A Village by Village Documentary: Including the Distribution of Basic Services and Institution in the 4 Sub-Divisions of Manyu Division”, Mamfe, 2000, p.3-5.

⁹⁶P. M. Kale, *Political Evolution in the Cameroons*, Buea, Government Printers, 1967, p.9.

⁹⁷Crowder and Ikime, *West African Chiefs*, p.27.

handle cases with financial demands of not more than \$10.⁹⁸ These cases included marriage divorce, debt, land issues and all civil cases. Despite this effort to rule through the chiefs, it was still clear that their powers under the British administration were reduced just as was the case under German colonialism.⁹⁹ The accumulated executive powers permitted the chiefs to maintain law and order, effect community development and even execute justice. They controlled the local government in their areas on the instruction of the British government.

During the British mandate in Southern Cameroons, there were three Native Authorities areas in Victoria, nineteen in Kumba and eight in Mamfe and fifteen in Bamenda.¹⁰⁰ They worked in very close collaboration with British administrators who acted as supervisory authorities and special days were set for meetings between the Native Authorities and British administrators. During such meetings, instructions were handed down to the NAs, by which the administration acquainted itself with their problems and difficulties.¹⁰¹

It should be recalled that with the acute shortage of personnel for the NA courts, the *Ekpe* members were used as Court messengers and police. This was almost the same role they played in pre-colonial times. However, their power and authority as court messengers and Police was reduced vis-à-vis their original functions. Secondly, the District Officer had to approve their appointment. In their new role, the members of *Ekpe* became corrupt since they were remunerated and many had curry favour with the *nfor* in order to be appointed. Others used their positions as messengers and Police to assault the people and extorting money.¹⁰² They became warrant chiefs in their own areas of jurisdiction.¹⁰³

Mamfe Native Authority

Mamfe Division lies between latitude 5°15' and 6°30' and covers a belt of country extending over the width of the province from the boundary of the protectorate of Nigeria on the west to the Anglo-French boundary of the mandate territory on the east which is fixed but not demarcated. To the north of latitude 5° 45', the eastern boundary marches with the Bamenda division in a north – Westerly direction until it meets the Nigeria boundary. To the South lies

⁹⁸ NAB. File No. 442, "Native Court Bali, Memo No 715/62/1918/B/2 of April 17, 1928, Correspondence District Officer to Resident," 1918, p.1.

⁹⁹ Ninjoh, "Advanced Level Cameroon History", p.90.

¹⁰⁰ Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges* Vol.11, p.85.

¹⁰¹ D.A. Low, "Lion Rampant," in *Journal of Commonwealth Political*, Vol.11, No.3, 1964, p. 236.

¹⁰² Aletum, *Bafut Institution in Modern Politics in Cameroon*, p.28.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* p. 29.

Kumba division, this boundary is not clearly defined but runs roughly east to west following the southerly limits of the Mbo, Obang and Ekwe clans.

The population of the Mamfe division from 1936 stood as follows; adult males 22, 585 and that of women and children stood at 46763, given 69,348 inhabitants. Over the years, the population of Mamfe Division increased by 300. This statistic was made known by the assistant district officers of Mamfe captain Cowan in 1936. This increase in population was due to the assessment report from the Assumbo area in which the male population was at increase. Given also an increase in taxable male population was said to be the main cause of the transfer of the six villages from Bamenda division to Mamfe division in the 1930 to increase the number of taxpayers in Mamfe division¹⁰⁴.

Divisional headquarter was at Mamfe. The Mamfe division extended right up to the north-westerly direction until it shared boundary with Nigeria. To the south, the division shared boundary with Kumba division, this boundary was not clearly defined but it ran roughly east to west following the southerly limit of Mbo, Obang and Ekwe clans. The divisional headquarters of Mamfe division was situated at a road junction of Manyu and Bali rivers, which later became known as the cross-river. The division is mainly broken, forest country, heavily watered, and studded with foothills which risk is the eastern and northern sections to form the grasslands of the escarpment.

The British in adopting her colonial policy of Indirect Rule during Mandate period in Mamfe division created administrative units. The administrative units that constituted Native Court areas also served as headquarter of Native Authority. The Mamfe native authority had its headquarter in Mamfe and was the main native authority in Mamfe division. This local administration constituted Mamfe, Bakebe, Mbinjo and Tinto native court areas. These native courts handled both civil and criminal matters affecting the people of the area such as murder, adultery, witchcraft, land dispute to name but these few.¹⁰⁵ It was created in 1963, it had five court areas, which included Takamanda, Boki Mbulo, Assumbo, Mesaga and Ekoi

Kembong Native Authority

Before the institution of the present Kembong Native Authority and the court in 1929, the Keaka shared a court at Mamfe with some Banyang villages. The Ekwe court and Native Authority at Nsanakang was shared with the Boki on the North bank of the Cross River and the Obangs. The

¹⁰⁴ Eyongetah, Brain and Palmer, *A History of Cameroon*. , p.29.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Joseph Agbor, 70 Years, Farmer, Ntenako, 7th February, 2022.

court at Bakoko, was also shared with the people of the Balundu District, which was later on transferred to Kumba Division. The Kembong Native Court constituted the composite Native Court area with three main ethnic groups (Ekwe, Keaka and Obang tribes). The native courts settled both civil and criminal cases affecting their people. Meanwhile, R. G. Biddulph, assistant district officer, wrote a series of intelligence reports in 1933 on the clans of the areas and proposals made for reorganisation of Native Court that included six-group native courts area to be created. There were others Native Court Authority like Akwaya and Eyumojock¹⁰⁶.

The Bangwa / Banyang Relations

The Bangwa ethnic groups were situated in the north east of the Mamfe Division. The area shared boundary in west by Dschang in the West region of French sphere of the Cameroons, the area is inhabited by eleven clans mainly Bangwa, the ethnic groups included Fontem, Fotabong I, Fosimo, Fosi Mengdi, Tschati, Folepi, Foreke-Tcha, Fotabong III, Foto-Dimgetet, Fonjumetor and Fossongo. Bangwa ethnic groups were administered from Mamfe from 1922 during the British Mandate in Cameroon. Bangwa or Nweh was transferred to Mamfe, when Dschang was handed over to French in 1920 following Anglo – French partition of Cameroon in 1916 and confirmed in. 1922¹⁰⁷.

The eleven village areas now included in and with the Bangwa group area bounded on the north by the Bamunbu village area. On the east, the boundary with the water shed which was the existing international boundary with the French between 5°20 N and 5°40 N. The Southern boundary is the river F1, Misur, or Betsu, which run along the whole extent of the Foreke-tcha-tcha and Fotabong II village areas. Southern most limits, dividing them from their Konawa, Samson Adeoye George neighbours on the western border were the Mbo, Elumba, and Banyang groups.¹⁰⁸

The first European approach to these areas came from Nguti in the Banyang area. The white man was first called to the Banyangi's as "Tata" and tot eh in Bangwas as "Ndek" in about 1896. A German officer small escort arrived in defang. While in defang, the officer burnt down the chief's palace because he refused to return a stolen drum. He then left to Tali. Under the British rule in Bangwa area, the clan was subjected to the rule of a chief of another clan. The native courts of which all the clan chiefs were members and the president was Fontem where it existed a native authority court, and took the place of a district head. The chief worked

¹⁰⁶ NAB. File No. Ce (1947/1). "Annual report for Mamfe Division," 1947, p.15.

¹⁰⁷ M.N. Ashu, "Lebialem Story", p.10.

¹⁰⁸ NAB. File No. 4134/01/15.AS TD/90/12 of 31/10/49.

in harmony to ensure the proper functioning of this court. They, in no occasion opposed the president instructions given to the district officer.

The British established schools in the Bangwa area. There was a Native Authority primary school open in 1930 at Fontem. The Roman Catholic missionaries established in others areas throughout the land. These schools were created to promote literacy in the area. The schools helped to train many Bangwa elements. In Fact, this explains why today Bangwa has one of the best-educated citizens Cameroon is proud of in Africa.¹⁰⁹

The Bangwa had vital trading links with the Banyangs. They exchanged trading items such as; slaves, guns, cloths, currency, beads, salt, and miscellaneous. European goods with which the Banyang traders traded with came from Calabar into the Mamfe river port. The Bangwa on their own part were the intermediaries in the Savannah Slave Trade. However, the trade, between the Banyang and Bangwa was not without problems¹¹⁰. The Bangwa believed that the Banyangs considered them as visitors because the Banyangs treated the Bangwa more of strangers coming from far distance area. What brought the uneasy trade alliance between the Banyang and Bangwa was, the legend, recalls that the son and heir of chief of Fontem was captured and enslaved by the Banyang, he was only released following the intervention of the wife of the chief of Tali to whom a payment of seven slaves was made. From then Fontem paid annual tribute to the Tali chief, whom they did not like, besides, the Bangwa gave much important to the Tali market, which the people of Tali did want to see them there. The Bangwa people decided to start their market in their own area.¹¹¹

Furthermore, the Bangwa Banyang conflict was also seen from the assistance the Banyang gave to the German during the Bangwa resistance against the German of 1899 – 1903. In the conflict, the Banyang decided to support the Germans against their brothers. This unbrotherly attitude of the Banyang angered the Bangwa and this helped to strain their relation. However, despite these hitches, which disturbed the smooth flow of the Bangwa/Banyangi trade relation, the relationship was rebuilt, so much so that Bangwa chiefs and sub-chiefs revealed their dynastic origin from the Banyang society. This included the paramount chiefs of Fonjumeter and Foto who claimed close link with the Banyang. The Banyang and Bangwa were administered together during the British administration of southern Cameroons. Their

¹⁰⁹ M. N. F. Ashu, "Introduction to South West Province Containment and under development in Fontem Sub Division" (A testimony), 1990, pp. 1-7.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p.12.

¹¹¹ Aka, The British Southern 1922-1961, p.22.

relationship was very cordial until the decree of 1992 that created the Lebialem division separated them¹¹².

Fontem Asonganyi, the best-known leader of the lineage belonging to a dynasty that traced its origin from Nchemti clan of Kembong in Ejagham land in Mamfe division. A story that illustrates the kind of connection existing between Kembong and Bangwa concerned a former Fon of Fontem in Bangwa country who is said that, as child was sold as a slave and taken to Kembong. He was only recovered through the good offices of Cameroon nationalist sentiment, first in the French Cameroon and then gradually forced its way into the British Cameroons as it grew in strength and intensity. Two dominant themes in the growth of Cameroonian nationalism can be traced in each part of the Cameroon: (1) in the French Cameroon nationalism per se and its outgrowth, the demand for the “reunification” of the two Cameroons (to use Cameroon, nationalist terminology); (2) in the British Cameroons, first, Southern Cameroonian separation (from Nigeria) and later, under the impetus of ideas and pressure from the East, a mounting pressure in that territory for ‘reunification’ with the French Cameroons.¹¹³

To assert that nationalism was imported into Western Kamerun from Eastern Kamerun is to assume four things at least; that there were close political contacts between western Kamerun and eastern Kamerun in the late 1930s; that southern Cameroons did not have any political problems of their own which could force the rise of nationalism; that nationalism rose in western Kamerun in about 1947, and that nationalism rose in western Kamerun in form of either separation or a demand for independence. To assert also that there were no southern Cameroonians who were either bothered by of the leader of Tali. Tali the closest neighbour of Bangwa. Tali, founding ancestor is believed to have come from Kembong and returned to his father the Fontem. It is claimed that in recognition of this service was a regular tribute paid by Fontem to the village of Tali in the upper Banyang. When he succeeded to the Fon ship, he gave to it the name “Fontem” from the great leader and ancestral hero of Kembong¹¹⁴.

Widikum. The Widikum people, according to oral tradition originated from an area near the villages of Bamben and Numben in the North West region of Cameroon. Egunoyimi is said to be the ancestral home of the Widikum– speaking people found in Momo division, part of

¹¹² NAB. File No. AF. 22b4655, LG, “Federation of Banyang, Bangwa, Mundani and Mbo clan, Mamfe Division, 1950, p.9.

¹¹³ Ibid, p.15.

¹¹⁴ NAB. File No. AF 13 Origin File No E.R. 6859, An assessment report on the Bangwa tribal area in the Mamfe Division of the Cameroons province by H.Cadman. Buea Archives December 19th 1922, pp.12-14.

Mezam, Lebialem, Manyu, Menchum, Menoua and Bamboutous Division. As a result of an intelligence report on the Ngie clan of the Bamenda Division, six villages in the Menka – Widikum area, Esaw, Bassi, Nkom, Echia, Akuwa and Abichia were transferred from Bamenda division to Mamfe division. The reason for this transfer was not really clear knowing that these six villages do not share any history, customs or linguistic relations with the villages of the Mamfe Division. This transfer of villages was however, been an alteration to the legal boundaries, which still appeared to be Moisel's map.¹¹⁵

Fontem Native Authority

The Bangwa Clan occupied an area of 100 miles and has a population of 12100; it was the most thickly populated part of the division. They are divided into nine separate village areas, which inhabited the country on the east. Mamfe North and Mamfe East constituencies comprised; Widikum, Mundane, and Bangwa correctly called Nweh and Nkinkwa or Nkonghombo. Nweh people were named and called Bangwa and the whole Nweh area called Fontem, named after Fontem Asonganyi. It was this area that Nweh and mundane areas which became one administrative unit under the Fontem sub-division (1966 – 1993).¹¹⁶

Fontem sub division became a full division with a new name Lebialem. Lebialem plateau, where the division got her name is the watershed of many rivers that flow in the Manyu basin or plain. Another school of thought said the name came from a waterfall. The main drainage system comprised the rivers Bergeur, in Lebangi and the Ntchembeur in Lewoh merge into a confluence and flow over a rocky out-crop several hundred feet down into the Nwehchen lowland. Other version says Lebialem came from Nweh "Lebeaem" which means the hill or mountain that causes fright or fear). However, it is cleared that it was named just like other administrative units in Cameroon where names of administrative units were taken from geographical features.¹¹⁷

Lebialem division has three sub-divisions, Alou, Menji and Wabane. The Alou sub-division derived its name from nature, foggy or misty nature of the escarpment or plateau area all through the year. Alou is the Nweh name for cloud or mist. The people of Ndungatet, Nwebetaw and Nwengong chiefdoms on which bordered the market in the area, first gave Alou as a compromise name to Alou market. It comprised of six paramount chiefdoms: Lewoh, M'muockmie, M'muockngie, Ndungatet, Nwebetaw and Nwengong. Wabane was the name

¹¹⁵ Ibid.p.12.

¹¹⁶ Interview with Nkemnjukeng Marius, 48 years, teacher, Yaounde, 10th December 2022.

¹¹⁷ M .N. Ashu *Lebialem Story*, ANUCRED, Menji 2002, pp.8-9.

given to the area to demarcate the boundary between Bamumbu chiefdom to the north and the chiefdoms of Betchati and Folepi to the south¹¹⁸. On the boundary spot stand two trees close together. The two trees developed a Siamese trunk at the base that base that had been so before the advent of the colonial rule. On this spot, all the eight paramount chiefs of Mundani met during December to pour libation to their ancestors for unity and to dedicate the area as the capital of all Mundani people. They call the area Wabane¹¹⁹

The name Bangwa stands for all the inhabitants of the nine cluster chiefdoms, even though they do not constitute a tribe or a single political unit. The nine chiefdoms included; Fozimogndi, Fozimombin, Fonjumeter, Fotabeng, Foto, Fossungo, Fontem, Foreke Cha Cha and Fotabong III. Bangwa is arrived from the word “Nwe” or “Nwa” in the northern dialects which referred to both the country and the language ‘Bangwa’ therefore correctly refers to people who speak Nwe and live in the narrow strip of the country in southern Cameroons which forms the foothill of the section of the east Cameroon plateau inhabited by the Bamileke.

The people of Bangwa were grouped into administrative unit of local government as part of Mamfe .The Bangwa chiefdom maintained much closer link with its neighbours. The term Nwe is today used to describe the highland areas of the four chiefdoms, Fontem, Fonjumeter and Foto Dungalet. Another term “Mok” described the country of the two northern most chiefdoms fozimogndi and Fozimombin, which are linked geographically and historically with other ‘Mok’ chiefdoms among the Bamileke area. Bangwa is today used to refer to all the people of Lebialem division. The Bangwa speak a Bantoid language, which is closely related to language spoken by the Bamileke, particularly around Dschang and Fondongela. Fontem is the Chief title, which represented two important areas Lebang Azi and Fontem itself. In most cases, Fontem is used to cover the three areas.

The Southern Cameroons community that insisted on unification was the Bangwa (Nweh) Native Authority. In a petition in 1949, the Bangwa referred to the Anglo-French partition of Cameroon and raised the issue of unification. The petition stated, among other things that:

If the UNO cannot unite both the so-called French and British Cameroons into one country, it should for the interest of the common people, do its utmost to rectify the present boundaries so that people of the same tribe, now divided between British and French Cameroons, begin to enjoy life under one government. In this way, we the

¹¹⁸ Ibid, pp.12-13.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p.9.

people of Bangwa would be joint together with the Dschang people now under French rule. The present separation has caused so much hardship in our social life.¹²⁰

The Bangwa were certainly under the influence of the Kumze, a Bamileke ethnic association created in 1948 by Mathias Djoumessi, Chief of Dschang. In its constitution, it was indicated that Kumze: *Se donnait pour objectif, non-la unification des deux Camerouns, mais l'obtention des assouplissements au régime frontalier afin de faciliter les échanges commerciaux entre ressortissants de leurs ethnies installés des deux cotés des zones française et anglaise.*¹²¹

The Bangwa therefore wanted unification, more precisely Bangwa-Dschang unification and the abolition of frontier or trade barriers between the two communities because of the campaign and influence of the *Kumze*, a French Cameroon ethnic association in Bangwa land on the eve of the UN Mission in 1949. At the fourth congress of *Kumze* in Foreke-Dschang in 1951, the 12 delegates from the Bangwa Tribal Union (Southern Cameroons) still insisted on the elimination of the frontier between the two communities. Emphasis was not on total unification.

However, Atem, a scholar of Bangwa origin claims that the Bangwa appeal for unification could be traced far back to their contributions to the realization of some of the German projects. According to his findings, Bangwa labour was used for the development of roads, railways (especially the Nkonsamba-Bonaberi railway) and the Douala port, which after the partition of Kamerun in 1916 fell within the French sphere.¹²² Bangwa people therefore wanted unification in order to have access to these projects given that they were separated from them following the defeat of the Germans and the partition of Kamerun. Despite this view, the outcome of the May 1949 CNF conference, which the Bangwa Tribal Union attended, revealed that the strong appeals for the total unification of the two Cameroons came mainly from French Cameroonians.

Widikum Menka- Native Authority

Menka-Widikum had an area of 350 square miles and a population of 8.137. It comprised of four unrelated clans namely Ambelle, Busam, Menka and Widikum-Ateh and four other unrelated villages.¹²³ There were administered in the native courts at Menka and Widikum and

¹²⁰ NAB. File Td/1950/12, Petition from Bangwa Native Authority to Members of the UN Delegation at Mamfe on 31/10/1949.p. 12.

¹²¹ NAY. 2AC 7797, Assemblée Traditionelle Bamileke, Motion 1952, p.2.

¹²² G. Atem, "Cameroon-Nigeria Relations 1884-1961: A Study in Political, Economic, and Social Interactions between two Neighbouring States", Ph.D. Thesis in History, University of Calabar, Calabar, 1984, p.273.

¹²³ Interview with Anong Jacob, 43 years. Teacher, Edea, 23rd Februru 2023.

though the Widikum court was originally opened as a sub-court of Menka. They were, in fact, two entirely separated courts and the members of one never sat in the other. The native authority was the Menka-Widikum court". During the six years, villages of the Ngom clan were transferred to Bamenda division to join their relatives the Njie's on whom an intelligence report had been written. Throughout their administration as part of Mamfe, they had no love been in Mamfe due to linguistic and cultural differences that existed between the two groups. In 1964, they wrote a petition letter to the West Cameroon government IN Buea expressing their willingness to leave Mamfe to join their kith and kin in the Grassfield. See appendix 7 for the petition letter .¹²⁴

Administrative Staff

The administrators who carter for the day to day activities of Mamfe Division included a district officer, two assistant district officers, a district clerk, a second class clerk, a clerk attached to the local treasury office who also assisted in the general office work, two interpreters and seven office messengers. From 1922 to 1939, the following officers were in charge of the division; Major I. Sealy – King, district officer 1/1/35 to 13/5/35 M.H.W. Swabey district officer 13/5/35 to 31/12/35. The following again acted as assistant district officers; Captain J.R.G.Cowan, A.D.O. 1/1/35 to 31/12/35, D.C.E. Tovey, A.D.O. 24/11/35 to 31/12/35, Major L. Seally King D.O. 23/12/35 to 31/12/35. Chiefs and Indirect Rule.¹²⁵

Indirect Rule in Mamfe Division

The institution of chieftaincy in Manyu Division went through many changes during the colonial and postcolonial periods. During the nationalist quest for independence, politicians and intellectuals looked upon the chieftaincy institution as an instrument to be used to achieve their goals. As such, the non-democratic and anti-modern nature of the institution did see its survival in the face of modernization. The fact that chiefs were used as agents of administration by colonial and postcolonial states undermined their ability to mobilize for social change.¹²⁶ Yet the chieftaincy institution demonstrated exceptional flexibility because the modern from all occupations strove to get chiefs involved as active allies in the pursuit of power.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ NAB.File no. 187/186,C1.904 AB(!)(1964),Widekum Village Area Request for Transfer

¹²⁵ NAB.File no. 939 868/23 Ce 1922/Annual Report Mamfe Division

¹²⁶ N.K...Lukong, "Civil Disobedience in the North West Province, 1960-1966," Masters of Arts Dissertation, University of Yaounde I, 2005, p.37.

¹²⁷ E. F.Lekunze, "Chieftaincy and Christianity in Cameroon, 1886-1926: A Historical and Comparative Analysis of the Evangelistic Strategy of the Basel Mission," Ph.D., Thesis in History Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, 1987, p.23.

However, by the end of the First War World in Cameroon in February 1916, attempts to form an Anglo-French condominium in Cameroon failed. The British Foreign Secretary, Lancelot Oliphant, and the French Diplomat, George Picot, met in London and provisionally partitioned Cameroon into British Cameroon and French Cameroon. In November 1918, the First World War ended in Europe and the Paris Peace Conference imposed the Treaty of Versailles on Germany. Under articles 119 of the treaty, Germany surrendered all her overseas colonies including Cameroon to the victorious powers. According to Article 22 paragraph, 5 of the covenant of the League of Nations, ex-German colonies were to become mandated territories of the League of Nations in 1922.

Britain took one-fifth of the Former German Cameroon while France received four-fifth. For administrative convenience, therefore, Britain divided her share of Cameroon into Northern and Southern Cameroons and administered them as integral parts of Northern and Southern (Later Eastern) Nigeria respectively. However, from April 1916 up to 1922, Britain continued with the same administrative policy laid down by the Germans. This transitional period gave her the necessary time to introduce her own administrative policy known as Indirect Rule. This was the policy initiated by Lord Frederick Lugard, Governor General of Nigeria from 1914-1919. However, the policy was officially introduced in Southern Cameroons on July 1922.¹²⁸ Further, in 1945, after the Second World War, the two parts of Cameroon were placed under the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations Organisation (UNO) with Britain and France still as the Administering Authorities.¹²⁹

Reasons for Indirect Rule in Mamfe Division

In order to meet up with the terms of the Mandate and later Trusteeship agreements, the British administering authority decided to adopt the policy of Indirect Rule to ease their administration in Southern Cameroons. Owing to the vast and inaccessible nature of former Mamfe Division now Manyu Division, the British deemed it necessary to use the traditional rulers they met on the spot for effective administration. A number of reasons were advanced for the adoption of the policy in Mamfe Division. These reasons included:

Indirect Rule was a well-known natural result of the British attempt to integrate African traditional authorities into the colonial political institution.¹³⁰ The British adopted the policy

¹²⁸Ibid. p.82.

¹²⁹ Fanson, Cameroon History for Secondary Schools Vol.2, p.95.

¹³⁰F.

both from choice and from necessity. From choice, because the colonial government believed in preserving the fabric of indigenous society as far as possible and adapting it to the changing needs of the time. Indirect Rule was borne by necessity because “there was no practical alternative to it, unless they wanted to impose an artificial undemocratic and perhaps unrepresentative system on the people”.¹³¹ Therefore, the policy of Indirect Rule presented a unique illustration of the contradictions and paradoxes of British rule in Africa.¹³²

The main reason that encouraged the application of this policy in Manyu Division was the lack of adequately trained colonial administrators.¹³³ This was compounded by the fact that Southern Cameroons was not a British colony and so they did not think it otherwise to incur extra expenditure in setting up different administrative units within the territory. Such a venture could have even implied an extra cost in administration while the British were out to minimize cost by every means possible. The British taxpayer was not to be overburdened in running the overseas territories.¹³⁴

Besides, the British realized that there existed Manyu traditional institutions like the *Ekpe*, *Nfan*, *Ekok* and Traditional Council especially in the Eyumojock and Fontem chiefdoms that were quite dynamic and receptive.¹³⁵ The British felt that rather than dislocate such powerful and well-organized traditional structures, they could rather be associated as partners in administration. This concept was strengthened by the fact that traditional rulers exercised much power, influence and authority over their subjects. All these came from the respect the people reserved for their chiefs or *Nfors*. It was clear that the administration could be made easy if they worked with these rulers.

It was also clear that accessibility to the interior of Mamfe Division remained a nightmare especially areas like Akwaya Obang, Nsanakang and Tinto as there were no routes leading to most parts of the territory. This meant that even if Britain had to set up administrative units in the territory, it was going to be extremely difficult to reach some areas. Thus, the best means of ensuring effective administrative coverage over the entire division was to make use

L... Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, 5th Edition, London, Frank Cass Impr, 1922, Cited in Fuhwi Ngwa Divine, “Fon, Chiefs and People in Conflicts in Bafut, North West Cameroon, 1900-1982”, Ph.D Thesis in History, University of Yaounde 1, 2011, p.30.

¹³¹R. E. Wraith, *Local Government*, London, Penguin Books, 1953, p.19.

¹³²*Ibid.*

¹³³Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges Vol. 2*, p.85.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*

¹³⁵Geroge Nso Ndip Tabetando, Senator and Chief of Bachuo-Ntai, an Exclusive Interview on “Cameroon Calling” Programme, over National Station, November 2019.

of the traditional authorities since such institutions existed all over, even in such enslaved areas.¹³⁶

Moreover, the British lacked a sound knowledge of the Mamfe environment. This was bound to affect their administrative machinery if they had to assume total control over the territory. It was further complicated by the harsh tropical climate that frightened many young British men from accepting to take up positions in Southern Cameroons. Most of them considered tropical Africa as the Whiteman's grave.¹³⁷ Thus, effective administration by British agents was not very evident from this point of view. Some alternative measure had to be put in place and the system of Indirect Rule that was to employ the services of the chiefs was introduced.

In addition, the British understood that the natives of Mamfe Division as well as the rest of Southern Cameroons had a traditional dislike for paying taxes.¹³⁸ They had lived this experience in the years of legitimate trade and thus understood the attitude of the Manyu man towards financial issues. However, sufficient resources had to be mobilized from within the territory to assist the administration principally through the collection of taxes. In view then of the difficult nature of the terrain and the traditional dislike by the people to pay taxes, the British believed the system of Indirect Rule would facilitate tax collection since the traditional rulers were highly respected and knew their subjects better than the British. These rulers were to be directly involved in the process of tax collection.

The British, following their Nigerian experiences came to understand that in order to avoid tension, violence and even war with the indigenes, the best way of administering them was to use their traditional rulers.¹³⁹ Equally, traditional rulers' best understood the traditional set-up of their territories so that the British could share in their experiences. It was ceremonial for the British to use traditional rulers as agents of administration since they were not ready to sacrifice any extra funds as administering Authorities.

From another perspective, the Indirect Rule policy was adopted because the British came to the realization that they could not galvanize sufficient manpower among the people to assist in modern administration.¹⁴⁰ This was because of the very high rate of illiteracy among

¹³⁶Interview with Tabi Lucas Eyong, 62 Years, Farmer, Ndekwa, 26th April 2022.

¹³⁷J.D. Fage, *A History of West Africa*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1969, p.88.

¹³⁸Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, p.86.

¹³⁹Interview with Joseph Nshanji, 45 Years, History Teacher, Buea, 21st May 2020.

¹⁴⁰Gower, *Independent Africa*, 1965, p.7.

them. This created a vacuum in the administrative structure, as the elitist class was very negligible or almost inexistent. The British had no option than to rely on the Natives Authorities (NAs) in fostering their administration, especially as their experience in Northern Nigeria was successful.

Finally, the British understood that their rule in Cameroon was temporal. They were to eventually leave the territory and saw no reason why they should invest so much in terms of administration. The Cameroon equation was even more complex as it was a mandated and Trust Territory. At the same time, the situation caused the British to apply their colonial philosophy of preparing the people towards self-government following their experience from the American war of independence.¹⁴¹ Indirect Rule was therefore intended to train them to run their own affairs when the British would have left. These were some of the considerations the British had in adopting the policy of Indirect Rule in the then Mamfe Division of Southern Cameroons.

Impact of Indirect Rule on the Traditional Set-up of Manyu Division

The British experimentation and implementation of the policy of Indirect Rule in Mamfe Division had far-reaching consequences. The policy was considered by Gower¹⁴² as one of the eleven British colonial legacies in Africa (the others are statehood; membership of the Commonwealth; British-style education, the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy, the civil service tradition, White Hall model, the military and police, the rule of law, the common law legacy, the economic legacy of under-development, the emotional and moral legacy producing a kind of African inferiority complex or the legacy of racialism and racism discrimination).

However, the policy of Indirect Rule brought local administration closer to the people. It removed the master-child relationship that existed in other colonial policies. The use of chiefs created a community spirit in the population especially in Mamfe Division where there was no evidence of centralized authority except in Bangwa. The policy educated the chiefs on local governance. Their leadership in the Native Authority (NA) gave them abundant administrative and even political experience.¹⁴³ Little wonder therefore that they played a leading role in the nationalist struggle and later through the West Cameroons House of Chiefs (WCHC). This system of administration laid the foundation for the involvement of Manyu and other chiefs of

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ P. Geshiere and B. Meyer (eds.), *Readings in Modernity in Africa*, Pretoria, University Press, 2008. pp.56-58.

Southern Cameroons in active partisan politics. Southern Cameroonians became used to constitutional procedures because of their involvement with the British administration.¹⁴⁴

Indirect rule policy facilitated the procedure of revenue collection since with the 'natives' were usually opposed to the payment of taxes. Taxes were collected easily because the chiefs were directly responsible and they had total control and authority over their subjects. The pace with which revenue was collected made it possible for the native authority to carry out social and economic development though on limited scale.¹⁴⁵

The value of chiefs was also reinforced through the customary court following the native law and custom, the tradition and culture of the people of Manyu remained intact. The common interest of the people was epitomized in local development as a common denominator of the essence of traditional authority. Common interest regulated their concerns and formed the bedrock of the promulgated law, and the laws which common interest ordained had a greater interest than government law. However today, the involvement of Chiefs in politics eventually destroyed this common spirit, because politics is perceived and understood wrongly as the only fundamental way in which power is exercised for development.

Indirect Rule also had a negative impact on the traditional set up in that it reduced and some cases eroded the powers of traditional rulers. The chiefs were compelled to be subordinates to the colonial administration. Some chiefs were appointed by the administering authority and were thus answerable to them. They could be dismissed at any time that they failed to satisfy their masters, as happened in the villages of Nchang, Besongabang and Kembong in the 1950s.¹⁴⁶ The policy also weakened the Traditional Council that used to regulate the power of chiefs before the colonisation of Cameroon. During the colonial period, the power of chief was subjected to checks and balances and not regulated among the Banyang and Ejagham by Ekok and *ekpe* association.¹⁴⁷

In order to create native authorities, the British sometimes merged villages or clans and imposed influential chiefs on them. In some cases, this caused resentment and conflict. The creation of warrant or artificial chiefs by the British administration distorted the traditional method of choosing a traditional ruler. The policy affected the loyalty of chiefs. As time went on, traditional authorities were bound to satisfy the aspirations of the British administration

¹⁴⁴A. N. Jua, "Indirect Rule in Colonial and Post Colonial Cameroon," *Paideuma*, 41, 1995, p.45.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 45.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Samuel Ayuk Tabot, 53 Years, Teacher, Besongabang, 15th August 2019.

¹⁴⁷ *Idem.*

than those of their subjects. The impact of this had been numerous chieftaincy disputes in the division.

The African staff who assisted in the administration of Mamfe division were S.J. Amachree 1st class clerk, B.J. Kaba 2nd class clerk, W.T. King 2nd class clerk, T. Kimaun qualified interpreter, Odiun qualified interpreter. The role played by the messengers in the administration was also very important owing to the fact that there were so many languages spoken in the division. Therefore, it was necessary to use messengers as interpreters on frequent official occasions. Equally, communication was also difficult between the administrative staff who spoke mostly English language and the native who spoke their national languages for smooth communication, there was need for interpreter.

The interpreter played an important role in the division. They were responsible in passing on the message of his honourable acting lieutenant - Governor, W.E. Hunt who visited the Mamfe division from the 3rd to the 7th of April 1935 and the visit of the director of medical and sanitary service Doctor W.B. Johnson who visited Mamfe from the 26th to the 28th March 1936 to the people. Jubilee day celebrations were held on the 6th of May on the government school playground. 480 school children from the government and native administration schools and the Basel Mission School at Besengabang were present and it is estimated that 1500 other persons also attended.¹⁴⁸

Conclusion

This chapter examined the geographical setting and historical background of the study area. We went further to analyse the pre-colonial socio-political organisations of the area. Traditional structures such as *ekpe*, *nkan* and *mfam* helped to maintain law, peace and order in the land. The administration of the division during the British Mandate was discussed. We rounded-up by treating the application of the policy of Indirect Rule in Mamfe Division and the impact of the policy on the traditional set-up of Manyu division. The major outcome of the policy of Indirect Rule was the fact that it trained the chiefs and elites of the division in the art of modern administration. The chapter further reveals that the rich geographical background which encouraged the Igbos and other ethnic groups from Nigeria to migrate into the division. It was these groups that pushed the Mamfe people to fight for their nationalism because they occupied their fertile land. The chapter illustrated to us that before the European administration in the territory, Mamfe Division already had a well-established political, economic and social

¹⁴⁸ Eyongetah, Brain and Palmer, *A History of Cameroon*, p.77.

systems, which guaranteed sustainable development. There were the chiefs at the head and Mgbé to maintain law and order. The attempt for invaders to disturb the progress of these institutions was seriously met with stiff resistance from the natives. The chapter concludes that Mamfe was a suitable environment for human habitation. With this background laid, we now move to examine the contributions of the elites of Manyu division in the process of reunification of Cameroon in 1961 in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

CONTRIBUTIONS OF MAMFE/MANYU ACTORS TO INDEPENDENCE AND UNIFICATION

Introduction

The Mamfe Division was one of the six divisions during the Mandate and Trusteeship administrations in the Southern Cameroons. The division played an important role in the process and the Cameroon Federal Republic was created. We shall therefore examine both individual and collective roles of Mamfe people during the struggle for reunification. The study discusses the role played by politicians like S. A. George, Dickson Mbi Frambo, Peter Arrey Aiyuk and Ndep Effiom. The chapter explains the contributions of Mamfe actors in the unification process. How they helped to mobilize the masses to support the reunification process. The chapter equally argue that even though they campaigned for reunification they were many people wanted the independence of the territory. Tribal and Improvement unions, chiefs and other actors in the process.

Politicians

Although political scientists and historians are concerned mainly with aggregates of human beings such as legislation, courts, political parties and other institutions, it is important to remember that the individual being is the basic unit of all social behaviour. The individual, also known as the “political actor”(because he engages in some form of relevant political activities). Understandable therefore the nature of the political actors can become useful in interpreting how their behaviours had been a function of their interaction in society in place and time. This knowledge to be gained from such political and historical interactions is even more important for developing countries, the history of which is linked to the behaviour of some political actors for good or evil. A number of politicians contributed their quota during the reunification process. Their contributions were immediately or later interpreted as either positive or negative. We would now name and discuss the Mamfe politicians and groups that contributed to the reunification of Cameroon.

Samson Agbor Adeoye George of Mamfe from 1922-1954

Samson Agbor Adeoye George who was popularly known as S.A. George was born in Mamfe in 1922 to a Nigerian and Cameroonian parents. He actually had a Nigerian father (precisely from Yoruba extraction called Henry George) and a Cameroonian mother from Esaghem (called

Ma Opku) of a small village along the Cross Rivers in Mamfe Division.¹ S.A. George was very instrumental in the political dispensation of the Southern Cameroons in particular and the Republic of Cameroon at large². His partial Nigerian origins notwithstanding, did not stop him from advocating unification of Southern Cameroons and French Cameroon. His name is not so popular in the discussions of political life of most English speaking Cameroonians, most probably because he died very young at the age of 36, almost at the peak of his political career.³ He was an eloquent, audacious speaker and the leading political figure in Mamfe Division from the late 1940s up to 1956 when the cold hands of death visited him. His party the KNC refused to save his life while he was in his sick bed in a London hospital.⁴ The hierarchy of the party declined the responsibility to pay his surgeon's bill when he asked for assistance, which resulted to his death.⁵

Honourable S.A. George attended primary school at the Government Primary School in Mamfe town. He then proceeded to Nigeria where he studied in St. Gregory College Lagos and Enitona High school Port Harcourt. After his studies, he worked as a postal clerk and a telegraphic officer from 1942 to 1945.⁶ He equally worked as a post and telecommunications agent in Lagos before becoming a freelance journalist. He usually worked as a private secretary to Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe while a journalist. He attempted to form a branch of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC) in Mamfe together with Gabriel A. Atabong in order to expand the ideologies of the party in the Southern Cameroons. As concerns his political life, S.A. George was a prominent member of the Zikist Vanguard and an active trade unionist in Nigeria.⁷

S.A. George was also a secretary of the Lagos Town Council Workers Union. He occupied a very significant position of the Cameroons Youth League (CYL), which launched him into the political arena of the Southern Cameroons politics when the territory was administered as an integral part of the newly created Eastern Region of Nigeria in Enugu from 1946 to 1953. S.A. George together with Honourable Martin Forju represented the Mamfe Division at the Eastern Regional Council in Enugu and the Central Executive Council in Lagos.

¹ Eyongetah, Brain and Palmer, p.78

² Aka, The British Southern Cameroons 1922-1961, p.242.

³ <https://simple.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/User;\:Rambo1981> ,p.4

⁴ Ibid.p.6.

⁵ Ibid.P.45.

⁶ Ngho, Cameroon 1884-Present (2018) ,The History of a People, Yaounde, pp.187-188.

⁷ <https://simple.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/User;\:Rambo1981>.

Through their activities with other members, Southern Cameroons was later granted a quasi-regional status⁸ under the Lyttelton Constitution.⁹

Honourable S.A. George was a quintessence of Cameroonians who rose from a poor background and made it to the public arena. He would have preserved his high position in politics in spite of the challenges he faced in Nigeria, but surprisingly he resigned from the Executive Council for reasons of principles, interest and the aspirations of the people he represented. This made him to be considered as a man of steering character, remarkable degree of moral courage, patriotism and selflessness, who was ready to die for his people. He left behind a lesson worth emulating for future politicians who would stand to protect the interest of the people and territory they would represent.¹⁰

Before the cold hands of death took him, he had published a booklet in “Kamerun Reunification” in which he expressed the idea of the future of British and French Cameroons. He intimated by implication that he favoured immediate reunification. He castigated the administration of British Cameroons as an appendage of Nigeria and the incorporation of French Cameroon into the French Union during the mandate and trusteeship periods.¹¹ In his effort to promote the reunification of Southern Cameroons and French Cameroon, he urged the UN General Assembly to review the trusteeship agreement. He wanted the UN to work out an interim condominium administration in Cameroon established by the French and British that would carry out the functions being performed by the Governor General in Lagos and the French High Commissioner in Yaounde. Again, he advocated a federal system of government because it would guarantee the security of political institutions like the House of Assembly, and the House of Chiefs of Southern Cameroons would be created.¹² He said that with the federal system, the advantages Southern Cameroons had derived from the British Indirect Rule system would not be jeopardized.¹³

S.A. George talked about a Council of Ministers that would be from the elected representatives of the people. Equally, as a man of the people, he was given the opportunity to present a paper on the plight of the people during the inaugural meeting of the Cameroon

⁸ Quasi Regional Status by Southern Cameroons was given some limited autonomy to operate like a state like having Leader of Government Business

⁹ S. A. George, *Kamerun Unification: Being a Discussion of a 7-Point-Solution of the Unification Problem*. London, Carey and Claridge, 1956, pp.6-18.

¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 18-19.

¹¹ S. A. George, *Kamerun Unification*: p.17.

¹² Ibid .P.15

¹³ Ibid.

National Federation (CNF) that took place on 14th and 15th May 1949 in Kumba. The meeting was aimed at preparing for the U.N. visiting mission to Southern Cameroons. Hon. S.A. George issued an official statement in which he recommended that the “integral part” provision of trusteeship agreement be deleted in order to allow Southern Cameroons to be administered as an autonomous territory. He went further to say that without the integral clause, Southern Cameroons would not have been administered as an attached part of the Eastern Region of Nigeria; the territory would have been granted its own legislative, budgetary and administrative institutions similar to those enjoyed by the three existing regions of Nigeria. Still talking about the bad treatment of the people of the territory, S. A. George spoke of the need for rapid development in Cameroons and lamented about the period of socio-economic neglect which the territory had experienced under mandate and trusteeship periods;

The territory was looked after and essential administrative services were maintained on a skeleton basis for twenty- eight years. For this period also, the Cameroons was subjected to vigorous, merciless exploitation while its inhabitants lived merely as plantation slaves under German farmers. Britain allowed the German government and her subjects to use the territory as a supply house for all the rubber, banana, cocoa and other products which made Germany confident in her second onslaught on civilisation. Provisions of social services were unknown and unheard of in the Cameroons. There was no link with Nigeria for fear that Germany might ultimately take back full political control of the Territory¹⁴

The event that gave the opportunity to Southern Cameroons to take a decisive stance on their demand for a regional status was the crisis that erupted in the Eastern House of Assembly in 1953. The crisis caused the abolition of the John Macpherson Constitution and marked a turning point in the attitude of British administrators and Nigerian politicians towards the Cameroonian request. The benevolent neutrality bloc of the Southern Cameroons therefore was decisive to severing the link with the Eastern Region.

They called on Cameroonian to support the demand for a separate region for the territory. The message was circulated throughout the territory inviting delegates of all works of life to attend a meeting at Mamfe from 22nd to 24th May 1953. The Mamfe meeting was massively attended; it came out with far reaching resolutions which were petitioned to be sent to Lord Oliver Lyttelton, the secretary of state for colonies. The petition demanded the creation of a separate and autonomous legislative assembly for the trust territory of Southern Cameroons.¹⁵

¹⁴ Eyongeta, Brain and Palmer, *A History of Cameroon*, p.133.

¹⁵ Ibid.

The territory would have been granted a similar status like the three existing regions in Nigeria having her own legislature, budgets and administrative decentralization. He was therefore the first to start calling for Southern Cameroons to secede from Nigeria before Kamerun National Congress (KNC) in 1953. He was first an important politician in Southern Cameroons who played an important role for the reunification of Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon. S.A. George was one of the Southern Cameroonians parliamentarian in the Regional Executive Council in Enugu and Central executive council in Lagos who was elected in 1953 following the establishment of Macpherson constitution on the KNC ticket. As a representative of the people of Mamfe in Lagos Nigeria, S. A. George defended the interest of his people when he was addressing the House of Representatives. He emphasized on the plight of his people and he called on the British to accelerate economic development in the area.¹⁶

He was a staunch secessionist who supported Southern Cameroonians separation from Nigeria. When Endeley deviated from the original aims of KNC's, S.A. George became converted to the idea of reunification and gave his view in a pamphlet titled "Kamerun Reunification" written in England in March 1957.¹ In this book, he explained how both the British and the French Cameroons could come together as an entity. His ideas became the first concrete proposals to articulate the subject of reunification. In the pamphlet, he formulated Seven (7) Points towards Reunification or seven Point's Solution of Reunification Problem. Simon Joseph Epale, a reunificationist, a trained teacher of French Cameroon, supported he his view. According to the Seven Point's Solution of Reunification, S.A. George proposed that the following steps should be taken:

He called on the UN General Assembly to review the two separate Trusteeship agreements and provide an interim administration of Cameroon under the joint trusteeship of British and the French government. In this, he wanted that only one government should exist and one leadership between British Southern Cameroons and French Cameroon. In this way, it would be easier for the two territories to unite. They proposed that the British and French governments should establish an Anglo-French Commission, which would assume the functions that were performed by the Governor General of Nigeria in British Southern Cameroons and the French High Commissioner in French Cameroons. They wanted an authorized official from Britain to be appointed to Cameroon directly so that the territories

¹⁶ S.A. George, *Kamerun Unification; Being a Discussion of a 7-Point-Solution of the Unification*, P, 56.

would have nothing to do with Nigeria or France.¹⁷ They proposed an “Anglo-French Commission of administration”¹⁸ comprising of two members appointed by both the British and the French government respectively should be created. The council of ministers should be established comprising only of Cameroonians. It would also include a premier and two joint commissioners who would either hold a joint chair or alternating leadership of the council. This was intended to train the two territories for their self-rule and leadership skills.

A parliament of two chambers should be established and it should comprise apart from Cameroon members, one European representing the French colons and other European interest. He wanted two House of Representatives, which should include the Lower House (National Assembly) and the Upper House (Senates) to include experienced European members of parliament. Three or four government units should be recognized within the Cameroon Nation. This unit should exercise legislative and executive functions within each respective unit. This was intended to solve the problem of different cultural diversity and ethnicity in Cameroon.¹⁹

They proposed a progressive system of popular elections in the less advanced areas. In the more advanced area, they called for a type of election based on full adult suffrage. In other words, two different kinds of elections were to be organized in Cameroon based on the mentality of the people concerned. S.A. George support for reunification was really a surprise to many people. One would have thought that, since his father came from Nigeria, he would have rather advocated for continue integration with Nigeria. But he was the first to move the motion on benevolent neutrality in 1953, which gave rise to party politics. Actually, two major conferences took place in Mamfe in a building owned by his mother. The outcome of these conferences helped to shape the political future of Southern Cameroons as the two Cameroons became united thanks to the groundwork laid by Hon. S.A. George in the early 1950's.²⁰

Although the Seven Point's Solution for reunification proposed by S.A. George did not become the talk of the town immediately, it could be argued that it was this document that transformed reunification to become a point of discussion in the lips of so many people in the Southern Cameroons in general and Mamfe Division in particular. It became the lantern that led the path on which pro-reunification activists followed. The document was used at the

¹⁷ Ibid.p.135.

¹⁸ Ibid.P.58

¹⁹ Ibid.P.45.

²⁰ George, Kamerun Unification, pp.14-15.

Bamenda conference of May 28th to June 1st 1957 which was convened to prepare for the 1957 London conference.²¹

Dickson Mbi Frambo of Tali

D.M. Frambo was a controversial politician that Mamfe Division had, who helped to facilitate the reunification process through his actions. He hailed from Tali and was a parliamentarian for Mamfe North under the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP). He was elected in January 1959 during the regional election that was organized into the Southern Cameroons' House of Assembly. Table 2 below, shows the results recorded.²²

Table 2: The results of the 1959, election into Southern Cameroons House of Assembly

Political Party	Contested seats	Seats won	Polled votes
KNDP	25	14	73,304
KNC	21	8	35,327
KPP	6	4	16,027
NCNC	1	Nil	71
OK	2	Nil	2,021
Independent Candidates	11	Nil	10,434

Source: V. J. Ngoh, *The untold story of Cameroon Reunification 1955-1961*, p. 16.

From the election results on table 2 above, the KNDP had 14 seats, KNC 8 and KPP 4 seats giving 26 seats. KNDP therefore had simple majority. In effect, it meant that, in the case of any bill to be voted in the House of Assembly, the KNDP would normally carry the day, if party discipline was fully applied. In 1960, one KNDP representative, Honourable J.M. Boja from Wum constituency²³ changed his mind and crossed the carpet from the KNDP to KNC/KPP alliance. Boja's decision placed the Southern Cameroons parliament in a stalemate as both KNDP and KNC/KPP alliance had thirteen members each. Due to this act, Boja was nicknamed the 13/13 man.²⁴ This of course, meant that no party had advantage over the other.²⁵

²¹J. L.Nfi, "French Cameroon and Reunification of Cameroon. pp.192-193.

²² NAB. The Frambo Affair, A paper for discussion presented by Dr. Bongfen Chem-Langhee, Department of History University of Yaounde, 1980, p.2.

²³A geographical area represented by elected parliamentarian, who is there to defend the economic, social and political interest of the people he represents.

²⁴ N.N. Mbile, *Cameroon Political Story Memories of an Authentic Eye Witness*, Presbyterian Printing Press, Limbe, 1999.p.142.

²⁵ Ibid.P.54

The situation was further compounded when the independence of Southern Cameroons was to be determined by the House of Assembly and the United Nations. The KNDP stood for reunification and the KNC/KPP alliance, which later became known as CPNC wanted continuous integration with Nigeria. KNDP had formed a government under the leadership of John Ngu Foncha as premier. Foncha's government, in terms of balancing had a serious problem because it could not take any decision without being challenged by the opposition in parliament. Foncha did everything possible to keep maintaining his party majority that in case any members of KNDP crossed the carpet again, the party would not lose its position to the KNC/KPP alliance.²⁶

In late 1960, what J.N. Foncha was trying to avoid happened. His government for the first time was that a man could break the chains of party discipline and dolt out of it. This was the episode of Dickson Mbi Frambo that rocked Southern Cameroons. Frambo, a village farmer from Tali in present day Upper Banyang Sub-Division was elected in the January 1959 election on the KNDP ticket. He was also one of the KNDP parliamentarians who kept the number of seats at 13, 13 for KNDP and KNC/KPP alliance. In 1960, he crossed the carpet from KNDP to CPNC. Some members of the CPNC are alleged to have visited Frambo at his home in Tali and persuaded him at gun point to leave KNDP and join the CPNC.²⁷

It was said that Frambo had no desire to continue supporting the KNDP, but was enslaved to that party because of the huge amount of money he owed KNDP. It was also said that during the campaign for the general election, Frambo borrowed money from the party coffers to buy a Land Rover, which he was unable to refund after the campaign. His indebtedness to the KNDP was close to about 2000 pounds sterling and this was the reason he remained in the KNDP party. He needed to pay this money before freeing himself. When the CPNC party hierarchy learned about this, that it was just the sum of 2000 pounds that was still keeping Frambo in KNDP, they went to pay the money in order that it would facilitate his joining their party.²⁸

On the 8th May 1960, it was alleged that the high-levelled KNC/KPP alliance delegation that comprised of Dr. Endeley himself, N.N. Mbile and Fokum paying an unexpected visit to Tali village in attempt to persuade Frambo to join their party. The delegation gave Frambo 2000 pounds for him to settle his debts with KNDP and as an evident for him to leave the KNDP

²⁶Ibid. p.143.

²⁷ NAB.The Frambo Affair, 1980,P,3

²⁸Ibid .P.5.

party and embrace the KNC/KPP alliance. It was also alleged that Frambo handed to the delegation a letter of resignation from KNDP duly signed by him addressed to the Commissioner of Cameroons in which he made his intention to leave the party. But, rather than to stand by his words according to N.N. Mbile, Frambo changed his mind and then issued a second letter the next day which stated that some member of the KNC/ KPP alliance visited him at his house at Tali and persuaded him at gun point for him to resign from KNDP to join their party.²⁹See appendix 8 for the letter in its entirety.³⁰

That day, Frambo rushed to the Mamfe police station to present his complaint against Dr. Endeley and N.N. Mbile that “Dr. Endeley and Mbile came to my village, held a gun at me and compelled me to resign from my party KNDP”. Listening to this complaint the Southern Cameroons government immediately appointed a judicial commission of inquiry, which was led by J.E. Buke the West Indian lawyer resident in Nigeria to investigate into this matter. The reports of the inquiry found Frambo guilty to have collected the money without force because Frambo could not explain how in his own village of over a thousand inhabitants, three men with gun compelled him to sign a resignation against his will without him raising alarm. These conclusions were arrived at, because Frambo could not provide any witness on what happened on the 8th May 1960 in his village. The commission castigated Frambo as a shameless liar who after striking a deal with the KNC/KPP alliance came back and wanted to abrogate it.³¹

If Frambo would have kept his words by maintaining his deal with the KNC/KPP alliance, Southern Cameroon independence and Reunification struggle would have been so complicated in the sense that the KNC/KPP alliance which stood for continuous integration with Nigeria would have had 14 seats while the KNDP would have gone down to 12 seats. The idea of plebiscite would have been far fetched for the United Nations as measure to grant independence to Southern Cameroons, because the KNC/KPP already had a majority to decide on continuous integration with Nigeria. The United Nations would have simply tabled the matter to the Southern Cameroons’ House of Assembly for the representative, of the people to vote between reunification and continuous integration with Nigeria. From these analyses Frambo became the most important political figure who finally determined the organization of the UN conducted plebiscite in February 1961. The inability of Frambo to stand by his words,

²⁹NAB. Pp.7-9.

³⁰ Ibid. P.10.

³¹ NAB. The Frambo Affair, 1980 p.15-16.

caused the UN to conduct a plebiscite in the territory in which the KNDP won, it was thanks to D.M Frambo that a plebiscite was possible in the territory³². Plate 1 below indicates the portrait of Hon. D. M. Frambo of Tali Mamfe.

Plate 1: Dickson Mbi Frambo of Tali



Source: Family album at Tali Mamfe retrieved on 12th August, 2021.

The “Frambo Affair”, as the event was superficially perceived and named at the time, deserves little more than passive attention. During the event, attempts were made by some Members of Parliament (MPs) to reduce the number of elected members of the government party in the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly (SCHA). It occurred at the time when Southern Cameroons was faced with a choice between Nigerian and Cameroun citizenship. Then, there were essentially only two political parties represented in the SCHA, the KNC/KPP Alliance and the KNDP. The former, was the opposition party that opted for Nigerian citizenship while the latter, was the government party that advocated for Cameroun citizenship with some reservations.

³²Interview with Rev. Betang, 75 years, Pastor, Tali, 2015.

At the same time, the SCHA contained a maximum of twenty-six elected members equally divided between the opposition and the government parties. Thus, if the “Frambo Affair” had succeeded, the KNDP government would have collapsed and the movement towards reunification would have failed. The view that separated territories of the former German Kamerun Protectorate be reunited to form a single political entity would become a shadow of itself. The history of Southern Cameroons would not have been the same today. Here in lies the significance of the “Frambo Affair”.³³ See Appendix 2 for more information on D.M. Frambo.

Peter Arrey Aiyuk from 1936-1958.

P.A. Aiyuk was a Member of Parliament from the Mamfe constituency on the KNC ticket of 1953, who was among the parliamentarians who represented the Southern Cameroons in the Nigerian House of Representatives in Lagos. He was one of the politicians who contributed to the granting of the Quasi Regional status to the Southern Cameroon in 1954 following the putting in place of the Lyttelton Constitution. Peter Aiyuk equally added his voice to that of S.A. George to demand for the reunification of Southern Cameroons and French Cameroon. His decision to support reunification was influenced by the fact that his village of Ntenako had a series of problems with Nigerian traders. These traders constantly tormented his people.³⁴ The Igbo tyranny and domination manifested its ugly face in the P.A. Aiyuk village in different ways. One of the ways was the garri crisis which became known as the “Ntenako garri uprising”

It all started in the 1950s, when the Igbos put a dubious purchasing mechanism in place. Since they were the principal buyers of garri in the entire Mamfe Division they developed a habit of artificially increasing the aluminium container cup (better known by the natives as “cigarette cup”) in which garri was measured for sale. As a result, the holding capacity of the container was significantly increased, the container that normally would take 20grams was manipulated to accommodate close to 30 grams of garri. This was not welcomed by the women who were mainly the garri producers and sellers.³⁵

The attitude of the Igbos forced the villagers to rise up in support of their chief and other elites to end these malicious practices since it deprived them of their genuine profit from their garri and other products. It got to a point where the villagers could not tolerate it any longer. In

³³ NAB, File, No. I/b/b/1980, Aa1926/54/ The Frambo Affair, A Paper for discussion presented by Bongfen Chem-Langhee, Department of History university of Yaounde pp.1-2.

³⁴K. Abang.,Southern Cameroon negotiating an existence,2018.Buea,pp.137-138.

³⁵Interview with Nso Alexander, Teacher, age 65, June 2018.

an act of defiance, the Chief of Ntenako village and the elite mobilized their subjects to create a common front to resist the Ibo domination and tyranny. They did this by first hulling their cereal and second plan by refusing to sell garri and other food items to the Igbos. The crisis went on for long until the traders bowed down and started measuring garri and other cereals in the proper containers provided by the villagers. These incidents made P.A Aiyuk to have the impression that the Nigerians in general and Igbos in particular were not good friends or good partners to live with. Thus, he started developing interest in the reunification of Cameroons.³⁶

Plate 2: Chief Peter Aiyuk Arrey of Ntenako



Source: Chief palace Ntenako, 25th September 2020

Another remarkable contribution of P.A. Aiyuk was his participation in the London Constitutional Conference in 1958 alongside other Southern Cameroons politicians such as; E.M.L. Endeley, J.T. Ndze, P.M Kale, N.N Mbile, J.N Foncha and A.N Jua. The resolutions of the conference quickened and accelerated the pace towards Southern Cameroons independence and reunification. It was during this conference that the members of parliament of the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly increased from 13 to 26 giving them the power to deliberate on reunification and to acquire virtual self-government and have a premier.³⁷

³⁶Interview with Tabi Emmanuel Mbi, Teacher, Years 58, 21th June, 2018.

³⁷K. Abang Southern Cameroon negotiating an existence, 2018. Buea, p.138.

Simon Enow Ncha of Kesham (1923-1980)

Simon Enow Ncha was the unsung hero of Mamfe Division and the father of independent candidatures in West Cameroon politics. He was renowned for his political cannibal, Ncha was a political professional in his own right. Humble and hospitable, his personality typified the simplicity of true greatness. Born in 1923, he was educated at the Basel Mission Teachers Training and Theological Centre Nyassoso.³⁸ He attended the Umudike (Umuahia) Agriculture School and the Ibadan Agric Institute. He taught for many years and later worked as an Agric field officer. His public career included the period at the Takamanda Native Authority and the Mamfe Divisional Joint Committee.³⁹ S.E. Ncha remains one who undoubtedly symbolized political righteousness in the then Southern Cameroons. His call into politics came early when at the tender age of 30 the political “dark horse” from Kesham defied the odds to defeat Solomon Ashu Arrey (*Nfor* Arrey) at the October 26, 1953 elections to the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly (SCHA).⁴⁰

As the first elected independent candidate in Southern Cameroons, S. E. Ncha remains one of the unsung heroes in Mamfe Division and Anglophone Cameroon politics.⁴¹ He made sure the voice of “*ova-side Mamfe*” people was loud enough to not be ignored in the rising build-up of Manyu politics. He played a role in West Cameroon politics that only the revelations of history can project and celebrate. He was the leader whose example inspired the political careers of men in the likes of Philip Fon Gorji Dinka, Fon S.A. Angwafor and a host of others.⁴² Ncha’s election as the first independent candidate to the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly was a defining moment in Southern Cameroon’s Westminster-style potential democracy that resonated way beyond 1953.⁴³

Ncha the unknown teacher produced a political page-turner upstaging the KNC apple cart in 1953. He was disappointed by the manipulative nomination procedure that saw his own party, the KNC, side-lining him and fielding the Victoria-based business magnate, Solomon Ashu Arrey. In an unprecedented and revolutionary act of political courage, S.E. Ncha ran as an “independent Candidate” and went on to defeat *Nfor* Arrey and the incumbent Martin Foju who was sponsored by the Kamerun People’s Party (KPP). His victory and humiliation of *Nfor*

³⁸ Interview With Samson Abangma, 74 Years, Buea, 12th December 2016.

³⁹ Ibid.p.141.

⁴⁰ NAB, File No.V3652, Vc/b /1959/1 “Summit Conference, Mamfe, August 10-11,”1959, p.32.

⁴¹ Interview with Ekinneh Agbor Ebai, 56 Year, Communicator, Yaounde September2022.

⁴² Ibid., p.33.

Arrey so angered the KNC that S. E. Ncha was suspended and later expelled from the KNC for six months. He eventually declared for the KPP, but his action blazed the trail for what eventually became a major feature in the Southern Cameroons political landscape.

Political pundits might disagree over what place S. E. Ncha should have in the sand pits of Southern Cameroons history. However, opinion is unanimous that he opened the way in 1953 and set the stage for other independent candidates in Anglophone Cameroon. During the 1959 election, Ambrose Fonge who led the KNDP to victory in 1957 ran as an independent candidate after losing the KNDP nomination in Mamfe South to D. M. Frambo. The KNC fielded N. E. Nkwanyuo. Still in 1959, S. E. Takunchong; an independent candidate gave W. N. O. Effiom (KNDP) and S. A. Arrey (KNC) a run for their money in Mamfe West.⁴⁴

The re-match in 1961 saw Effiom win a landslide against Takunchong (CPNC) and S. E. M. Agbaw (an Independent candidate). During the 1961 elections, Solomon Anyeghamoti Ndefru Angwafor (*Fon* Angwafor) in Ncha's footsteps challenged the marginalization of Mankon within the Metta-dominated KNDP.⁴⁵ He ran as an independent candidate in Upper Ngemba and floored the KNDP's D. A. Nangah and the One Kamerun's (OK) Maximus Chibikom. Martin Fusi, another independent candidate also defeated the KNDP's Isaiah Ambe in Bafut West.⁴⁶

When the KNDP fielded the rising Mbo politician, Nzo Ekang Nghaky in Mamfe South in constituency 1961, the CPNC recruited another Mbo, Ambrose Fonge, as their Trojan horse to counter Nzo. Feeling marginalized, two Banyang candidates, Richard Njie Ayuk of Sumbe and John Enaw, both ran as independent candidates and lost to Nzo.⁴⁷ In Mamfe East, B. T. B. Foretia, another independent candidate was defeated by P. M. Kemcha KNDP. In Mamfe North, C. J. Lekunze independent candidate (later OK) defeated T. Tanchie with Gorji Dinka playing as an accelerator.⁴⁸ Likewise, Z. M. Nkwo, an ethnic Mbo ran as an independent candidate against J. K. N. Tataw KNDP in the February 1965 by-election in Mamfe South.⁴⁹ Standing up to principles was a hallmark of S. E. Ncha's character and his example inspired several other independent candidates who decided to stand up to the marginalization of minorities. The

⁴⁴ George, *Kamerun Unification*, p.16.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.196.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ NAB, File No: 1303, VC/a (1961) 4.5, "Southern Cameroons Plebiscite," 1961, p.12.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.17.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

independent candidacy as a feature of Anglophone politics is undeniably S. E. Ncha's political legacy.

For a man who believed that a place in history mattered more to him than money and power, S. E. Ncha was the power point of the political issues in Mamfe Division. His decision to assert the importance of his minority ethnic "ova-side *Mamfe*" people within the Banyang-dominated Mamfe constituency was informed by his strong personal conviction that all men are created equal; that one man is as good as another and no condition is permanent. Between 1954 when he was expelled from the KNC and 1955 when the KNDP was founded, S. E. Ncha was the lone opposition member in the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly (SCHA) and served in most of the important House committees. His position as the leading Mamfe politician was confirmed during the 1957 election when he led the KPP team in Mamfe against his former party, the KNC and obtained the highest number of popular votes.⁵⁰

Towards the end of 1960, the disquiet in the Southern Cameroons concerning the Plebiscite questions reached serious proportions. A conference of major political parties was arranged in London in November 1960. The Right Hon Iain Macleod had taken over from the Right Hon Lennox-Boyd as Secretary of State in October 1959 and the former therefore took the chair at the conference. It was attended by Field, Foncha, Muna, Endeley, Motomby-Woleta, Kangsen, Ncha, Effiom, Fon Gallega 11, *Nfor* Oben and Kale.⁵¹

His contribution both in the opposition and government was enormous. Within the KPP, he was the Parliamentary leader and second deputy party leader. He represented the KPP in the 1956 Bamenda Constitutional Conference and in the 1956 All-Party Election Drafting Law Committee. Although he won re-election in 1961 under N. N. Mbile's CPNC in the Mamfe northwest constituency, he crossed carpet to the KNDP. After re-unification, he became Section President of the CNU for Manyu, led the Manyu CNU Section delegation to the 1980 Bafoussam Congress and was elected into the Economic and Social Council where he remained until he died in 1980.⁵²

He brought to the administration of West Cameroon the best and brightest and carried out many social experiments with an eye for history. Not all those social experiments worked. The idea of crossing the carpet in the KNDP, even though well intentioned, left a legacy of anger and betrayal among N. N. Mbile and his supporters. His accomplishment built him

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ NAB, File No. Is. 111, Vb/ 1961/3, "Cameroon Commoners Congress," p. 2

⁵² Interview with Besong Bessem Dora, 60 Years, teacher, Buea, June 2019.

goodwill in the heart of those who knew him well. Certainly, Politicians missed his deep-throated laughter and the ease he felt with the younger generation just as he was comfortable with his peers like S. E. Takunchong, the Chief Mbiatem and many others who made his home a meeting place of great fun and discourse.

This goodwill for S. E. Ncha was seen as he sacrificed to keep himself in good care when he fell ill and ultimately in his last days. Manyu and Cameroon lost a great Patriot and Statesman,⁵³ a politician and thinker who wanted to give his best but indeed gave just a fraction of the great gift he was endowed with. The only thing that is truly eternal is a good name. Truth and beauty fade; integrity lasts forever.⁵⁴

Hon. William Ndep Orock Effiom (1950-1990)

WNO Effiom was born on April 3, 1931 in Nsanaragati and he was the 4th and last surviving child of Obi Effiom and Katching Ojong both of blessed memory. A giant gifted man with granite determination, his compelling life story was a profound journey, which took him from the hinterlands of Nsanaragati to Mamfe; where he attended primary school; before venturing into politics that began a public service career spanning over 50 years.⁵⁵ Effiom shaped and witnessed Cameroon history. Every man is born unique. There was only one Effiom who in all honesty and sincerity was not born great. It could not be rightly said either that he had greatness thrust upon him.

From all available records, he worked hard and tirelessly for his greatness, in most cases, defying long odds. Orphaned at a very tender age, the young William Ndep Orock Effiom worked as an assistant to a Nigerian businessman, Anya and put himself through primary school in Mamfe town. Like many of his generation, he proceeded to the Teacher Training College and graduated as a teacher. He was subsequently appointed Headmaster of Nfuni primary school; from where he launched his illustrious political career built upon rock-solid grassroots endorsement.

As party politics took hold in Southern Cameroons, his charm and gift for leadership raised his visibility and public profile, eventually attracting the attention of KNDP party barons who drafted him as their candidate in the 1959 elections into the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly. At the relatively young age of 28, Effiom was virtually a political underdog. In

⁵³Interview with Tambe David, 59 Years, physician, Buea, November 2009.

⁵⁴A. Tangwe and P. Kiawi, "Cameroon History Since 1800" an Advanced Level Approach, June 2009, pp. 270-271.

⁵⁵Interview with, Gladys Oben Effiom, 66 Years, Retired Administrator, Mamfe, 24th October 2018.

Mamfe West, he was up against the KNC candidate; the formidable Victoria-based businessperson, Solomon Ashu Arrey (Chief S.A. Arrey of Ossing) and S.E. Takunchong of Besongabang who defied party discipline to run as an independent candidate, ostensibly because of his name recognition, Effiom,⁵⁶ the political dark horse upstaged the applecart by winning a landslide. The results according to the Southern Cameroons Information Service Press Release No 249 of January 29, 1959, showed Effiom (4,004 votes); SA Arrey (1,702), and S.E. Takunchong (297).⁵⁷ It was his skilfulness as a one-man political power house, that as a freshman Member Parliament, he was appointed Secretary of Public Works and Transport in the first cabinet of Prime Minister J.N Foncha in 1959.⁵⁸ After the December 20, 1961 elections, in which he soundly defeated S.E. Takunchong (CPNC) and S E. M. Agbaw who ran as an independent candidate, Effiom established himself as a political force to reckon with in Mamfe politics. Effiom won 5,969 votes (68.1%) while Takunchong got 2,049 (23.7%) and Agbaw 643 (7.4%).

In another political front, Hon Effiom contributed negatively to the dethronement of some chiefs in the former Southern Cameroons chiefdoms because they never supported reunification. For instance, Hon Effiom and E.T. Egbe spearheaded the replacement of Chief Nyenti Stephen Eyong by Ncho Mbu. Chief Nyenty never supported the reunification of Southern Cameroons with the Republic of Cameroon that the ruling KNDP stood for in 1961.⁵⁹ As a matter of fact, all chiefs that opposed reunification had series of problems in their chiefdoms created by the government or were simply deposed by the same government. Chief Nyenti was the founder of the Cameroon Commoners' Congress (CCC) that stood against the reunification of Southern Cameroons with "La Republique du Cameroun" and the integration of Southern Cameroons with Nigeria. Rather, the party stood for "the third option" which was secession that was applauded by many Southern Cameroonians.⁶⁰

In 1960, a chieftaincy dispute occurred in Kembong village between Chief G.E.B. Obenson who did not support the ideologies of the KNDP and Denis Tabot who stood strongly behind the KNDP. In the face of this, the Hon Effiom manipulated the people to replace Chief

⁵⁶NAB, confidential ref: No. Demo/HQ/B.32, The Gendarmes Brutality in West Cameroon"

From KNDP National Secretariat, 28 December 1962, Hon. Z. A. Abendong visited the area to inspect the scene.

⁵⁷ NAB, File No. Vc/b, 1959/6, "Statement to the Fourth Committee on 24th September, pp.2-5.

⁵⁸W.Nkwi, H. Kah and M. Ndeh, *The Gendarmerie, (In-) Security and Popular Reaction in West Cameroon, Federal Republic of Cameroon 1961–1964. Modern Africa: Politics, History and Society*, 4(2), 117–139, 2016, p.135.

⁵⁹Group Interview with Abunaw Augustine 67years Quarters head, Besong Diana, 65 years, farmer and Agbortar Vincent, 74 years, Retired Teacher. Bachuo-Ntai 15th, March 2019.

⁶⁰Ngoh, *The Untold Story of Cameroon Reunification: 1955-6*, Limbe, Presprint, 2011, p.14.

G.E.B Obenson with Denis Tabot. Hon.W.N.O Effiom who was the speaker of the WCHA at the time spearheaded this dethronement.⁶¹ In the same light, Peter Ashu Nsoesie of Nchang village replaced Chief Moses Ndip Apie as the Chief of Nchang. The latter was a militant of the Cameroon People's National Convention (CPNC), the opposition Party in Southern Cameroons. The former was a staunch supporter of the ruling KNDP. Chief Moses Ndip Apie was dethroned because he did not support reunification.⁶² Since he never toed the KNDP line, he was simply removed from the throne by Hon Effiom when reunification was achieved.⁶³

In January 1962, he was retained in the cabinet as Secretary for Education. The post he held cumulatively with other cabinet portfolios such as Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary, until he left the executive branch of the then West Cameroon government in 1967 following his election as Speaker of the West Cameroon House of Assembly and President of the House of Chiefs; a position he held until the federation was abolished in 1972.⁶⁴

After the West Cameroon government was dissolved in 1972, Effiom returned to Mamfe and was elected Member of Parliament from 1973 until 1990.⁶⁵ In 1988, he faced one of the strongest challenges in his political career during the legislative elections featuring the Khaki list, which he headed and the Green list led by DA Wanobi, whom he had mentored. In the end Effiom fought the political battle of his life and defeated the Green list. It was the last election he would ever contest and although he returned to Parliament where he was elected President of the Finance Committee, his tenure was cut short after Parliament was dissolved and fresh elections called, in the wake of the country's return to multi-party politics. He was appointed Grand Chancellor of the National Orders in July 1990; a position he held until he retired from government and active public service in 2007.⁶⁶

Although loyalty to friends trumped other considerations, when he entered politics, Effiom was a convictional rather than consensus politician. He never aimed to convince his political opponents; he sought to defeat them. While he neither schemed, nor bulldozed his way to seek power for its sake, Effiom had a strong handshake and a long memory; he was an encyclopaedia of events with accurate dates. He remembers all and forgets nothing. He

⁶¹NAB, File No:P.1147/s.3, Id192/1, "Chieftaincy of Mamfe Division West Cameroon," 1962, p.4.

⁶² Group Interview with the Ossing Village Authority (Etok), Representatives, Ayuk Ndip Peter ,74Years, vice Chairman of Ossing Traditional Council, Ayuk Peter Agbor ,56Years, Clerk of the council, Etamanyi Johnson Tanyi , 74 Years, Treasurer and Besong Besong Cecilia, 59 Years, Women 's Chief, Ossing, 6th April 2016.

⁶³M.M. Ndobegang, "Native Administration in Mamfe Division 1916-1961," Maitrise Dissertation, University of Yaounde, 1982, p.48.

⁶⁴ The West Cameroon Gazette, Vol. 2, No 2.

⁶⁵ Interview with Lucy Gladys Oben Effiom,.

⁶⁶ Idem

demonstrated a rare courage and determination to succeed in the rough and tumble of politics, where he had to fight several battles. For someone who believed absolutely in himself, his own abilities and trusted his gut instincts. Effiom was, however, no less trenchant in battle.

When he went to war against his political opponents, his legendary patience gave him enough staying power and he took no prisoners. People whispered that it was not a wise man that will oppose whatever Effiom wanted in politics and there was a long list of political casualties as credible deterrence. He exuded trust and loyalty and his principled leadership and selflessness confounded even his most ardent critics and detractors.

Effiom was a very private family man who shunned publicity, but he was also an unapologetic conservative and traditional iconoclast, who feared no one and was very comfortable in his own skin. He had no time for women liberals; his formidable wife, Lucy Tabe Effiom, who passed away in 1998 after a protracted illness was never allowed to work. After the passing of his first wife, Effiom remarried Gladys Oben Effiom. A man of honor even in death, is survived by eight children: Ria Enaw (USA), Raymond Ayem Effiom (USA), Dr. Charles Effiom (Britain), Dr. Bisong Effiom (Britain) Obi Bernard Effiom (USA), John Okem Effiom (South Africa), William Effiom (Mamfe) Ntui Effiom (Yaoundé).⁶⁷

People who saw Effiom from a distance will never know he was more than just a rigid politician. A great conversationalist with a roaring, infectious laughter, he was a light-hearted man of fulsome humour and a man of many worlds; a universe of politics and public service, all neatly woven by a life of quiet philanthropy and sacrifice for his people which he did without any fanfare or publicity. Having experienced poverty and financial hardship first-hand as a young man, Effiom had a naturally generous and feeling heart. He lived for others. He troubled himself very little about material things. His life also reflected a truth to self-personal philosophy. Where many would have sniffed out dubious means from our corrupt system to enrich himself and family members, Effiom was tenacious in his moral responsibility. He left a worthy footprint on the sands of reunification agenda over time as an inspiring example of fortitude, magnanimity, firmness and dignity.⁶⁸

As a member of the CPDM party where he played the role of wise man, Effiom witnessed some of the checker parts of Cameroon's political history, notably the unresolved Anglophone question. His demise, certainly took away a huge slice of Anglophone history, but

⁶⁷ The West Cameroon Gazette, Vol. 4, No 2.

⁶⁸ Idem

in the wake of socio-political crisis in the North West and South West Regions, Effiom displayed a posture that many have construed as aloofness, from a man whom character, history and providence placed in the firmament of eminence; and he served the nation well. When many had thought he would deploy his political capital and acumen to help resolve the Anglophone problem, Effiom silence was deafening.⁶⁹ His usual taciturnity, iron-cast audacity and moral strength were largely unfelt even as soldiers waged a campaign of terror against his own Manyu people. This was inconsistent with a moral disposition that normally would require him to speak out. By acting otherwise, he placed himself on the wrong side of history.

That notwithstanding, his legacy of personal integrity represented a high value system difficult to re-establish in a country entangled in governance instability and conspicuous moral bankruptcy. Politicians and those seeking leadership positions should see in Effiom life an open book from which to learn the fun and wisdom of selfless patriotism. Indeed, even older generations of politicians like Mengot Victor Arrey-Nkongho, Peter Mafany Musonge, and Ni John Fru Ndi, rather than burn themselves out straddling the political space with younger aspirants, should, like Effiom, cultivate the disposition of statesmanship and maintain an eloquent taciturnity of being kingmakers and oracles of the polity. To Cameroonians who are distraught and overwhelmed by the vicissitude of Cameroon's rudderless as well as those who are plundering the nation's resources to amass needless and scandalous wealth.

Hon Effiom's political life is a lesson in contentment and serenity. The "grandmaster of Manyu politics" has paid his dues. He left the stage a fulfilled man and totally at peace with himself. "There is no cause for birth and death, save to enjoy the interval," wrote George Santayana.⁷⁰ Cameroon has not only missed a great figure but also a symbol of reunification.

Emmanuel Tabi Egbe of Bachuo-Akagbe (1945-1990)

Emmanuel Egbe Tabi was born on April 24th 1929 in Tinto village, Mamfe Division in the Southern Cameroons. His parents were Isaiah Egbe and Emilia Mpey Egbe. His father was a civil servant working with the department of Posts and Telegraph. He attended his primary education in Tali and Bachuo-Akagbe in 1933. He did secondary education in Besongabang. Essosung. Onitsha, Fourah Bay College and then London. Egbe Tabi was from Bachou Akaegbe Mamfe.

⁶⁹ Interview with Soter Agbaw-Ebai, 54 Years Communicator, Yaounde, May 9, 2019.

⁷⁰ Idem..

The first political association that aroused national feelings, in Egbe Tabi was the Cameroon Youth League (C.Y.L), which as matter of fact was the genesis of Cameroon politics. It was founded in Lagos on March 27, 1940 by P. M kale and E.M.L Endeley. Egbe Tabi came in contact with this association some six years later while a student at the Prince Institute, Onitsha. C.Y.L was a common interest association that grouped together the British Cameroon students in and around the environs of Lagos. An intellectual whose speeches were fountains of inspiration for young Cameroonian nationalists after the Second World War, Tabi Egbe met E.J. Alex Taylor, a Nigerian lawyer for support.

The aim of the CYL was to arouse among its members a spirit of national consciousness, seek a recognised status as a separate region for southern Cameroon within Nigeria. It acted as a medium presenting the opinion of Southern Cameroonians to government and local authorities on matters affecting the welfare and destiny of their territory. To effectively sensitize all Cameroonian students with these aims, branches of the C.Y.L were established in almost all the colleges in Nigeria and the Cameroons where there were three or four Cameroonian students.

A branch of the C.Y.L was thus opened at Prince Institute Onitsha, where Egbe Tabi was a student in 1946. He was elected the president of the Onitsha branch of the C.Y.L a position he held until 1949 when his studies ended. In Onitsha, Egbe Tabi invited the guest speakers like the founding fathers of the association, Kale and Endeley to discuss burning issues of the time, which concerned the broad interest of the trust territory. In the course of the conference, they sporadically demanded the unification of Northern and Southern British Cameroons as the first towards for the independence and reunification.⁷¹

One other political association that kindled national consciousness in Egbe Tabi during his secondary school days in Nigeria was the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). The NCNC called for a united national crusade for the liberation of Nigeria and the Cameroons from British colonial rule in the post war years. Nnamdi Azikiwe set up a youth wing of the NCNC in the Eastern Region. The youth wing aimed at creating national consciousness and belonging among Cameroonians and Nigerians towards their liberation from British rule.⁷²

⁷¹ Eyongeta, Brain and Palmer, *A History of Cameroon*. P.29.

⁷² B. Marcus, "Tabi Egbe, a politician". Maitrise Dissertation', University of Yaounde, 1988, p. 14.

There were two categories of membership in the youth wing. First there were the “Zikists”. Zikists were youths who were adherent to Azikiwe’s call for the liberation of Nigeria and Cameroon from British colonial rule and Zikified, referred to the staunch adherents of the liberation call of the Nigeria and the Cameroons even if this meant open confrontation with the British. This category learnt revolutionary songs and recitations aimed at questioning the semi-god of the British. Egbe Tabi was later in 1951 to employ these Zikified ideas when he worked as an account clerk with the CDC. One day the chief accountant gave some tabular work in accounts, a British girl called Keken. She in turn, passed the assignment to one “Pa Wakai”, a Cameroonian.⁷³

When the chief accountant wanted the work, the British girl found out that “Pa. Wakai” had not finished the work. This British girl was furious and insulted this old man. Egbe Tabi who was in the same office with “Pa. Wakai” could not bear this insolence from a white girl who was not even a peer to “Pa. Wakai’s” first child. The white girl was about walking out of the office when Egbe Tabi blocked her way and furiously asked her if “Pa. Wakai” was a white, she would have spoken to him in the manner she had just exhibited without waiting for a response from her. Egbe Tabi went ahead to recite the beatitudes of the youths and psalms 23 which he had learnt as a Zikist.⁷⁴

Both the beatitudes of the youths and psalm 23 were recitations, which portrayed the evils of the colonial administrator like the semi godness of the whites, the heavy burdens of taxation, the lack of basic freedom and so on. Egbe Tabi utterances to the white girl finally reached the hearing of the chief accountant who summoned him and taken into his office. Egbe Tabi narrated how taken had been very rude to a man he very much respected. He doubted whether if Pa. Wakai were a white taken would have been very insolent to him. The chief accountant who was a white expressed regret for all that had happened and later apologised to Papa. Wakai.

The Kamerun Society was founded in 1956. By this year Egbe Tabi was of mature age now to define and appreciate the political future of his country in whatever association he now belonged to.⁷⁵ The 1950s politics in the Southern Cameroons meant integration into Nigeria, reunification with French Cameroon or full independence for the southern Cameroons with a distinct entity. In this light a group of civil servants and those working in the parietal, formed

⁷³ Ibid.p.29.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 45.

⁷⁵ NAB, File No 019, “Southern Cameroons Information Service”, 1961, p. 39.

the Kamerun. Society. This included people like Tamajong Ndumu, Egbe Tabi, victor Anomah Ngu, Gwanula Alexander, Tanyi Mbuagbaw, Jack Kisob, L.Z., Nkwetah, I.J. Epale and Dibue.

Egbe Tabi claimed these civil servants formed the K.S. According to the public service regulations in the Southern Cameroons they prohibited from taking part in active politics. Egbe Tabi was the secretary general of K.S. He drafted petition that the KNDP addressed to the United Nations. In the Mamfe conference of 1959, the various parties in the territory since 1954 were also present. The K.S. came to conclusion that a majority of the existing parties cherished secession from Nigeria but were still undecided about integration with French Cameroon. This is why the K.S. advocated an evolutionary reunification instead of immediate reunification.⁷⁶

The K.S. was regarded as an association of Southern Cameroons intellectuals which provided genuine political counsel to the politicians. It was not linked to any particular ideology in southern Cameroons but acted as a political think-tank of the southern Cameroons politicians. The founding president was Tamajong Ndumu and Egbe Tabi was the secretary general. The K.S. was a forum where southern Cameroons intellectuals exchanged ideas about reunification with their counterparts of French Cameroon. The fact that in 1955 the U.P.C. was banned by Roland Pre in French Cameroon encouraged the party to move towards Southern Cameroons.

Its surviving members fled to the Southern Cameroon and began to Campaign for reunification hence K.S. was formed to examine the case against or for reunification. The K.S. was for reunification because the majority of Mamfe Division in particular and Southern Cameroon in general supported it because Cameroon was a big entity under the German and its computation between the imperial government of Britain and France was an immoral act. Consequently, this group of Southern Cameroonians in which Egbe Tabi belong, wanted a reunification of its pre-1914 borders. One would have felt that Egbe Tabi would have supported the integration with Nigeria because a good part of the Ejagham and Boki to which the Banyang people are culturally linked are found in Nigeria and they shared same culture and tradition but this was not the case.⁷⁷

If people like Egbe Tabi could not be integrated into Nigeria a place where he studied and lived great part of his life, it was because of the dirty record left in the territory by the Igbo's. The Mamfe division was a gateway to and from Nigeria; consequently, the Igbo came to dominate all economic activities in the area. What was particularly disturbing about the

⁷⁶B. Marcus, 'Tabi Egbe, a politician.' p.99.

⁷⁷Ibid, p.55.

Igbo's was the arrogant manner they went about their activities, so much so that Eyongeta and Brain put the problem "Nigeria became synonymous with the Igbo's and joining Nigeria meant selling the Cameroons to the Igbos". Egbe Tabi decided to openly show his continue support for reunification that was master minded by the chief of Bachuo-Ntai, Chief Nchombu⁷⁸. Egbe Tabi and the KNDP, he joined the party following the persistent calls of Foncha who invited Egbe Tabi to visit him in Buea lodge and appealed to him in strong sounded words :

I understand your position and all you have said we may not be able to pay you as much as you now get from the CDC. I know you are doing good work there in the C.D.C in the service of our country. What I am saying is what you will serve our country more and better by joining us (KNDP). Money is not all in this life. There are higher values in life. The country needs your services. Go home and think it all over and let me have your reply in a day or two."⁷⁹

It was this touching appeal from Foncha, which influenced Egbe Tabi to resign from CDC to join KNDP. He was appointed the speaker of West Cameroon House of assembly in October 1961, thereafter, just a few days later he was appointed the Federal Vice Minister of Justice. He was very present at the initiation of the first ideas for independence. Egbe Tabi further continued with the process of the negotiation for a plebiscite to be conducted in 1961. This was done to determine whether Southern Cameroons would achieve independence by joining either the independent Federal Republic of Nigeria or the Republic of Cameroon. Egbe Tabi contributed enormously to the rise of the early pressure groups and political parties like (C.Y.L), NCNC, K. S. Cameroon United Congress (C.U.C.) and Cameroon National Union (CNU).

Adolph Ako Defang Mengot of Mbinjong (1925-1980)

One more great a figure from Manyu Division who contributed enormously in the political history of Cameroon was Adolph Ako- Defang Mengot. He was born on 21 July 1925⁸⁰ at Mbinjong, a village located about 12km from Mamfe along the Kumba-Mamfe highway. The absence of a school in Mbinjong at that time caused the young Mengot to trek three miles daily to attend vernacular school in Bachuo Akagbe.⁸¹ He passed the Standard Six examination and was awarded the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria First School Leaving Certificate. He gained employment as a Probationary Teacher in the Banyang Central School in Tali.⁸²

⁷⁸ Interview with Ayuk Tabot Samuel, 65 Years Communicator, Yaounde, 12th August, 2018.

⁷⁹ B. Macus, "Tabi Egbe, a politician", , p. 98.

⁸⁰ NAB, "Southern Cameroons Information Service," 1961, p.37.

⁸¹ Ibid. p.46.

⁸² Interview with William Orock, 67 Years, Driver , Kumba, 6th November 2018.

After two years as a probationary teacher in Tali, he passed the entrance exam into what was then called the Kake Teachers Training Centre, which later became Government Teachers Training College-Kumba. He graduated five years later with a Higher Elementary Teachers Certificate- Grade Two. With his well-known distended appetite for more education, Mengot registered for a University of London correspondence course to prepare himself for the Teachers Professional Certificate Examination. He passed the exam and was awarded the University of London Teachers Professional Certificate. This higher certificate qualified him to teach in Secondary school. He then became a tutor at Hope Waddell Institute at Calabar in Nigeria and later a senior tutor of Geography at the Government Boys Secondary School at Umuahia in Nigeria.⁸³

The irony is that while Mengot taught and prepared students in secondary schools to enter universities, he himself was not qualified to matriculate into any university. However, he was qualified to sit for the Oxford University Matriculation Examination which he wrote and passed in 1953 and entered Durham University College in Sierra Leone.⁸⁴ With a scholarship from the Cameroon Development Corporation, Mengot was mandated to study Economics instead of Education, which he actually loved. He graduated in 1958 instead of 1957 because he lost one year due to ill health. He graduated with a BA in Economics, He proceeded for further studies to Fourah Bay College, (University of Durham), Freetown, Sierra Leone, after obtaining his Cambridge Certification. Mengot taught History, Mathematics and Accountancy at the Albert Academy, Freetown, Sierra Leone. He returned to Cameroon in June 1956 after obtaining his Bachelor of Arts in Economic Studies (B.A. Econ) Durham. Mengot first taught at the Government Teachers' College in Kumba, before being appointed Provincial Education Officer for what was then the Bamenda and Cameroon Provinces of Southern Cameroons (now North West and South West Regions of the Republic of Cameroon), before being promoted to the Upper Scale Post of Principal of Government Teacher Training College Kumba in 1960.⁸⁵

On October 1, 1961, Dr. Mengot was promoted as the first Cameroonian Director of Education for West Cameroon. In July 1962, he was appointed by Presidential Decree as "Délégué Culturel", for West Cameroon, thus holding the two posts of Director of Education and Cultural Delegate of West Cameroon (1961-1971). A. D. Mengot joined the United Nations International Service in the Specialized Agency of the United Nations Educational, Scientific

⁸³J.T. Tabe, Chieftaincy Institution of Manyu Division (1922-2017): A Crossroads of Traditional and Politics in Cameroon, Ph.D. Thesis in History, University of Yaounde 1, 2015, pp.56-58.

⁸⁴Ibid p.59.

⁸⁵Ibid.

and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on 11th February 1973. As a specialist in curriculum development and evaluation, he was posted to Dakar, Senegal, as the Deputy Director of the UNESCO Regional Office for Education and Culture and UNESCO Liaison Officer with United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Program (WFP) and the African Development Bank (ADB) (1973 – 1979).

On 1st January 1980, the Director General of UNESCO appointed him to the post of UNESCO/UNDP Sub-Regional Education Adviser for Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania, with residence in Dar-es-Salaam (1980-1981). In July, he was transferred to the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, in the division of the Structures and Content of Education (ED/SCM). Mengot took his early retirement from the Cameroon Civil Service and the United Nations International Service, effectively on June 1st, 1982.

A. D. Mengot obtained the following academic qualifications; in 1955 he obtained the Inter. LLB Certificate in London, in 1956, B.A. Econ in Durham, in 1966, M. Ed. Harvard, in 1971, Ed. D from the university of Harvard. He became a member of the Harvard University Chapter of the Phi Delta Kappa Organization in 1967. First Cameroonian Director of Education for West Cameroon, Cultural Delegate of West Cameroon; Deputy Director of the UNESCO Regional Office for Education and Culture; UNESCO Liaison Officer with UNICEF, the World Food Program (WFP) and the African Development Bank (ADB); UNESCO/UNDP Sub-Regional Education Adviser for Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Returning to Cameroon in June 1956 after obtaining his Bachelor of Arts in Economic Studies (B.A. Econ) Durham, Dr. Mengot first taught at the Government Teachers' College in Kumba, before being appointed Provincial Education Officer for what were the Bamenda and Cameroon Provinces of Southern Cameroons, (now North West and South West Provinces of the United Republic of Cameroon), before being promoted to the upper scale post of Principal of Government Teacher Training College Kumba in 1960. He used his educational prowess to mobilise and educate the Southern Cameroons masses on the evil colonial rule. He also used his knowledge to inform the people of his village, Mbinjong on the political activities that was going on in the territory. He militated in the KNDP political party which propagated the idea of reunification. His village, Mbinjong voted for KNDP which stood for reunification during the plebiscite of 1961.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ J.T, Chieftaincy Institution of Manyu (1922-2017), pp. 58-59.

Dr. Mengot took his early retirement from the Cameroon Civil Service and the United Nations International Service, effective 1st June 1982. Dr. Mengot holds the following academic qualifications: 1. The Inter. LLB Certificate 1955, London. 2. B.A. Econ. Durham (1956) 3. M. Ed. Harvard (1966) 4. Ed. D Harvard (1971) He became a member of the Harvard University Chapter of the Phi Delta Kappa Organization in 1966 and Inter-LLB in Law, and a Regent's Institute Diploma in Journalism panacea for success.⁸⁷

After looking at the individual contributions of Mamfe actors to the reunification of Cameroon, it is now time to examine the collective contributions starting with the Improvement Union, the population and the chiefs

Mamfe Improvement Union

The Mamfe Improvement Union was an organisation of the entire Mamfe Division comprising of indigenes from all parts of the division, which comprised Mamfe, Ejagham and Bangwa. The Union was aimed at saving the present for succeeding generations from the source of disunity and its effects. It was out to foster the spirit of tolerance, cooperation and mutual understanding among the respective ethnic groups in order to ensure future mutual understanding and inter-tribal harmony. It was also to fight in conjunction with other political forces emancipation, social welfare and economic security for the Cameroons in general and the Mamfe Division in particular. The reason of discussing the union in the study is for us to examine the memorandum, which was tabled to the United Nations by natives through the United Nations Visiting Mission to Cameroon on ills of the British colonial administration in the territory. It was particularly referred to the political, economic, social and educational problems the division was facing especially to assert their identity. They wanted to attract international sympathy and support for their political, Social and economic reforms.

Political Advancement

National Identity: The introduction of the Macpherson Constitution in Nigeria from January 1952, had not only made the meaning of the word "Trusteeship" dubious but had gone a long way to justify the fears of the Cameroonians that the integration of the Northern and Southern Sections of the Cameroons with the Northern and Eastern Regions of Nigeria respectively was a deliberate attempt to deprive the territory of its national identity contrary to the provision laid down by the United Nations Organisation in the administration of the Trust

⁸⁷ Ibid.p.60

Territories. This is highly objectionable as it is contrary to the basis of the administration of the Territory in the International Constitutional law.⁸⁸

The Thirteen Members from the Cameroons in the Eastern House of Assembly consisting of eighty members and the six out the 148 members in the House of Representatives cannot democratically produce any effective results during the term of their offices without the sympathy of the Nigerian legislation. While it is not possible to assess the extent of such sympathy this unwholesome integration provided no room for political progress within the Trust Territory.

Further, the political structure of the Cameroons was made more ridiculous by the retention of a commissioner within the framework of the Eastern Region of Nigeria. Whereas the Northern and Western Regions were managed by Lieutenant Governors only, and it could therefore be said that the commissioner of the Cameroons occupied a redundant position in the Eastern region. As a result of these differences, it was rather very difficult to assess the political progress of the country and it was also impossible to implement important recommendations of the last mission in respect of the Territory. This unfortunate position gave rise to vague partnership based on glaring inequality between the Trust Territory and the Colony of Lagos and Protectorate of Nigeria.⁸⁹

As pointed out by the Honourable Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, President of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons in his presidential address at the Fourth Annual Convention held in Lagos in 1952, this integration was not conducive to the political development of the Cameroons and in effect the Macpherson Constitution postponed the independence of the Cameroons. In view of the above unsatisfactory conditions, in conjunction with other Cameroons national organisation, the members of the Mamfe Improvement Union demanded National Identity which implies; Absolute autonomy for the Northern and Southern Sections of Cameroons under the United Kingdom Trusteeship, The creation of the office of a Lieutenant Governor subject only to the Governor of Nigeria and through him to the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations, Formation of a joint consultative council between the British and French sections of the Cameroons and Ultimate unification of the two politically demarcated Territories.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ NAB, File No. 4134/1/79, Memorandum from Mamfe Improvement Union to the Visiting Mission, 1952, p.3

⁸⁹ Ibid, p.3.

⁹⁰ Ibid

Local Government Reforms; It is a matter for regret that a “Memorandum on Local Government Policy in the Eastern Provinces”, adopted by the Eastern House of Assembly on 16th July, 1949, had no implementation in the Cameroons even though it was an admitted fact that Native Administrations continued to operate even though it had outlived its usefulness.⁹¹

Frontier Restriction; The question of unification is a burning question because the union regards the separation of the Mbo and Bangwa people from their kith and kin in the section under Section under French Trusteeship as the greatest humiliation and immediate steps must be taken to right the situation by removing the frontier problems and putting an end to the passport difficulties.

Social Advancement; the Union observed with regret that though the lack of social amenities constituted a common problem in the entire Trust Territory, the shortage was more acute in the Mamfe Division. This statement might seem sentimental. The first visiting mission in 1949 observed that they were inadequate medical and health facilities in the Trust Territory but on analysis admitted that some areas were being adequately served. The absence of a definite statement on Mamfe due to their inability to tour the Division for a reason best known to the Administering Authority was embarrassing, as it should have served to establish the accuracy of the above statement.⁹²

Nevertheless, to expect a 60-bed old hospital with six nurses, one Doctor and a pharmacist to satisfy the need of over 200,000 people in a division where diseases like leprosy, dysentery, yaws and hyenas were rampant and the outbreak of small-pox, chicken-pox and measles claimed the lives of hundreds annually was an impossibility. Consequently, in the early part of 1950 it was only possible to secure relief from a violent epidemic of small-pox in the Ejagham, Takamanda and other areas after several villages had been rendered desolated and until recently outbreaks of dysentery, yaws and measles were still common in several areas of the district.

It is necessary to emphasise on the essence of education in the life of an underdeveloped people, but up till 1950s the indifferent nature of the Administering Authority in this aspect of the social welfare was rather disturbing. It was revealing to state that throughout the Division there was only one school run by the Government and this only ran up to Standard Six. The absence of any device of propaganda by the Government to impress upon the people the value

⁹¹ NAB, File No. 4134/1/79, Memorandum from Mamfe Improvement Union, p.5.

⁹² Ibid. p.2.

of education and the poverty of the majority of the natives makes patronage of the few schools available almost difficult by those in the rural areas. One would therefore expect such rural areas to be provided with schools to facilitate difficulties but the efforts being made on this line are almost negligible.⁹³

It could be argued that during such epidemic, aid was needed through medical authorities but the Union could not see the possibility of timely assistance where there was an equally dire need for trunk and feeder roads which would permit the use of mobile clinics and effective organisation of medical field units. Further the number of trained men capable of handling such serious outbreaks was appallingly small. This was exemplified from the engagements of District Officers and Reverend Fathers as vaccinators during the said period caused a serious outbreaks of small-pox in Ekwe area in 1950 when the few locally trained Sanitary Inspectors faced with difficulty of transport were, unable to cope with the situation.

With this background, and in order to guard against further outbreaks of such epidemics, reduce the number of leprosy-ridden members of the community particularly in the Banyang and Ejagham clans, the union pleaded with the mission to impress upon the Administering Authority the necessity of providing the following: at least three more hospitals to serve large centres like Bangwa, Assumbo and Ejagham. A dispensary at each court area. Leprosy settlement Mobile clinics.⁹⁴

1. Maternity Homes, Health and Sanitary Inspectors to ensure the Social welfare of the people and the observation of sanitation as steps towards the establishment of healthy homes and surroundings in rural areas.
2. Good water supply to replace water from the river which until today still serves the Mamfe town in spite of its obvious effects of the health of the inhabitants.

Economic Advancement; the underlying factor of the economic problems of Mamfe Division has been that since the British administration of the Cameroons over thirty-eight years. little effort was made to explore the economic accessibility of the Division, the result being an unplanned economic system and lack of development scheme for the welfare of the people. It was therefore a surprise to many people that under the Ten Year Development plan Mamfe came in only under one item “The Building of a house for thee Forest Officer” which was completed in 1950. The found that the British were not interested to develop the territory this

⁹³Interview with Eben Calvin .58 Years, Teacher, 14th July 2017.

⁹⁴ Interview with, Abi Charles, 58 Years Secretary General of IRIC, Yaounde, 10th March 2022.

confirmed in the way they neglected the area. The economic development policy of the territory pushed the improvement unions to add their voices with those of others to demand for secession from Nigeria and reunification.⁹⁵

Transport and Communication; good communication and transport facilities were factors to be reckoned with if Mamfe products like cocoa, palm kernels, palm produce grown in the interior were to be utilised. The roads leading to Mamfe were trunk roads, from Enugu to Mamfe, Mamfe to Kumba and Bamenda respectively the unions strongly demanded the opening up of other feeder roads into Ekwe, Obang, Mbo, Takamanda, Asumbo and Bangwa areas to facilitate trade and other developments. But this was not done and it infuriated the natives. This caused them to start thinking of leaving Nigeria to join Republic of Cameroon.

The Mamfe Improvement Union emphasised the fact that there was breaking of the spine, encroachment on the economic progress of the people. Commerce was mostly if not wholly the strict monopoly of foreign companies like the United Africa Company(U.A.C.) Ltd, in the particular case of the Mamfe Division. The plight of the inhabitants could be best be imagined than described where world exporters have always referred indigenous matters to the company at any time the small merchants attempted to import goods direct. The U.A.C. Ltd sold many of these commodities to the small merchants at more than hundred per cent profit allowing little or no profit for them.⁹⁶

The U.A.C. restricted the sale of imported commodities like kerosene, soap and salt, , only to a few middle men at prices almost double what natives could have offered, had they been allowed to make direct purchases from the main shop. As a scale monopolistic concern in the Division carrying out large import and export trade the firm made an unscrupulous U.A.C in the purchases of cocoa and palm kernels from the sellers even though the prices were dictated by the buyers. Sometimes, a trader may remain over a week waiting for he produce to be bought.⁹⁷

Free Trade and land problems; The union demanded that, if the United Nations Organisation had the interest of the people of the Trust Territory at heart, that efforts should be made to call upon the Administrative Authority to allow the people use international markets more especially among the member nations of the United Nations Organisation. As

⁹⁵ NAB, File No. 4134/1/79, Memorandum from Mamfe Improvement Union to the Visiting Mission, 1952, p.12.

⁹⁶ NAB, File No.4134/79.

⁹⁷ Ibid. p.78.

concerned the Besongabang Aerodrome, the Union did make any legal action leading to the acquisition of the land on which present aerodrome was built. According to the 1947 Report “The system of land tenure was within the recognised limit of a community with each family cultivating its own separate holding. If there was waste land at the disposal of the community, these holdings could be extended or fresh holdings made”⁹⁸. It was therefore clear that land was held on communal basis and consequently the Union demanded an adequate compensation of the said aerodrome. As usual it was never applied. It helped to frustrate the Besongabang inhabitants the more and vowed not to collaborate with British and Nigeria.⁹⁹

It is necessary to emphasise the essence of education in the life of an underdeveloped people but up till 1950s the indifferent nature of the Administering Authority in this aspect of the social welfare was rather disturbing. It was revealing to state that throughout the Division there was only one school run by the Government and this only ran up to Standard Six. The absence of any device of propaganda by the Government to impress upon the people the value of education and the poverty of the majority of the natives makes patronage of the few schools available almost difficult by those in the rural areas. One would therefore expect such rural areas to be provided with schools to facilitate difficulties but the efforts being made on this line are almost negligible.

After a close look at the role played by the Improvement Union in political developments of Southern Cameroons it would be necessary for us to equally examine the role played by the population in fostering the political activities of the territory. They made a formidable part in pushing on Southern Cameroons independence process.

The role played by by Mamfe/Manyu Masses/population in Unification Process

The masses refers to a large general group of regular folks- the common people of a society. The masses are everybody else people use this term when they need to speak generally about the majority. Although it often refers to the lower class. To win an election, a politician must appeal to the masses or population Participating and voting is a fundamental right of every citizen in the democratic system of a nation. It is a chance for the citizens of a country to have a say in the people who represent them or an issue that impacts them. Voting and participating in election is one of the responsibilities of citizens all over the world. In the United States, the

⁹⁸ NAB. File No. 6589/128/RI 1949/Mamfe Aerodrome, correspondence Report 1949

⁹⁹ Interview with, Agbor Carl Enow, 76 Years, Farmer, Besongabang, 14th November, 2021.

voting process is fairly straightforward. First, an eligible citizen registers to vote or to be voted.¹⁰⁰

The contribution made by the grassroots population of Mamfe division before, during and after the reunification of Southern Cameroon with the Republic of Cameroon was enormous. This was because the masses contributed both positive and negative in the reunification process. The indigenous population of Mamfe/Manyu division massively attended the Mamfe Plebiscite Conference of August 11th 1959. Under the banner of divisional councils and the Cameroons Union of students, the masses advocated a union between Southern Cameroons with the Republic of Cameroon. This opinion was prompted because during the mandate period, there was mass influx of Nigerians especially the Igbos into Southern Cameroons. They came in as plantation workers, police officers, teachers, managers and traders. These Nigerians were rude and arrogant and considered themselves as the second colonial masters of Southern Cameroons. They introduced the “Touch and buy Policy” where the natives were forced to buy goods just by merely asking the price or touching it. They charged high prices, seized native women and disrespected native cultures. These exploitive and mischievous attitudes of the Igbos led to Igbo phobia (fear and hatred for the Igbos) thereby forcing masses to nurse hatred for Nigeria as a whole and to completely detach themselves from Nigeria by voting in favour of reunification with the Republic of Cameroon.¹⁰¹

The UN in determining the qualification of voters for the plebiscite during the Mamfe Plebiscite Conference, the people of Mamfe division mounted pressure on the UN to grant a number of issues for the interest of all Southern Cameroonians. They ensured that only persons born in the British Cameroons or those whose parents were born there and who were over the age of 21 were qualified to vote. Even though they never succeeded to reach a consensus on either the alternatives of the questions or the qualifications for voting at the Mamfe Plebiscite Conference, it was later implemented at a subsequent conference in New York. When KNDP and KNC-KPP delegates once more returned to the UN and after heated debates they finally agreed in October 1959 on the plebiscite questions.¹⁰²

The attended or participated in Campaigns rallies organized by the politicians. They rallies were aimed at selling their political manifestos. The rallies was attended by people from all works of life living in Mamfe and the villages. Some of them even wrote petitions against

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.fda.gov>.

¹⁰² Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, P Limbe, ,Presbook, 1996, p. 214,

Nigerian injustice and attended constitutional conferences during which they negotiated in favour or rejected such constitutional reforms.

The population participate in many political activities in the country such as campaigning for or against candidate in partisan elections, some of them Assistant Registration Officers, the qualification was that one would have completed Standard VI education. One person who fulfilled this requirement was Ojong Daniel who was sent to in Kembong village, Mamfe West to carry out voter registration.¹⁰³ Natives were also involved in the distributing of campaign materials and voter cards, and organizing or managing political rallies or meetings. The turnout indicates the good percent of eligible voters who actually cast their votes in the plebiscite day.¹⁰⁴

Still examining the role played by masses during the reunification, some of them were involved in the distribution of voter's cards and electoral materials. They had to crisscross the enclave areas of the division like Oban, Akak, Bakoko, Akwaya and Bache. These were some of the places that the UN Officials could not reached due to the problem of inaccessibility and insecurity. Some masses were made Polling Station Agents in some of those remote areas. At the end of the day they ensure that the plebiscite and reunification process were carried out under the atmosphere of peace and tranquillity.¹⁰⁵

On the other hand, The Ejagham-Ekoi of Cameroon and the riverside tribes around the Rio Del Rey area were against the reunification agenda due to their cultural attachment to Nigeria.. In the face of this, they campaigned seriously against reunification agreement; they stood firmly for the integration of Southern Cameroons with Nigeria. To them integration of Southern Cameroons with Nigeria was a natural reunion as the people of Southern Cameroons and Nigeria were people of the same ancestral origin. They argued that integration of Southern Cameroons with Nigeria it would have made them to feel at home and open the way for cultural, economic and even political cooperation. Historically British Cameroons was ruled as part of Nigeria for a long time.¹⁰⁶

Chiefs of Mamfe as Partners in the Unification

As we cannot treat the Mamfe chiefs in isolation, it is necessary to jointly look at their contributions in the decolonization process in the Southern Cameroons in its entirety. The

¹⁰³ Interview with, Enow Felix Achere, 74 Years, Nchang, 14th September 2020.

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.fda.gov>

¹⁰⁵ Interview with John Tazafor, 73 Years, Retired History Teacher, Buea, January 12th 2017.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. P.220.

British Colonial policy of Indirect Rule gave exceptional recognition and importance to traditional authorities in the Southern Cameroons. Through the native administration, the Chiefs played dominant roles in local government. Chiefs were sensitized and they manifested a keen interest in community leadership. Village chiefs possessed both the executive, legislative and judicial powers. They were instrumental in the success of the Native Authorities. They were the spiritual leaders and custodians of the traditions of their subjects. Before the 1950s, the chiefs had not yet identified themselves as an influential group that, with the formation of a recognized association, could influence the politics and development of the Southern Cameroons.

The involvement of chiefs in politics bedevilled the chieftaincy institution in Manyu and led to the dwindling influence of traditional authority in the division. During the pre and the post-independence eras, some traditional rulers never depended on the colonial administration and elected representatives respectively in order to exercise their authority. But their involvement in politics made them to lose their dignity in the sight of their own subjects who belonged to different sides of the political divide. Political parties globally undermined the authority of traditional rulers in an effort to canvas for votes, many upheavals surrounding chieftaincies in Manyu have political undertones.

The horrors in mind were the Nchang and Besengabang crises, which were in a state of unrest due to the interference of Politicians in the chieftaincy affairs. These conflicts brought retardation in development and drove investors away from the division. Traditional rulers would do Manyu a great service if they kept themselves out of partisan politics. As part of government effort to bring good governance to the doorsteps of the people, factors that have caused for the declining influence of traditional authorities such as their involvement in party politics should be discarded.¹⁰⁷ Southern Cameroons under the British was administered as an integral part of Nigeria. As such, she was bound to be affected by the political and Constitutional Changes in that country after the Second World War. During the war, the British preached the “gospel” of the good aspects of democracy of freedom which would able the colonial people to fight against the return of Germany to their territory.¹⁰⁸

One of the most significant factors that promoted decolonisation in Cameroon was the Atlantic Charter of 1941. This Charter was drawn up at the end of the Atlantic Conference held by the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill and the United States President, F. D

¹⁰⁷ Interview with, Taku Mbi Daniel, 71 Years, Chief of Eyangchang, Eyanchang, 3rd March 2019.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

Roosevelt off the coast of Newfoundland.¹⁰⁹ It contained a declaration that was endorsed by all the nations fighting against the Axis Powers. This declaration stressed on the “rights of all people to choose the forms of government under which they will live”.¹¹⁰ The Charter condemned colonialism in all its forms. In the face of this, the chiefs of Mamfe Division and those of Southern Cameroons seized the opportunity to fight for self-government from Britain.

It is in this context that, the struggle for independence in the Southern Cameroons was spearheaded by Western Educated elites, supported by traditional rulers whose influence reduced from the 1950s.¹¹¹ Prominent among traditional rulers of Manyu Division were Chief S. A. Arrey of Ossing, Chief M. M. Besong of Mamfe, Chief Bate Atcha of Okoyong, S. E. Oben of Mbinda, Chief P.A. Fongang of Tabay, Chief Nso Enow of Mfuni, Chief Mathias Njesam of Sumbe, T.H. Forikocha of Bangwa and Chief S. E. Nyenti of Bachuo Ntai.¹¹² The involvement of these chiefs in politics was clearly reflected in their activities during the plebiscite of 1961 and other political consultations in Southern Cameroons.

From the early 1940s, social changes in the Southern Cameroons resulted in the emergence of a new middle class that included teachers, clerks, laymen and a host of others. They sought to seize the reign of power not only from the British, but also from the traditional authorities. The constitution of local government through the NAs had effectively left this new educated elites in the cold. As the demands of modern governance in the NAs increased and also became complex, the *nfors* were chosen on the basis legitimacy and not on their ability to run the bureaucratic structures of local government. The political educated elites were therefore determined to take over the local administration from the chiefs.

The new demands of local government necessitated an increasing role for the educated who sought to capture the power base of the *nfor*. They had either to replace the *nfor* as administrators at the local level or associate them with their political goals in order to penetrate their power base. Whether radical or conservative, all the emerging politicians recognized the traditional powers of the *nfors*. In 1946, Obafemi Awolowo intimated that chieftaincy had become: “An incalculable sentimental value for the Masses in Western and Northern Nigeria.

¹⁰⁹J.Watson, *Success in Twentieth Century World Affairs*, London, John Murray, 1981, p.151.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Chem- Langhëë, "The Kamerun Plebiscites 1959-1961, p.5.

¹¹² Interview with Bernard Ayuk, Retired Teacher, 70 Years, Mamfe , 20th June 2018.

This being so, it is imperative as a matter of practical politics that we use most effective means at hand for organizing masses for rapid political development".¹¹³

However, Sklar¹¹⁴ postulates that many chiefs were reluctant in these nationalist days to engage in partisan politics. Open partisanship was thought to be an abuse of traditional authority. Nevertheless, most enlightened chiefs realized that a democratic era was at hand. They preferred to reach an agreement with the emerging elites who were also trusted sons of their communities. This was in order to avoid the indignities of disregard by unpredictable politicians who were capable of being less sympathetic to chiefs they had adhered to in the past.

Consequently, Chiefs readily attached their interests to those of the rising class. All these came with the introduction of representative government in 1951. Following a number of constitutional reforms in trying to meet up with the new political climate, the *nfor*s were placed in the hands of the politicians. Initially, the mobilization of the *nfor* before 1955 was without any problem. Everyone, be it politicians, traditional rulers and the masses were all behind one goal, a clearer future relation for Southern Cameroons and Nigeria. Amaazee¹¹⁵ points out that at this point in time, all the chiefs were behind Dr. Endeley given that he was the one who led Southern Cameroons out of Eastern Nigeria followed by the creation of a separate legislature and accord of a quasi-regional status. With the change of position by Dr. Endeley and the formation of the KNDP by Foncha, the chiefs of Southern Cameroons were divided in their support for him and the KNC on the one hand and Foncha and the KNDP on the other.¹¹⁶

When the Mandate system began in 1922, the Clifford Constitution was applied to Southern Cameroons. This constitution gave the territory one seat in the Central Legislature in Lagos which was occupied by Chief Manga Williams of Victoria. In 1946, that constitution was replaced by the Richard's Constitution that gave the territory two seats in the Regional Legislature in Enugu while at the same time suppressing the single seat in the Central Legislature contained in the Clifford Constitution. Nigeria was now divided into three regions; the Northern, Western and Eastern. Each region had a House of Assembly composed of official and unofficial members.

¹¹³ O. Awolowo, *Path to Nigerian Freedom*, London, Faber and Faber, 1947, p.66.

¹¹⁴ R.L.Sklar, *Nigeria Political Parties: Power in an Emerging African Nation*, New York, Publishers International, 1983, p.102.

¹¹⁵ Amaazee, *Traditional Rulers (Chiefs) and Politics*, p.42.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

The official members of the house were appointed by the government that had the power and prerogative to designate five or more such members in the region. The constitution also provided for a Central Legislative Council composed of twenty official members and twenty-nine unofficial members. The constitution reflected Governor Richard's attempt to frustrate the forces of progress in Nigeria and the Southern Cameroons as it fell short of providing a smooth political progress through equal representation.¹¹⁷

To Mamfe chiefs and other in the Southern Cameroonians, the Richards constitution was a backward step because it made the territory to lose its lone representation in the central legislature in Lagos. Again, Southern Cameroons was given no regional government, but only two representations in the Eastern House of Assembly in the person of Chief Manga Williams of Victoria and Fon Galega II of Bali. Attempts by Southern Cameroon nationalists to replace Chief Manga Williams at the Central Legislature were ignored by the British administration. The Campaign against the Richard's constitution led to Nigerian and Cameroonian nationalists to England. Cameroon rallied to the cause of a separate region from Nigeria under the leadership of P. M. Kale.¹¹⁸

While in London Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (Zik) strongly criticised the provisions of the Richard's constitution, P. M. Kale presented a memorandum in which he highlighted that the division of Cameroon into two had separated families making them strangers to each other. He insisted that Northern and Southern Cameroons were large enough to be self- government. P. M. Kale further requested that land claimed in Victoria and Kumba (Bakweri land especially) should be returned to the owners. He stated that no 'Bakweriman' was a member of the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) Board and that only two per cent of Cameroonians leaving primary school had chances to go to college, and mostly in Nigeria.¹¹⁹

In March 1949, the unions of Southern Cameroonians in Lagos, Nigeria, such as the Mamfe Improvement Union, the Cameroon Youth League (CYL), the Bamenda Improvement Association and the Bakweri Union petitioned the Governor for a separate Southern Cameroons with its own assembly under a chief commissioner and directly responsible to the Trusteeship Council.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷Ngoh. *Constitutional Development in Southern Cameroons, 1947-1961*, Yaounde, 1967, p.234.

¹¹⁸Kale, *Political Evolution*, p.22.

¹¹⁹NAB, File No A1918/24, "Natives in British Sphere," 1924, p.3.

¹²⁰NAB, File No. Vc/b/1959/21, "Petitions and Complaints," 1959, p.7.

The issue of reunification started coming up in earnest in May 1949 when Dr. Endeley sponsored a meeting of political groups from both British and French Cameroons in Chief Mukete's house in Kumba. There it was agreed that both Cameroons should work steadfastly for a unified Cameroon after each must have separately achieved independence. In July 1949 at the Eastern Regional Conference held in Enugu, the Southern Cameroons' proposal for separation was examined.¹²¹ After much debate, it was agreed that the Cameroons and Bamenda provinces be represented in the Central Executive and the Regional House of Assembly. It was assumed this would end the demand for a separate region.

This proposal was carried to the Ibadan Conference of January 1950 by Endeley who led a two-man delegation of the Cameroon National Federation (CNF). There in Ibadan the demand of the Eastern and Northern Regional Conference were accepted. The Southern Cameroonians argued and complained that their interests would be suppressed by Igbo domination in the Eastern Regional Assembly.¹²² This argument did not change the position of the Secretary of State for Colonies who forced the British to increase the seats of Southern Cameroons in the House of Assembly in Enugu from 2 to 13 in 1952 when a new Constitution was introduced. Southern Cameroons was to have one ministerial position out of the four from the Eastern Region in the Council of Ministers. These proposals were made under the new constitution known as the Macpherson Constitution. The Constitution gave room for the first joint elections to be conducted in Nigeria and the Cameroons.

To be more precise, the British Southern Cameroons was represented by 13 elected members out of the 80 in the Eastern Regional House of Assembly. In implementing the new constitution, British Southern Cameroons was carved into 6 electoral districts: Kumba, Mamfe, Bamenda, Nkambe, Wum and Victoria. Of the six divisions, Bamenda had three seats in the Regional Assembly while others had two each. Except in the Federal Assembly that Bamenda had 2 seats, the rest of the divisions had one each.¹²³ All the Southern Cameroonians who won seats in their various divisions were on the ticket of the National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroon, (NCNC).

At the end of the elections, the following representatives were produced: V.T. Lanjo, S.T. Muna and J. N. Foncha represented Bamenda, J. T. Ndze and A. N. Ngala represented

¹²¹National Archives Calabar (NAC) File No. 1/4/197, "Minutes of the Proceedings of the Eastern Regional Conference on Constitution Revision," 1969, pp.10-13.

¹²²NAB, File No. Vc/b/1959/21 "Petitions and Complaints," 1959, p.8.

¹²³Ibid.p.12

Nkambe. Reverend J. C. Kangsen and S.C. Nji represented Wum, S. A. George and M. N. Foju represented Mamfe, N. N. Mbile and R. N. Charley represented Kumba and Dr. E. M.L. Endeley and Motomby Woleta represented Victoria.¹²⁴ Dr. Endeley was appointed Minister of Labour in the Executive Council in Lagos and S.T. Muna became Minister of Works in the Eastern Regional Executive in Enugu.¹²⁵

The inhabitants of Southern Cameroons that were administered as part of the Eastern Region, were invariably drawn into the mainstream of Nigerian politics. The marriage however appeared to be one of convenience as politicians like Foncha, S.A George and S.T. Muna began to express their dislike for the connection with Nigeria. They wanted to project the image of Southern Cameroons, S.A. George complained about the urgent need for development projects and about the British neglect of the territory. But before the thirteen representatives could have enough time to get their political ideas across to the colonial administration, especially on the defects of the Macpherson Constitution, a serious crisis occurred in the Eastern Regional House of Assembly in Enugu.

The Eastern Regional Crisis of 1953 and Developments in the Southern Cameroons

The crisis in the Eastern Regional House of Assembly was provoked by a conflict within the ruling NCNC. It concerned a challenge to Azikiwe leadership of the party. This crisis caused a serious rift within the party; it led to the resignation of government ministers, paralysed the legislature led to the dissolution of the Eastern House of Assembly and to the eventual collapse of the Macpherson Constitution. It started following a sharp division between ministers from the Eastern Region who were both in the Eastern and Central Houses of Assembly. Some felt that the new constitution should be given a trial period, while others thought it ought to be outrightly rejected.

The Azikiwe group found many lacunas in the new constitution.¹²⁶ Besides, a conflict developed between Azikiwe, the President and Eyo Ita the Vice President of the NCNC and Leader of Government Business in the Eastern Region. Eyo Ita refused to put in place radical constitutional changes and to reshuffle the cabinet on the request of the party's hierarchy. Azikiwe and his followers then masterminded the collapse of his government. Some of the Nigerian ministers decided to stay put, but S.T. Muna, whose view reflected those of Southern Cameroonians on the deficiencies in the constitution, decided to quit. He was immediately

¹²⁴Chem- Langhëë, "The Kamerun Plebiscites" 1959-1961, p.94.

¹²⁵Ngoh, Cameroon 1884-1985 A Hundred Years of History, 1988, P.190.

¹²⁶Ibid, p.192.

dismissed by Eyo Ita as minister in the Eastern Region. All attempts to have him reinstated failed when the Southern Cameroons request was defeated by a vote of 45 to 32.¹²⁷ This motion caused much frustration among Southern Cameroonians in the Assembly. Endeley, Nze, Kangsen, and S.A. George, who were in Lagos held a meeting and came out with the option to steer clear of Nigerian politics. They thus opted for a policy of “Benevolent Neutrality”.

They decided to boycott the Eastern House and not to participate in any further elections in Nigeria. They further called on all other Cameroonians to do the same. Meanwhile, Mbile, Ndi, R.N. Charley and Motomby Woleta rejected the policy of Benevolent Neutrality. Both the NCNC and Action Group (AG) of Nigeria supported the demand Southern Cameroons for a separate regional status, legislature and budgetary autonomy. In May 1953, the Lieutenant Governor of the Eastern Region dissolved the Eastern House of Assembly. The benevolent bloc then addressed a message to the people of Southern Cameroons, explaining their boycott of the Nigerian assembly and convening a conference in Mamfe from the 22nd to 24th May 1953.¹²⁸ All villages, towns, native authorities, chiefs and tribal organizations sent two representatives each to this conference.¹²⁹

At the end of the Mamfe conference, a number of decisions were arrived at, first that the two major political pressure groups in the Southern Cameroons at the time (Kamerun United National Congress or KUNC led by R.K. Dibongue and Cameroon National Federation or CNF led by E .M.L. Endeley) should unite.¹³⁰ The outcome was the creation of the Kamerun National Congress (KNC) in 1953. This was the first indigenous political party in British Cameroon.¹³¹ The second major outcome of the Mamfe conference was a splendid understanding between the Native authorities and the Western educated.

Still concerning the resolutions of the Mamfe conference, Southern Cameroonians in one Voice wrote a petition to the Secretary of State for Colonies on May 28, 1953 demanding the creation of a separate and autonomous status for the Trust Territory of Southern Cameroons. Dr. Endeley left Lagos for London where he submitted the petition to the Secretary of State for Colonies, Lord Oliver Lyttelton.¹³² Finally, the conference gave the Southern Cameroons traditional rulers an opportunity to meet and discuss the matters concerning them as a unified

¹²⁷Ibid. p.193.

¹²⁸Kale, *Political Evolution in the Cameroons*, pp.40-42.

¹²⁹Ibid. p.41.

¹³⁰NAC, File No. 1/4/1970, “Minutes of the Proceedings of the Eastern Regional Conference 1970, p.16.

¹³¹Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884-1985 A Hundred Years of History*, p.195.

¹³²NAB, File No. Vc/b/1959/21, “Petitions and Complaints,” 1959, p.10.

front. These rulers envisaged the creation of the House of Chiefs (shall be seen later) so that their voices could be heard in all political discussions in the Southern Cameroons.

The Eastern Regional crisis was therefore an eye-opener to Southern Cameroonians because they came to realize that their destiny could not be linked with that of Nigeria.¹³³ This was so, because due to the attachment of Southern Cameroons to the Eastern Region the trust territory was seen as a colony within a colony. Moreover, the development of Southern Cameroons was very slow due to its lack of a separate budget. The social, economic and political domination of the territory by Nigerians and the dismissal of the only Southern Cameroons Minister, Solomon Tandeng Muna from the government of the Eastern region of Nigeria were issues of great concern. Wasted attempts made by Southern Cameroonians to see into it that Muna was reinstated, made them to conclude that their voices could not be heard in Nigeria due to their status.

The crisis reawakened the political consciousness of Southern Cameroons chiefs who showed their readiness to fight for the independence of the territory. Those who nursed grievances about Nigerians from the incident became very disgruntled with the whole administration of Southern Cameroons and were determined to change it. In collaboration with Western educated nationalists like Dr. E.M.L. Endeley, Dr. John Ngu Foncha, S. T. Muna and P.M. Kale, the chiefs of Manyu joined hands with other Chiefs and started demanding for a separate Southern Cameroons region.

As mentioned earlier, the major political changes within Nigeria after 1945 saw the effective presence of chiefs in the political life of the protectorate, but the official side lines of chiefs politics was enshrined in the Macphersons Constitution of 1951. It introduced a representative government amounting to a betrayal of the chiefs. The British who abruptly sideline the chiefs took the elected educated elites as their new partners in political development.¹³⁴ This was in pretext that chiefs had not been prepared to perform any meaningful roles in the new dispensation. Thus, the frustrated and agitated chiefs naturally turned their anger against Dr. E. M. L Endeley, the leader of the territory who was being groomed to take over power from the colonial masters.

In July and August 1953, the Lancaster House Conference was convened. Chiefs and other Native authorities of Cameroons on behalf of themselves and their peoples authorized

¹³³Ibid, p.194.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

Endeley, J.C. Kangsen and Malam Abba Habib to represent the territory at the meeting.¹³⁵ During it, Dr. Endeley who led the Southern Cameroonian delegation emphasized the territory's need for a separate legislature.¹³⁶ In reaction, the Secretary of State assured the delegation that the territory would be granted a separate regional Status if the KNC won the pending elections, which were to be held because of the dissolution of the Eastern Regional House of Assembly.¹³⁷ This condition intensified political activities in British Southern Cameroons and gave the KNC greater recognition and support. At the end of the elections of 1953, KNC won 12 out of 13 seats while S. E. Ncha from "Ova-side Mamfe" who ran as an independent Candidate won the remaining one seat.¹³⁸ It was this victory, which encouraged Britain to grant Southern Cameroons the Quasi-Federal Status with a separate Regional Assembly.

Since the Macpherson Constitution had suffered a severe blow because of the Eastern Regional Crisis, there was need for a new constitution to be put in place. There was condemnation of the constitution in other parts of Nigeria and the demand for its replacement was inevitable. In response, the Lyttelton Constitution was adopted in 1954. Generally speaking, the Eastern Regional crisis served as a milestone in the independence struggle in the Southern Cameroons.¹³⁹ After the crisis, things changed dramatically and the call for separation became the most pressing demand in the territory. Once this was attained, the move towards independence became irreversible.

The Lyttelton Constitution of 1954 saw the granting of a quasi-regional status marking a determinant step in the political evolution of Southern Cameroons. Following the granting of this new status, elections were organized to provide for a separate legislature for the new region. Native Authorities had to be represented in the new Southern Cameroons House of Assembly by Six members.¹⁴⁰ Two were traditional rulers namely W. Mformi of Nkambe and Manga Williams of Victoria in 1957. Later in 1959, the number of chiefs went to three with the coming of J. Mokambe of Kumba¹⁴¹

In May 1957, the London Constitutional Conference was convened to review the Nigerian Constitution and push the colony closer to independence. In attendance from the

¹³⁵ Ngoh, History of Cameroon since 1800, p.201.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Tabe, "Chieftaincy Institution of Manyu Division" (1922-2017), PP. 56-58.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. p.140.

¹⁴¹ Amaazee, *Traditional Rulers (Chiefs) and Politics*, p.41.

Southern Cameroons were the representatives of KNC, KPP and the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) that was formed in 1955. The chiefs of Southern Cameroons were also presented at the constitutional Conferences by Fon of Bali in 1957 and the Fon of Bum in 1958.¹⁴²

Another election was convened in 1957 during which the four political parties that contested stood for different tendencies. The KNC wanted an autonomous self-government within Nigeria with useful contacts with the peoples of French Cameroon; the Kamerun People's Party (KPP) created in 1953 stood for autonomy within Nigeria; the KNDP defended the course of secession and gradual reunification, while the Union Des Populations du Cameroun (UPC) a political party from French Cameroon wanted immediate independence and reunification. At the end of the elections, the KNC won 6 seats, KNDP 5, and the KPP 2. It should be recalled that EML Endeley's continued popularity was as a result of the support of the chiefs.

The Leader of Government Business was henceforth become the Premier of Southern Cameroons. It was agreed that membership in the House of Assembly be increased from 13 to 26 while the territory was to have 12 representatives in the Senate in Lagos (8 before).¹⁴³ The creation of the institution of the House of Chiefs of 20 members in the region with each division represented by at least 3 members was adopted. The Commissioner who was to represent the British government in the territory would be the High Commissioner for both Northern and Southern Cameroons, not the Governor General of Nigeria. The Commissioner would be responsible for the appointment of the Speaker of the National Assembly after consultation with the Premier. Elections were to be held into the Assembly to suit the new provisions.

Another conference was convened in September 1958 in London and major constitutional advancements were made which ushered in a new self-government constitution for the Southern Cameroons. Following this conference, it was emphasized that the House of Assembly enlarged and the House of Chiefs that was promised in 1957 be effectively established. It was also decided that the number of Ministers should not be less than 4 and also not more than 7. Finally, it was agreed that the Commissioner would still preside over the Executive Council, pending a review in 1959. Elections were therefore organized to implement

¹⁴²United Nations Trusteeship Commission (UNTC), "United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories in West Africa, Report on the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration," 1958. p.55.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

the new changes. Surprisingly, Dr. E.M.L Endeley started to change his stand on secession from reunification of Kamerun.

During a state banquet on May 29th 1958, Endeley stated that the KNC's priority was no longer reunification, but how the territory could be independent.¹⁴⁴ This change of attitude could be explained by his close links with the Action Group of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, his marriage to a Yoruba woman and probably the political violence in French Cameroon. Endeley capitalized on the political violence that characterized French Cameroon at the time as well as on the uncertainties of the unknown French system and culture to change his political platform.¹⁴⁵

On the 23rd December 1958, the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly was dissolved and new elections were scheduled for 24th January, 1959.¹⁴⁶ The outcome was to upset the leadership situation in the territory political landscape. The year was a time of no compromise among the political leaders. As the electorate went to the poll on 24th January the contest involved four political parties. The following results were recorded: KNDP that was supported by many chiefs won 14 seats, KNC that lost the support of the chiefs won, 8 seats and KPP that was unpopular among the chiefs won 4 seats. From the results, KNDP of Foncha won the election with a slight margin. Foncha replaced Dr Endeley as the Prime Minister of Southern Cameroons on the 30th January 1959,¹⁴⁷ This ended Dr. E M L Endeley domination of politics in the Southern Cameroons.

The election did not however settle the conflicting views concerning the future of Southern Cameroons ,because it was not long when the opposition party in parliament, the KNC, by intrigue made J. M. Boja a member of the KNDP for Wum to cross the political carpet on the 15th March, 1960 to join the KNC party.¹⁴⁸ This brought the state of the party of KNDP to 13 seats ,KNC 9 seats and the KPP 4 seats , the last two agreeing to form an alliance. This therefore took the seats to 13/13.¹⁴⁹ So, it became difficult for the then National Assembly to settle the fate of Southern Cameroons on the eve of the independence of both Nigeria and

¹⁴⁴NAB, File No.Vc/b, 1959/6, "Statement to the Fourth Committee on 24th September, 1959 by Dr. E. M. L. Endeley,"1959, p.5.

¹⁴⁵Ibid. p.6.

¹⁴⁶NAB, File No. Vc/b/1959/2, "The Mamfe Conference,"1959, p.19.

¹⁴⁷Ibid. p.142.

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

¹⁴⁹Chem-Langhëë and M. Z. Njeuma, "The Pan-Kamerun Movement, 1964-1961," in Ndiva Kofele-Kale (ed.) *An African Experiment in Nation Building. The Bilingual Cameroon Republic since Reunification*, Colorado, Westview Press, 1980, p.53.

French Cameroon.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, the plebiscite became the way for Southern Cameroonians to decide their political future: either to unite with la Republique du Cameroun or to integrate with the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as will be seen in the next sub-section.

Cameroon Commoners' Congress (CCC)

It was not common to see a few politicians who knew the truth and stood for it, even if it meant destroying their personal interest as against international interest, or for the possibility of pulling large crowds of people to themselves. It is said that you can fool some people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.¹⁵¹ Chief Nyenti Stephen Eyong happened to be one of those politicians who stood for the truth in Southern Cameroons. He discovered that his colleagues were not telling the truth about the future of the territory. Chiefs wanted to right the wrongs of pretentious politicians who wanted to destroy the political future of Southern Cameroons. To do this, Chief Nyenti went around explaining the relationship between Southern Cameroons and her two neighbouring countries.¹⁵²

Chief Nyenti called on the British government to put finishing touches to Lord Lugard's work of building the Southern Cameroons nation. He was prepared to co-operate with any political party that did not want to see Southern Cameroons dominated by a foreign country. In the face of this and taking into consideration his power as Chief with authority over their people, he took the courage and determination to create the first ever indigenous political party called the Cameroon Commoners' Congress (CCC) in Mamfe Division on 27th September 1959.¹⁵³

The party's political platform was opposed to those of KNDP, KNC/KPP and OK the popular political parties in the Southern Cameroons at that time. Its detractors called it 'Cameroon Cheap Cargo'.¹⁵⁴ It was the desire of Chief Stephen Eyong Nyenti of Bachuo-Ntai, Mamfe the leader to serve his people as a politician and as a traditional ruler. Thus, the willingness of the Bachuo-Ntai people to release him to the service of the nation culminated in shaping him as a politician. Plate 2 that follows carries Chief Nyenti's portrait.

¹⁵⁰Ibid. p.194.

¹⁵¹NAB, NoVc/b1959/2.

¹⁵² Ibid, P.196.

¹⁵³NAB, File No.504,Vb/b1961/4, "Administrative District Office Mamfe,"1962, p.12.

¹⁵⁴ Chem-Langhëë,"The Kamerun Plebiscites 1959-1961," p. 201.

Plate 3: Chief Nyenti Stephen Eyong of Bachuo-Ntai, 1925 - 1999



Source: Nyenti's Family Library, Bachuo-Ntai 2015.

Objectives and Structure of CCC

To ensure the smooth running of the CCC party and to make it popular to Southern Cameroonians, the following objectives and organograms were established. The objectives were: to march Southern Cameroons forward to liberty (independence), not backward to slavery; to see that Southern Cameroons become self-governing at a definite time; the delay of self-government caused by opportunities will not be tolerated. To work for the growth of the federation by getting the Southern Cameroons to stand shoulder to shoulder with Northern, Western and Eastern Regions of Nigeria before Her Majesty's Government and demand dominion status. To put up a fight against reunification with French Cameroon because it would separate the Southern Cameroons from her neighbouring brothers in the North, West and East.¹⁵⁵

The CCC would maintain the brotherhood relation between the Mamfe people on the one hand and the Kumba, Calabar, Ikom, Ogoja and, Aro Rivers people on the other hand. CCC would put a brake on crude politicians who spread false propaganda and gave foreigners the wrong impression that the Southern Cameroons is unstable. It would do practical politics and

¹⁵⁵Tabe, "Chieftaincy Institution of Manyu Division" (1922-2017), PP. 57-59.

not allow theorists spread the vague promise of leading the Southern Cameroons to El Dorado. Time was precious and not to be wasted like previously. The theorist were feathering in misery in their own nests and living in abundance. The party would preserve the customs of the people of the land and to it that they are respected; It would practice what it preached and would not preach Christianity while turning round to practice paganism. Finally, CCC would work for peace and prosperity and bring the indigenes and strangers together to discuss their differences and reach agreement through compromises.

The party was organized in the following way: Seven Executive posts constituted the central working Committee made up of the President General, the Assistant President General, the Secretary General, the General Treasurer, the Auditor, the Chief Whip and the Finance Secretary. Once elected, they retained their offices for a period of five years. They were replaced as soon as a vote of no- confidence was passed on each of them.¹⁵⁶ Each branch of the party was to have officers similar to those of the main party. These officers were named: the president and his assistant, the secretary and his assistant, the treasurer and his assistant, the Whip (Dikama) and his assistant, the Messenger (Okini) and his Assistant.

The Party was divided into five wings. chiefs' wing: chiefs were the heads of the party. Officers' wing was made up of seven Central Officers together with branch Officers. Special wing: this group constituted indigenous officials. Ordinary wing: were members who were not indigenes of the land. The Women wing: constituted by women who were in popular organizations. The party derived its funds from donations and also from subscriptions, levies and fines. Each branch was supposed to keep its own money, but the General Treasurer was to be informed about it from time to time.¹⁵⁷

Rules, Motto and Symbol of the CCC Party

For the day-to day running of the party, rules were written down in the Constitution. Also contained in the constitution were its Motto and Symbol. These rules were dished out to the Militants as follows: Militants were to speak their truth to one another in order to retain their confidence; they were also expected to protect their customs. Any Militant that was treacherous to any other member was tried and if found guilty, was expelled with ignominy.¹⁵⁸ Members were to be ready to learn how to forgive and forget one another and to help one another. Any

¹⁵⁶NAB, File No. 1504, Vb/b1961/4, "Cameroon Commoners Congress, Information Service," 1961, p.5.

¹⁵⁷NAB, File No.504, Vb /b1961/3, "Cameroon Commoners Congress," 1961, p.12.

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

member of the party who failed to attend twelve consecutive meetings without sufficient and satisfactory reasons ceased to be a member.

Any member who in the opinion of the party injured or attempted to injure the party or worked or noted contrary to the interest of the party or attempted to break up or dissolve the party or bring the party into discredit or refused to comply with the order or decision of any committee or acted contrary to any orders or directions of the party was punished by censure, fine or expulsion. Any expelled member automatically ceased to have any claim upon the funds and the property of the party.¹⁵⁹

The party motto was: “No Domination” the chiefs made it loud and clear that when Britain and France were partitioning Cameroon even though French Cameroon was larger than British Southern Cameroons in population, there was no Minor and Major Nation. Both nations had the same status; it was Britain that decided to administer British Southern and Northern Cameroons as integral parts of Nigeria.¹⁶⁰ Therefore, the sovereignty of Southern Cameroons cannot be compromised by either the Republic of Cameroon or Federal Republic of Nigeria. Southern Cameroons should be made a sovereign state with a separate political entity and a seat in the United Nations Organisation as contained in the Trusteeship agreement of 1945.¹⁶¹ Chief Nyenti told Southern Cameroonians not to throw this right away due to inferiority complex or cowardice.¹⁶²

In addition to this, the party intended to pass across Fon Achirimbi’s message during the 1958 Southern Cameroons House Chiefs’ Conference. In his address, he lamented the loss of identity and self-determination of the territory which could only be recovered by joining forces to fight for the Southern Cameroons’ nationhood. Fon Achirimbi 11 was not in favour of the union within either the Republic of Cameroon or Nigeria because to him, the latter was “fire” and the former “water”.¹⁶³

Chief Nyenti was therefore inviting Southern Cameroonians of good will and his fellow traditional rulers, masses, teachers, lawyers and doctors to join CCC to fight for their own chief justice, prime minister, ambassadors, seat in the United Nations, army, currency, University and National Radio.¹⁶⁴ In addition to these, he told Southern Cameroonians that if Sierra Leone

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ NAB, File No. 1504, Vb/b1961/4, “Cameroon Commoners Congress, Information Service,” 1961, p.6.

¹⁶¹ NAB, “Cameroon Commoners Congress, Information Service”, p.1.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Kale, *Political Evolution in the Cameroons*, Buea, Government Printers, 1967. p.69.

¹⁶⁴ NAB, 1959, File N° Va /A 1959/2, “Southern Cameroon Plebiscite”, 1961, p.14.

with 2.100.000 people on 27,000 km² of land got its freedom on April 1961 ,Pitcairn with 143 people on 2 square mile land wants freedom date fixed, Monaco with 20.000 people on half square mile land has freedom ,what about Southern Cameroons with 1,570,000 people on 16,000 square miles land .He further reminded Southern Cameroonians that the irresponsible government at the time never clearly requested for freedom. That the United Nations reported the government to them with the following words: “considering the question of the Southern Cameroons the committees started from the assumption that the people of the territory were politically mature and perfectly capable of deciding their own future, but it had heard no formal statement to that effect.”¹⁶⁵

Although his party came very late, Chief Nyenti informed the people that it was better late than never. Time to act was then and not to be postponed. The party that started with close to 200 supporters and well-wishers participated at the Mamfe Plebiscite Conference. Cameroon Commoners Congress supporters were found in Victoria, Kumba, Mamfe, Bamenda, Wum and Nkambe. Some prominent members of the party were Elias Tabi Nchong of Ntenako village, Joseph Mbi of Bachuo-Ntai the pioneer president, Nelson Arrey, Newu Andrew and Moses Enow.¹⁶⁶ They undertook sensitization campaigns to inform the public concerning the objectives of the party.

It was difficult for one party to become Nation-wide because of Language barrier, uneasy means of transport and illiteracy of many who could listen neither to the radio nor read newspapers. Owing to the above facts, the CCC with stronghold in Mamfe dispatched its senior supporters all over the Southern Cameroons for an informative tour. The party raised a cry that “if every man should sweep before his own door, the town will be clean.”¹⁶⁷ It should be recalled that the CCC was the only political party that opposed the KNDP in Mamfe Division at the time.¹⁶⁸

To be able to meet up with this goal of a separate state of Southern Cameroons and to overcome a number of challenges from E.M.L. Endeley’s Cameroon Peoples National Convention(CPNC),which opted to be a state in the Federation of Nigeria and that of Dr John Ngu Foncha’s Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) which opted to join the “La Republique du Cameroun,” the CCC chose to answer the middle course of the divide neither

¹⁶⁵NAB, File N^o310/s, 6, vb/6/1959/3,” Southern Cameroons plebiscite,”1959, p.12.

¹⁶⁶Interview with Emmanuel Egbe, Civil Administrator, 48 Years, Yaounde, 3rdSeptember 2017.

¹⁶⁷ NAB, File No. 310/b6, Vb/6/1959/3, “Southern Cameroons Plebiscite,” 1959, p.10.

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Peter Nyenti Ayuk, Military Major, 57Years, Yaoundé, 6th May 2020.

wishing to be under Nigeria nor to join “La Republic du Cameroun.” That spirit of one’s own choice without imposition did not die with chief Nyenty. It was what reappeared out on a large scale to include local authorities nationwide, each authority had the inalienable right to take its own decision not that someone else makes the decision for it. The Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs was another forum that created an opportunity for chiefs to participate in politics.

Southern Cameroon House of Chiefs (SCHC)

The creation of the SCHC in 1960 was facilitated by the British who intended to promote parliamentary democracy through a bi-cameral assembly. Drawing inspiration from the role played by the House of Lords in Britain, the British felt that the House of Chiefs could work in close collaboration with the House of Assembly.¹⁶⁹ Some traditional authorities, especially from the centralized societies in the grasslands exercised enormous powers and influence. The divine and secular authority they possessed caused the British to find them very important. Besides, their achievements in the implementation of Indirect Rule necessitated the creation of the House of Chiefs. In 1952, an Eastern House of Chiefs Conference had been formed in Enugu with Fon Galega II as a member. It was therefore logical that a House of Chiefs be created for Southern Cameroons, after the granting of a quasi-regional status in 1954.¹⁷⁰

Origins and Aims of SCHC

The British colonial policy of Indirect Rule had given exceptional recognition and importance to traditional authorities in Southern Cameroons. Little doubt why after the 1957 London Constitutional Conference, the Commissioner of the territory was asked to create a House of chief. As a follow-up, he toured the territory between 1957 and 1958 to gather the opinion of chiefs on the issue. At the end of the tour, membership into the House would depend on medical fitness, respect of law and order, election and the endorsement of the Commissioner. Some Fons like those of Nso, Bali, Bafut and Kom were so influential that they were to be accorded full automatic membership.¹⁷¹

In May 1960, J. O. Field signed the Regulations formally creating the Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs (SCHC) with twenty-one members.¹⁷² After elections, in July 1960, the first session of the House took place in September in Buea. After the Plebiscite of 11th

¹⁶⁹Chem-Langhëë, “The Origins of the Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs”, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol 16 No.4, 1983, pp. 653–673.

¹⁷⁰ NAB, File No: V.3552/s.1, Vc/b1959, “Summit Conference 10-11 August, 1959,” p.27.

¹⁷¹Ibid. p.29.

¹⁷²Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884-1985 A Hundred Years of History*, p. 202.

February and the granting of independence on 1st October 1961, the House became the West Cameroon House of Chiefs (WCHC).¹⁷³ This House together with the House of Assembly constituted part of what could be considered the bi-cameral assembly that operated in West Cameroon. The House of Chiefs continued to play a determinant advisory role especially on land and chieftaincy matters until its dissolution in 1972 following the formation of unitary state of government. The SCHC equally had aims which are explained below.

The creation of the House of Chiefs could be attributed to the following objectives. The intensification of the struggle against colonialism and the democratization of some aspects of native administration resulted in a greater preference for the educated. The Western educated elite also began to challenge the leadership role of traditional Rulers. This forced the chiefs to forge a means of protecting their authority. The failure of traditional authorities in Assembly election also frightened them. None of the thirteen leaders of the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly in 1953 was a chief and the situation remained the same. They were therefore encouraged to press for a separate legislature. Finally, the chiefs also noticed that Western civilization was a growing menace to the customs and traditions of the society. The Chiefs therefore, felt that the creation of a House of chief would safeguard the people's culture.

From figure 1, Chief Nyenti was totally against both the integration of Southern Cameroons with Federal Republic of Nigeria and reunification with French Cameroon. He told his fellow chiefs that both British Commonwealth and French Union had the same characteristics in term of administration. He indicated that in the commonwealth system, the Queen was at the helm of administration while farmers were at the bottom of administration. Likewise, in the French Union, the President was at the head of administration in Paris, while farmers were at the bottom¹⁷⁴. He emphasized that both systems practiced top-to-bottom approach of governance, where by the common man had no place, while, everything were remotely controlled from London or Paris. There was, therefore no need for the chiefs to support either integration with Nigeria or reunification with French Cameroon. He called on his colleagues of Mamfe Division to support his course for a separate political entity, the independent of Southern Cameroons.

¹⁷³Ibid. p.100.

¹⁷⁴Tabe, Chieftaincy Institution of Manyu Division (1922 – 2011), p. 157.

Mamfe Divisional Chiefs' Conference (MDCC)

The MDC Conference was held following the creation of the Southern Cameroon Chiefs Conference (SCCC) in 1956. The aims of the conference among other things included: to fight for the lost rights of chiefs due to political intrusions according to native laws and customs ; to fight for their dignity and to restore peace and unity among themselves; to join forces with the government in fighting against irresponsible and money making politicians in the constituency; to protect the customs of Mamfe Division from the British politicians. It was also to make chiefs understand that they were above party politics.¹⁷⁵ For instance, chiefs were not to take part in partisan politics, and not to accept anything against them. Finally, Chiefs of Mamfe Division were called upon to bury their differences and co-operate with the government in building a united Cameroon .¹⁷⁶ Broken English was adopted as the official language of the conference, since not everyone could speak and understand each other's vernacular.

Forums of MDCC

The MDCC had an Executive Committee made up of six members drawn from all the then four Sub-Divisions of the division. It should be noted that this Committee was usually appointed during each session. For example, during the meeting held at the Basel Mission School Mamfe on the 13-14 February 1959,¹⁷⁷ the Fon of Fontem was the President, Nfor M.M Besong of Mamfe Town was Vice President, Chief D.O. Nchor of Njege was Secretary, Chief T. T. Tanchie of Defang was Assistant Secretary, Chief S B Oben of Mbinda Tabo was Treasurer, chief S A Akala of Amanavil as Financial Secretary and Chief R N Ayuk of Tinto 11 as Auditor.¹⁷⁸

In another meeting held in Mamfe Government School from the March 11, to 12, 1959,¹⁷⁹ the following chiefs were appointed as members of the Executive Committee; Chief P.A Fongang as the President, Chief Fotabong and Chief Mbi Atem as First and second Vice Presidents respectively, Chief J. A. Tataw as the Treasurer , Chief J. F Enowyaket as an Auditor and Chief Nyenti Stephen Eyong as the Secretary. Its duty was to compile the agenda for the conference after receiving items suggested by Sub-Divisional branches.

¹⁷⁵Ibid.159.

¹⁷⁶NAB, File No.1532/si, Ia /1957/2, "Minutes of Banyang Mbo Chiefs Conference in Tinto Native Court Hall, West Cameroon House of Chiefs Correspondence," p.35.

¹⁷⁷NAB, File No. PMO 392, Ia/ 1962/, "Minutes of Mamfe Divisional Chiefs Conference held at the Basel Mission School Mamfe," pp.27-28.

¹⁷⁸Ibid. pp. 54-55.

¹⁷⁹Ibid. p30.

Meetings usually started with the admission of chiefs into the Conference hall, an opening prayer,¹⁸⁰ registration and roll call. Attendance was mandatory for every member in every come together. This explains why during each meeting, attendance was taken. Below is the attendance list of the Meeting that took place in Government School Mamfe town were in attendance Chief P.A. Fongang of Tabong, Chief Fotabong 11 of Fotabong, Chief Mbi Atem Mamfe, Chief Enow Ayuk of Ntenako, Chief Agbor Arrey of Mbinjong, Chief Tabe Tanyi of Obang. Chief Mbu Oben of Ashum, Chief G.E.B. Obenson of Kembong, Chief Enowyaket of Egbekaw, Chief Njang Ayuk Nge of Tinto1, Chief Mose Ndip of Nchang, Chief J. A. Tataw of Ossing, Chief David Agbor of Ndekwei.¹⁸¹

This was usually followed by the reading of the previous Minutes, discussion and adoption of the minutes. The floor was opened to free discussion. In the conference at the Reading Room hall Mamfe, discussion was centred on the entry into Local Council, Customary Courts and the issue of reunification between Southern Cameroons and La Republique du Cameroon. After the deliberations, the following was the resolution arrived at. It was decided that since the chiefs were at the head of the Villages, they should not be excluded from the council that makes laws for the village. Chiefs should enter into Councils as traditional members without standing for election.”¹⁸².The reunification motion was highly supported by the chiefs of the division.

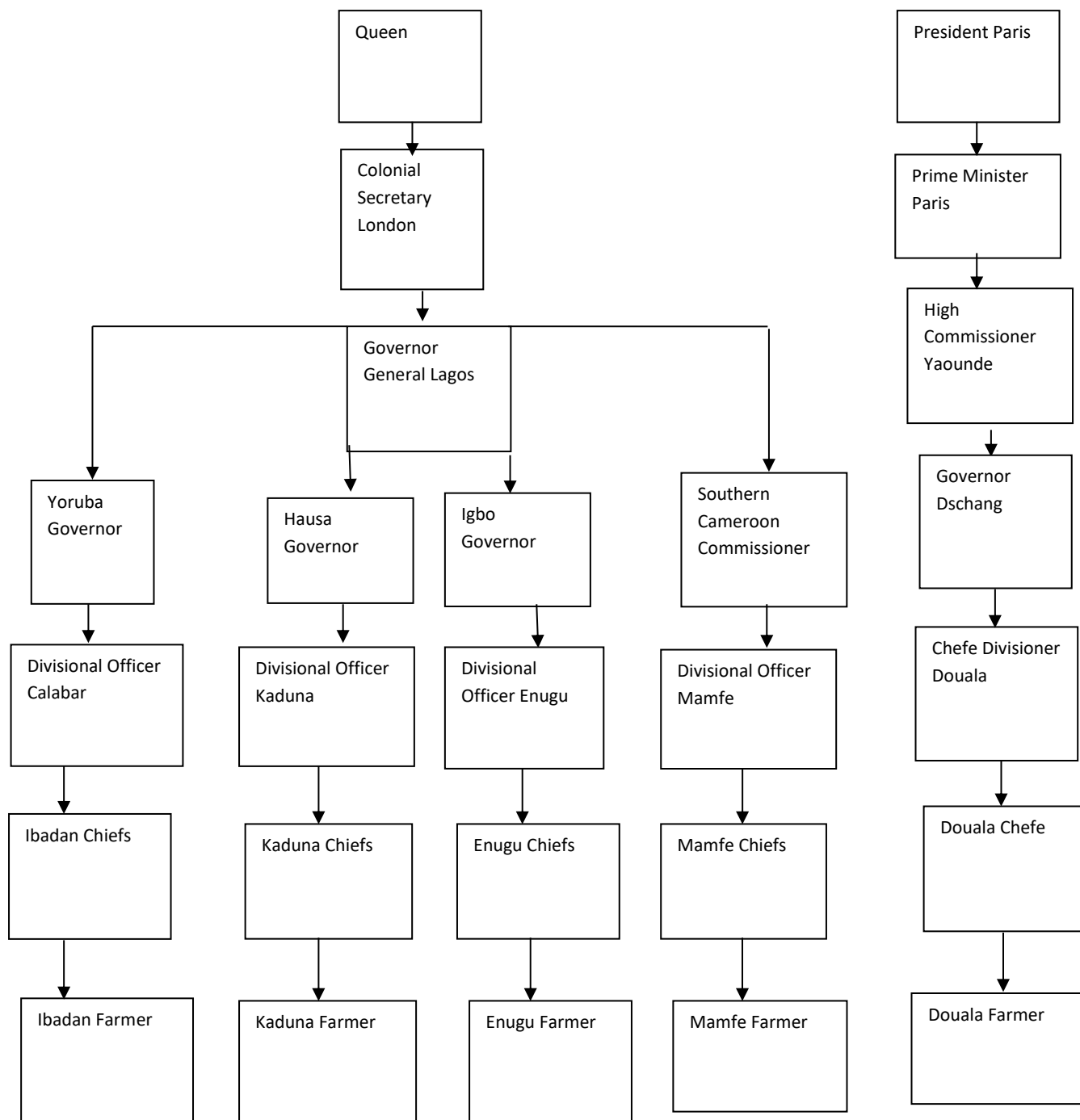
When Chief Nyenti Stephen Eyong took the floor, he asked the house whether they liked reunification with the French or secession. Since the question had political undertone, Chief Emmanuel Atem of Kepoti Village quickly objected to such a question that it might drag the House into political discussion. Against this backdrop, chief Nyenti seized the opportunity to explain the similarities between the Commonwealth and the French Union with the help of a diagram as shown in figure 1 below.

¹⁸⁰ Interview With Tambe Ayuk, 67 Years, Teacher and Chief of Anslem Village, Buea, 10th February 2013.

¹⁸¹ NAB, File No.Cl 1257/Ia/1959/1 “Minutes of Mamfe Divisional Chiefs Conference,” p.6.

¹⁸²NAB ,File No.LG 1903/s.1, Ia/1959/ 2, “Traditionl Ruler and Local Government,” p.26.

Figure 1: The Similarities between British Commonwealth and the French Union in 1957



Source: NAB, File N0. La/1959/4 "Cameroon CommonsCongress"1959 , p.20.

Conclusion

This chapter witnessed a drastic increase in the number of politicians of Mamfe division in national politics. We have discussed the contributions of these politicians, Chiefs, improvement groups and the Masses for the reunification cause. The British, to an extent respected both terms

of the Mandate and Trusteeship Agreements though bringing traditional chiefs into modern administration. That act directly affected the customs and traditions of the people of Mamfe. At the same time, the powers of traditional rulers were eroded and they were compelled to be subordinated to the British colonial administrators. Some of the chiefs were appointed by colonial masters and were thus answerable to them. They could be dismissed at any time that they failed to satisfy their masters. The creation of warrant or artificial chiefs distorted the traditional power alternation in Mamfe. On the other hand, chiefs were schooled on modern administration and made to be conscious of their rights and responsibilities. Indirect Rule enlightened the chiefs to contribute enormously to the formation of Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs, Cameroon Commoners Congress, Mamfe Divisional Chiefs Conference and the struggle for independence. Therefore, the British Mandate and Trusteeship periods were a mixed blessing to the people of Mamfe. The chapter reveals that the Mamfe actors contributed enormously to the reunification process by accepting the holding of a plebiscite conference they created associations, political parties, and they participated in the plebiscite elections which pushed on the reunification idea in the division. The chapter proceeds to investigate the level of preparedness the division had in welcoming reunification. This takes us to discuss a number of conferences hosted in Mamfe in prelude to independence and unification Southern Cameroons.

CHAPTER THREE

EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE IN MAMFE IN PRELUDE TO INDEPENDENCE AND REUNIFICATION FROM 1959-1961

Introduction

In this chapter, examines the reasons for the choice of Mamfe to host of the major decolonisation conferences of the Southern Cameroons some of the conferences were the Provincial Conference of the Cameroon Province and the Mamfe Conference of May 1953 (the Opinion Conference). We shall also discuss the reactions to various points of opinion at the Mamfe Conference. We shall further elucidate the Mamfe Plebiscite Conference of 1959, the Chiefs in the 1961 Plebiscite, the derivation of the plebiscite, the question of alternatives, results of the plebiscite and the issue of Third Option of the plebiscite. The work exposed on the preparation the Mamfe people had for reunification. The work argues that even though the Mamfe people had enough preparation for the conference, they did not inform the local chiefs on the conferences that took place in Mamfe. The chapter shall roundup by analysing the antagonisms and its repercussions that surrounded the Third Alternative.

The Choice of Mamfe as Host of Decolonisation Conferences

A number of reasons were considered in the choice of Mamfe Division as venue for the holding of important decolonisation conferences about the political future of the Southern Cameroons. To start, the geo-political location of the town was primary.¹ Mamfe was located midway on the road junction between Nigeria and other major towns of the Southern Cameroons. This location made movement into other parts of the territory easier. Those from the forest and grassland regions could travel easily to Mamfe than to other towns. The climate of Mamfe was also not too harsh as compared to other divisions. As we saw in the geographical setting, the rate of rainfall and sunshine were very moderate in the division. This gave room for uninterrupted political activities. The moderate climate and atmosphere attracted politicians and others into the division.²

The hospitality of the people of Mamfe cannot be overemphasized.³ The people exhibited an open door policy to everyone that visited the division. People who visited for touristic, administrative and business purposes were highly welcomed and treated very well.

¹ Interview with Agbor Eyong Ebai, Civil Administration, 12th August, 2021.

² Interview with. Ajong Patrick. Retired Military.kembong, January 24th 2021.

³ Interview with Besong Joseph Achare, Teacher, Ewelle, 13th August 2021.

Food and accommodation was offered to them at very cheap prices. Politicians and even business persons were attracted into the division for both political and economic activities. The availability of modern facilities in Mamfe such as regular electricity, hotels, rest houses like the Inland hostel, good communication network, pipe-borne water, accessible nature of the town (through river ports, road and air through Besengabang Aerodrome) , health centres and hospitals encouraged policy makers to schedule their conferences in the division. The availability of these facilities made decision makers to be sure of the moral and material wellbeing of conference participants in the division.⁴

The security of people and property in Mamfe was guaranteed. The presence of the *Ekpe* association that acted as the police of the land frightened all the troublemakers from causing trouble or from touching anything that never belonged to them. In the face of this, the landscape was suitable for political conferences free of disturbances. This explains why the Petition Conference of May 1953, Plebiscite Conference of August 1959 and other conferences took place hitch-free in Mamfe town. Not even the Nigerian tyranny and domination that was highly manifested in parts of Southern Cameroons prevented the holding of conferences in Mamfe.⁵

Above all, Mamfe was chosen to host the various conferences from the standpoint that it was a watershed between the situation in the grasslands and that in the forest zone. Again, it was due to the fact that the majority of its chiefs were still very influential than other chiefs in the forest zone. Many sat watching the decay of their authority. In Victoria Division, for example, before the plebiscite, virtually almost all the chiefs had lost their authority in their respective chiefdoms. The choice of Mamfe was apparent since the chiefs still commanded authority from their subjects and so could provide adequate security for the conference participants

Political Conferences

The process of the struggle for independence in Southern Cameroons was greatly encouraged by the political conferences that took place in Mamfe Division between 1948 and 1959. These conferences schooled the masses and pressurised the British to grant self-government and independence that would eventually lead to reunification.

⁴⁴Interview with Agbor Joseph Agbor, 56 Years, Teacher, Mamfe, 23rd June 2019.

⁵.Interview with Tabot Alfred Eyong , 54 Years, Interpreter, Yaoundé, 21st July 2019.

The Provincial Conference of June 1948

In June 1948, a Provincial Conference was held in Mamfe. The conference brought together representatives from villages, tribal unions and youth organizations. It was organised to prepare for the Ibadan constitutional conference, which was scheduled for January 1950. In trying to avoid the errors of his predecessor, Sir John Macpherson engaged the Nigerian Federation in two years of protracted negotiations on the form the new constitution would take. However, at the conference, it was resolved that the British Trust Territory of Cameroon should be granted a separate regional status with its own House of Assembly to be directly responsible to the Trusteeship Council of the UN.⁶

This resolution was initially introduced at the Regional preparatory meeting at Enugu, but it was rejected for two reasons. The first was that the territory of Southern Cameroons was not economically and financially viable.⁷ The second was that it was politically difficult to organize the region in view of the fact that part of that territory was administered from the Eastern Region and part from the Northern Region of Nigeria. The Enugu meeting instead suggested that Southern Cameroons should be represented in both the Regional House of Assembly and the Executive Council at Enugu and the Central Executive and Legislative Assembly in Lagos.⁸

At the Mamfe Conference, participants agreed to recommend the granting of a special status of Southern Cameroons. The Ibadan Conference came out with the Macpherson Constitution that was warmly welcomed. The constitution gave Southern Cameroon Thirteen 13 members into the Eastern Regional House of Assembly and six members into the Central Executive Council in Lagos.⁹ The conference played the groundwork for the holding of another conference in May 1953.

The Conference of May 1953 (Opinion Conference)

The crisis in the Eastern Regional House of Assembly was caused by a conflict within the NCNC. It concerned a challenge to Azikiwe's leadership of the party. This crisis caused a serious rift within the party; it led to the resignation of government ministers, paralysed the legislature; led to the dissolution of the Eastern House of Assembly and to the eventual collapse of the Macpherson Constitution. It started following a sharp division between ministers

⁶. Eyongetah and Brain, *A History of Cameroon*, pp. 155-156.

⁷ Ibid. P.158

⁸. Fanson, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, p.292.

⁹Ibid, p.294.

from the Eastern Region who were in both the Eastern and Central Houses of Assembly. Some felt the new constitution should be given a trial period while others thought it had to be outrightly rejected the support of the Azikiwe's group, which found many lacunas in this new constitution.¹⁰

Besides, they developed a conflict between Azikiwe, the President of the NCNC and Eyo Ita, Vice President of the NCNC and leader of government in the Eastern Region. Eyo Ita refused to put in place radical constitutional changes and to reshuffle the cabinet on the request of the party's hierarchy. Azikiwe and his followers then masterminded the collapse of his government. Some of the Nigerian ministers decided to stay put; but S.T. Muna, whose view reflected the Southern Cameroonians' view of deficiency in the constitution, decided to leave. He was immediately dismissed by Eyo Ita's government as minister in the Eastern Region. All attempts to have him reinstated failed as the Southern Cameroonians request was defeated by a vote of 45 to 32.¹¹ This motion caused much frustration among Southern Cameroonians in the Eastern House of Assembly, Endeley, Ndze, Kangsen, and S.A. George, who were in Lagos held a meeting and came out with the option to stay clear of Nigerian politics. They thus opted for a policy of "Benevolent Neutrality" seen in the words :

We, your elected representatives consider those acts to be a deliberate disregard for the wishes and aspiration of the people of the Cameroon. We have therefore broken our connection with the eastern region because we believed that, as a minority group in the eastern regional legislature, we are unable to make the wishes of Cameroon people respected. We consider that our immediate duty now is to press our demand for a separate region and to this end; we call upon all Cameroonians to be prepared to make sacrifices. We strongly advise all Cameroonians to boycott any future elections to the Eastern House... all native authorities, tribal organizations, chiefs and people of every village and town are required to send two representatives each to a conference to be held in Mamfe¹².

They decided to boycott the Eastern House and not to participate in any further elections in Nigeria. They further called on all other Cameroonians to do the same. Meanwhile, Mbile, Ndi, R. N. Charley and Motomby Woleta rejected the policy of Benevolent Neutrality. Both the NCNC and Action Group (AG) of Nigeria supported its demand for a separate regional status, legislature and budgetary autonomy. In May 1953, the Lieutenant Governor of the Eastern Region dissolved the Eastern House of Assembly. The supporters of the Benevolent Neutrality led by E.M.L. Endeley then addressed a message to the people of Southern Cameroons. In which they explained their reasons to boycott all political activities in the Nigerian Assembly

¹¹Ibid., p.193.

¹²Chem-Langhëë, "The Kamerun Plebiscites 1959-1961, P.137.

and convening of the conference in Mamfe from the 22nd to 24th May 1953.¹³ All the villages, towns, native authorities, chiefs and tribal organisations sent two representatives each to this conference.¹⁴

The Effects of the Conference of 1953

At the end of the conference that took place in the Reading Room in Mamfe, a number of decisions were arrived at, that the two major political pressure groups in Southern Cameroons at the time; Kamerun United National Congress (KUNC) led by R.K. Dibongue and Cameroon National Federation (CNF) led by E .M. L. Endeley were advised to merge and create a political party.¹⁵ The outcome of this union was the creation of the Kamerun National Congress (KNC) in 1953. This was the first indigenous political party in British Cameroons.¹⁶ The second major outcome of the Mamfe conference was a splendid understanding between the Native Authorities and the Western educated Elite. They agreed to work for the common interest of Southern Cameroons.

Still concerning the resolution of the Mamfe Conference, Southern Cameroonians in one voice wrote a petition letter to the Secretary of State for colonies demanding for the creation of a separate and autonomous status for the Trust Territory of Southern Cameroons on May 28, 1953. Dr. Endeley left Lagos for London where he submitted the petition to the Secretary of State for Colonies, Lord Oliver Lyttelton.¹⁷ Finally, the conference gave Southern Cameroonian Traditional Rulers the opportunity to meet and discuss the matter concerning them at a unified front. These leaders envisaged the creation of the House of Chiefs (shall be seen later) so that their voices could be heard in all political discussions in Southern Cameroons.

Therefore, the Eastern Regional crisis was a revelation to Southern Cameroonians because they came to realize that their destiny could not be linked with that of Nigeria.¹⁸ This was so, because due to the attachment of Southern Cameroons to the Eastern Region of Nigeria, the colony was seen as a colony within a Colony. Moreover, the development of Southern Cameroons was very slow due to lack of a separate budget for the territory social, economic and political domination of the territory by Nigerians and the dismissal of the only Southern Cameroons Minister, Solomon Tandeng Muna from the government of the Eastern region of

¹³P. Kale, *Political Evolution in the Cameroons*, Buea, Government printer, 1968, pp. 40-42.

¹⁴Ibid. p.41.

¹⁵NAB, File No. 1/4/1970, "Minutes of the Proceedings of the Eastern Regional Conference of 1954, p.16.

¹⁶Ngoh, Cameroon 1884-1985 A Hundred Years of History, p.195.

¹⁷NAB, File No. Vc/b/1959/21, "Petitions and Complaints," 1959, p.10.

¹⁸Ngoh, Cameroon 1884-1985 A Hundred Years of History, p.194.

Nigeria. Wasted attempts made by Southern Cameroonians to see into it that he was reinstated, they then concluded that their voices could not be heard in Nigeria due to their minority status in Nigeria.¹⁹

The crisis reawakened the political consciousness of Southern Cameroonian chiefs who showed their readiness to fight for the independence of the Southern Cameroons. Southern Cameroonians who nursed many grievances about Nigerians from the incident became very disgruntled with the whole administration of the British in Southern Cameroons and were determined to change it. In collaboration with Western educated elites like Dr. E.M.L. Endeley, Dr. John Ngu Foncha, S. T. Muna, P.M. Kale, the Chiefs of Manyu and other Chiefs started demanding for a separate regional status for Southern Cameroons.

As mentioned earlier, the major political changes within Nigeria after 1945 saw the effective presence of chiefs in the political life of the territory, but the official discouragement of chiefs into politics was enshrined in the Macpherson's Constitution of 1951. It introduced a representative government amounting to a betrayal of the chiefs by the British. The British abruptly dropped the chiefs and took the western educated elites as their new partners in political leadership.²⁰ This was in the pretext that chiefs had not been prepared to perform any meaningful roles in the new dispensation. Therefore, the frustrated and agitated chiefs naturally turned their anger against Dr. E. M. L. Endeley, the leader of the new elite who was being groomed to take over power from the colonial masters.

In the follow up to the Mamfe conference, Lancaster House Conference was convened between July and August 1953. Chiefs and Native Authorities of the British Cameroons on behalf of their peoples and themselves authorized Endeley, J.C. Kangsen and Malam Abba Habib to represent British Cameroons at the Conference.²¹ During the Conference, Dr. Endeley who led the Southern Cameroonians delegation to the conference emphasized that, the territory was in needed for a separate Legislature.²² In reaction, the Secretary of State assured that, the territory would be granted a separate Regional Status if the KNC won the pending elections which were to be held as a consequence of the dissolution of the Eastern Regional House of Assembly.²³ This condition intensified political activities in British Southern Cameroons and gave the KNC greater recognition and support. At the end of the elections of 1953, KNC won

¹⁹Interview with Sese Kou Besong Mershak Enow, 65 Years, Retired Head Teacher, Ntenako, 21st February 2019.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ngoh, History of Cameroon since 1800, p.201.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

12 out of 13 seats while. E. Ncha from “Ova-side Mamfe” who ran as an independent candidate won the remaining one seat. This victory encouraged Britain to grant Southern Cameroons the Quasi-Federal Status with a separate Regional Assembly.

As the Macpherson’s Constitution suffered a severe blow because of the Eastern Regional Crisis, there was need for a new constitution to be put in place. In addition, there was condemnation of the constitution in some parts of Nigeria and the demand for its ultimate replacement was inevitable by 1954. In response, Lord Lyttelton’s Constitution was adopted in 1954. Generally speaking, the Eastern Regional Crisis served as a milestone in the independence struggle of Southern Cameroons.²⁴ After the crisis, things changed dramatically and the call for separation became the most pressing demand in Southern Cameroons. Once this was attained, the move towards independence became irreversible.

The Lyttelton’s Constitution of 1954 that replaced the Macpherson saw the granting of a quasi-regional status marking a determinant step in the political evolution of Southern Cameroons. Following the granting of this new status, elections were organized to provide for a separate legislature for Southern Cameroons. Native Authorities had to be represented in the new Southern Cameroons House of Assembly by Six members.²⁵ Two were Traditional Rulers; W. Mformi of Nkambe and Manga Williams of Victoria in the House of Assembly of 1957 and later in 1959, the number of chiefs increased to three with the coming of J. Mokumbe of Kumba²⁶

In May 1957, the London constitutional conference was held to review the Nigerian Constitution and push the colony closer to independence. In attendance from Southern Cameroons were the representatives of KNC, KPP and the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) that was for created in 1955. The chiefs also represented Southern Cameroons in constitutional Conferences in London, for instance, the Fon of Bali in 1957 and the Fon of Bum in 1958.²⁷

In 1957, another election was convened, during which the four political parties that contested for different tendencies. The KNC wanted autonomous self-government within Nigeria with useful contacts with the peoples of French Cameroon, the Kamerun People’s Party

²⁴Ibid, p. 129.

²⁵Ibid. p.140.

²⁶ V. B. Amaazee, “The Igbo’ in British Southern Cameroons 1945- 1961,” *Journal of African History*, 1990. p.310.

²⁷ United Nations Trusteeship Commission (UNTC), “United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories in West Africa, Report on the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration,” 1958. p. 55.

(KPP) created in 1953 stood for autonomy within Nigeria, and the KNDP defended the course of secession and gradual reunification, while the Union Des Populations du Cameroun (UPC) a political party from French Cameroon wanted immediate independence and reunification. Election was therefore organised in 1957 and at the end of the election, the KNC won 6 seats, KNDP 5, and the KPP 2. It should be recalled that E.M.L. Endeley's continued popularity was as a result of the support he had from chiefs' of Southern Cameroons.

The Leader of Government Business was henceforth became the Premier of Southern Cameroons. It was agreed that Southern Cameroons membership in the House of Assembly be increased from 13 to 26 while Southern Cameroons was to have 12 representatives in the Senate in Lagos (8 before).²⁸ The creation of a new institution of the House of Chiefs of 20 members in the region with each division represented by at least 3 members was adopted. The Commissioner who was to represent the British government in the territory would be the High Commissioner for both Northern and Southern Cameroons, and not the Governor General of Nigeria. The Commissioner would be responsible for the appointment of the Speaker of the National Assembly after consultation with the Premier. Elections were to be held into the Assembly to suit the new provisions of the Assembly.²⁹

In September 1958, a conference was convened in London and major constitutional advancements were made which ushered in a new self-government governing constitution of the Southern Cameroons, the conference participants reminded the British that the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly should be enlarged and the House of Chiefs promised in 1957 be effectively established. It was also decided that Ministers should not be less than 4 but not also more than 7. Finally, the Commissioner would still preside over the Executive Council, pending a review in 1959. Elections were therefore organized to implement the new changes. Surprisingly, Dr. E.M.L. Endeley started to change his stand on reunification.

During a state banquet on May 29th 1958, he stated that the KNC's priority was no longer reunification, but how the territory could be independent.³⁰ The change of attitude could be explained by his close links with the Action Group of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, his marriage to a Yoruba woman and probably the political violence in French Cameroon made him to denounce reunification. With this, Endeley capitalized on the political violence that

²⁸ Ibid.P.12.

²⁹ Besong "An Illustrated History of Cameroon," p.193.

³⁰ NAB, File No.Vc/b, 1959/6, "Statement to the Fourth Committee on 24th September, 1959 by Dr. E. M. L. Endeley," 1959, p.5.

characterized French Cameroon at the time as well as on the uncertainties of the unknown French system and culture to change his political platform.³¹

On the 23rd December 1958, the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly was dissolved and new elections were scheduled for 24th January 1959.³² The political parties in Southern Cameroon were called again for political consultation. This was to upset the leadership in the Southern Cameroon's political landscape. The year is known as a time of no compromise among the political leaders. As Southern Cameroon's electorates went to the poll on 24th January 1959, four political parties participated. The following results were recorded: KNDP that was supported by mostly chiefs won 14 seats, KNC that lost the support of the chiefs won 8 seats and KPP that was unpopular among the chiefs won 4 seats. From the results, KNDP of Foncha won the election with a slight margin. Foncha replaced Dr Endeley as the Prime Minister of Southern Cameroons on the 30th January 1959;³³ this ended the domination of politics in Southern Cameroons by Dr. E M L Endeley.³⁴

This election did not however settle the conflicting views concerning the future of Southern Cameroons because it was not long, when the opposition party in the parliament, the KNC party, by intrigue made J. M. Boja a member of the KNDP for Wum to cross the political carpet to join the KNC party on the 15th March, 1960.³⁵ This brought the state of the party of KNDP to 13 seats and KNC 9 seats plus the 4 seats of KPP that came into alliance with the KNC. This therefore took the seats to 13/13.³⁶ So, it became difficult for the National Assembly to settle the fate of Southern Cameroons on the eve of Nigerian independence and that of French Cameroon. Therefore, a plebiscite became a way for Southern Cameroonians to decide their political future, either to reunite with la Republique du Cameroun or to integrate with the Federal Republic of Nigeria as seen in the next sub-section.

The KNDP Congress of June 1958

Endeley change of attitude began when he started paying less and less attention to the secession option following his previous great victories of 1953 to 1954. He began to perceive Southern Cameroons developing into a self-governing region "within the independence of Nigeria" and

³¹Ibid. p.6.

³²NAB, File No. Vc/b/1959/2, "The Mamfe Conference," 1959, p.19.

³³P, M. Ninjoh "Advanced Level Cameroon History Since 1800," Bamenda, 2011, p.142.

³⁴Chem-Langhëë, "The Kamerun Plebiscites 1959-1961: Perception and Strategies", pp.135-136.

³⁵Ibid. p.143.

³⁶Chem-Langhëë and Njeuma, "The Pan-Kamerun Movement, 1964-1961," in Ndiva Kofele-Kale (ed.) *An African Experiment in Nation Building. The Bilingual Cameroon Republic since Reunification*, Colorado, and West view Press, 1980, p.53.

to accept integration of northern Cameroons with northern Nigeria as an avoidable issue. He began to relegate unification inclusively to the background. These tendencies became stronger with time and circumstances. Endeley's sudden change of behaviour was against popular opinions in Southern Cameroons gave the opportunity to John Ngu Foncha who many considered as calculating politicians with his policy of *Foncharians* tilted this opportunity to his advantage by creating a new political party called the KNDP in March 1955 to oppose the KNC. Augustine Ngom Jua was his secretary general and W.P. Lebaga vice secretary of the party. Four years later S.T. Muna left the KNC and join the KNDP. The party had as its motto "Let the truth prevail".³⁷

Many historians have held the view that the leader of the KNDP Foncha propagated the idea of reunification. He was amongst the many Southern Cameroonians who supported the idea in 1949 when the CNF was created. Foncha's steadfastness in upholding the idea of reunification made people to credit him as the architect of reunification in Cameroon. Even from the inception of the KNDP in 1955, Foncha clearly stated that KNDP stood for "A peaceful co-existence between indigenous natives and tribal groups extraneous to Cameroons." He made the position of the KNDP very clear as the year pass by. He again stated, Unification is consequential upon secession... for the time being, while we are still part of the Federation of Nigeria, it is proper to make secession the beginning of unification... secession from the Federation of Nigeria would please Southern Cameroons in a position to negotiate terms for unification.³⁸

Foncha spread this idea for many years and wanted many Southern Cameroonians to equally share this idea to other people. Foncha went further to add, it would follow by the transitional period, which was referred to as codified Trusteeship and by possibly by another period of independence. With this, Southern Cameroon would be better prepared for unification. In order that unification should come based on the quality between the partners protecting the distinctive background of the English speaking and French-speaking sectors. Foncha insisted on independence before unification to strengthen the political foundation and build up the economic and social institutions that would preserve the cultural identities of Southern Cameroonians. To pass this message to Southern Cameroonians, Foncha and other KNDP supporters decided to organise a congress in Mamfe to pass across the message of

³⁷ Abang, *Southern Cameroons Negotiating an Existence*, , Bamenda ,Writivism, 2019, p.165.

³⁸ Chem-Langhëë, "The Kamerun Plebiscites 1959-1961: Perception and Strategies". P.139

secession from Nigeria. The Mamfe KNDP Congress was organised to prepare for the London Constitutional Conference of June 1958 and the Mamfe Plebiscite Conference of August 1959.³⁹

It was in the Mamfe Conference that the full text of the KNDP secession charter was presented. In that text, the founding fathers of the party reiterated their determination to preserve the identity of Southern Cameroons and the unity of all her people and sections. The fourteen (14) points program which was adopted and signed at Mamfe, the KNDP came out with the secession charter which would lead Southern Cameroons to secede from Nigeria, these included:⁴⁰

1. We shall avoid being under independent of Nigeria.
2. The opening of the door for indirect negotiation with foreign enterprise.
3. Creating opportunities for Cameroonians to give their best in developing themselves and their country.
4. It will make Cameroon an identified nation.
5. It will enable Her Majesty's government to shoulder her responsibilities.
6. It will save Cameroon from being placed in the analogous position now experienced by Togoland.
7. It will accelerate the political and economic advancement of the territory. Promote social progress and raise better standard of living at our own pace.
8. We shall maintain our culture without external interferences.
9. It will give us scope to work out a principle by which we shall unite all sections of our country arbitrarily torn off by foreign powers.
10. It will help us to see into the whole financial structure of the territory and make it possible for the Government to work out financial policies.
11. It will psychologically inspire the people of the Cameroons to increase productivity through self-sacrifice, building up their country and work speedily towards independence.
12. It will enable us accelerate the Cameroonisation of all departments of public service in the country.
13. The current political advancement of Nigeria has made it imperative for Southern Cameroons to take a definite stand-secession.

³⁹N.N. Mbile, *Cameroon Political History*, Memories of an Authentic Eyewitness, Limbe, Presbyterian Printing Press, 2000, p.54.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 64.

14. It is our cherished plan not only to secede from the Federation of Nigeria but also to encourage and promote trade and happy relations among our people with those of other races without distinction by annihilating hate and rancour or thus fostering the spirit of good will and love.

The conference in Mamfe was very important for one thing, the KNDP manifesto was made public and the stance of the party towards the independence of Southern Cameroons was made known. Equally, the party's 14 points program spelt out in Mamfe made the party to win the support of the traditional rulers, native authority, French Cameroonians and other political stakeholders in the territory. The traditional rulers made Foncha to understand that they would never abandon him except when he would abandon them.⁴¹

Circumstances Leading to the UN Conducted Plebiscite in Southern Cameroons

At its twenty-first session, the Trusteeship Council, having been informed of the approach, the Federation of Nigeria would achieve independent in the years ahead. It was therefore no question of obliging the Cameroons to remain part of an independent Nigeria contrary to her own wishes and that before Nigeria became independent the people of the north and south sectors of the Cameroons would have to say freely what their wishes were as to their own future. The United Nations wanted that before Nigeria achieve her independent, the fate of North and South sectors of the Cameroons should be determined. In this line, in a memorandum to the council at its twenty-second session, the administering authority of north and south sectors of Cameroons made it very clear, it would no longer administer the territories in the Federation of Nigeria. It was therefore necessary to consider what arrangements should then be made for the administration of the Trust Territory – arrangement that stated, should involve either the modification or termination of the present Trusteeship Agreement. The Administering authority stated further that it had promised that the inhabitants of both the Northern and Southern sections of the Trust Territory would be given an opportunity freely to express their own wishes about the future.⁴²

Another important event leading to reunification of Cameroon was the declaration made back by the *Ngondo*, *Kumze* RACAM and some individuals like Robert Jabea Kum Dibongue in French Cameroon. They decided to make the first move to bring all French Cameroonians in the Southern Cameroons under an association known as French Cameroons Welfare Union

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 203.

⁴² Report of the United Nations Commissioner for the Supervision of the Plebiscite in the Southern and Northern Parts of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, 30th March 1961, pp.7-8.

(FCWU) in August 1948.⁴³ The objectives was to work for unification, which was consider the best solution to the problems of French Cameroonians in the Southern Cameroons. So the demand for unification officially emanated equally from the FCWU. The FCWU was one of the several groups that petitioned the first UN Visiting Mission in late 1949 to unify the British and French territories in a very short time.⁴⁴

The petition was directed almost exclusively to the conditions which obtained in the French territory; it claimed that the French had done virtually nothing to improve the territory, that France practiced the colour bar there, that the people lacked public liberties and representative institutions.⁴⁵ The focus of the petition indicated that the petitioners were familiar with the French policies in French Cameroon and believed that unification could serve as a vehicle to protest French policy in French Cameroon. The FCWU was therefore the first social or political group to mention unification in its petition in both the Southern Cameroons and the French Cameroon.

When the first visit of the UN Mission to Cameroon was announced for October 31, 1949, Dr. Emmanuel Endeley, a medical doctor of Bakweri origin who had been expelled from practice in Lagos for alleged malpractice, subsequently returned to Buea and Victoria to launch a number of social development and quasi-political organizations. He succeeded in uniting nearly 20 tribal unions and formed the Cameroon National Federation (CNF) in 1949. Among its objectives were to assert the separate identity of the Southern Cameroons, to unite the Northern and Southern Cameroons und British Administration and to reunite the English and French Cameroons into a unified Cameroon.⁴⁶ It should be mentioned that the CNF was the first indigenous organization which made open appeal for the wider national issue like unification. This was because the federation included associations led by French Cameroonians and also because of the presence of a UPC delegation at the May 1949 CNF inaugural conference. The federation consisted mainly of the various improvement unions and or associations in the Southern Cameroons. The main groups like; CDC Workers' Union, Bafaw Improvement Union, Bangwa Improvement Union, Ejagham Improvement Union and others. The FCWU and the Baminyang Improvement Union (BIU) grouping people from the

⁴³ Ebune, *Growth of Political Parties*, p.135.

⁴⁴ Nfi, *The Reunification Debate in the British Southern Cameroons, The Role of French Cameroon Immigrants*, Bamenda, Langaa Research and Publishing CIG, pp.214.147.

⁴⁵ NAB, File No. 4134/1/28, petition from FCWU concerning the Cameroon under British and French administration.

⁴⁶ Ebune, *Growth of Political Parties*, p.131.

Bamboutous were part of the Federation.⁴⁷ This was modelled in the same way as the NCNC of Nnamdi Azikiwe organized as a collection of pressure groups and associations. As such, individuals could only become members through their associations. The structure therefore indicated the Nigerian connection and aspirations of the founder.

The KNDP appeal letter to Paul Soppo Priso certainly yielded fruits because in 1956, John Ngu Foncha bought an all-terrain Land Rover vehicle which he used for the implantation of KNDP in Cameroon⁴⁸. With this land Rover, Foncha toured all the villages in Nkambe, Nso, Wum, Bamenda, Mamfe, Kumba, Victoria, Buea, Tiko, Muyuka, Tombel and Meta land to enlist adherence and appoint local party officials. This approach of grassroots politics greatly accounted for the French Cameroonians was therefore instrumental in the rapid propagation of the KNDP ideology.

In a move to re-enforce its reunification option and get more French Cameroonian support, John Ngu Foncha in 1958, created a branch of the KNDP in Mamfe after the party's convention. He also associated the KNDP with a non-political organization, the Committee for the Reunification of the Cameroon (COREC), which was based in Douala⁴⁹. In 1958 John Ngu Foncha and Solomon Tandeng Muna visited French Cameroon and were received by Paul Soppo Priso and also probably by the premier, Ahmadou Ahidjo. These contacts made some French Cameroonians to become energetic supporters of reunification as they organized fund raising campaigns for the KNDP and reunification. For example, Douala Yondo who spoke English and French organized fund raising campaigns during this period for the KNDP. He also served as Foncha's principal contact with immigrant or itinerant British Cameroonians as well as Eastern sympathizers. French Cameroonians participated more in the reunification debate when the exiled leaders of the UPC arrived in the South Cameroons in 1955. The book titled "Kamerun Unification: Being a discussion of a 7 Point's Solution of the Unification Problem" was the first attempt by a KNDP member to describe outline the form which reunification should take.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Mbile in his *Cameroon Political Story* outlined the Improvement Unions and Associations that made up CNF omitting the FCWU and the BIU, p. 65.

⁴⁸ Soh, Dr, John Ngu Foncha, p. 49.

⁴⁹ Johnson, *Cameroon Federation*, p.133.

⁵⁰ Ngih, *Southern Cameroons*, p. 95.

- The first point called on the UN General Assembly to review the two separate Trusteeship Agreements and provide an interim administration of Cameroon under the joint trusteeship of the British and French governments.
- The secondly, they proposed that the British and French governments should establish an Anglo-French Commission which would assume the functions that were performed by the Governor General of Nigeria in British Cameroon and French High Commissioner in French Cameroon.
- The thirdly, “an Anglo-French Commission of administration” consisting of two members appointed by both the French and British Governments respectively should be formed.
- The fourthly, a council of Ministers should be established comprising only of Cameroonians. It would also include a premier and two joint commissioners who would either hold a joint chairmanship or alternating chairmanship of the council.⁵¹
- The fifthly, a parliament of two chambers should be established and it should comprise, apart from the Cameroon members, one European member representing the French colons and other European interests.
- The sixthly, three or four government units should be recognized within the Cameroon nation. They felt that each of these units should exercise legislative and executive functions within each respective unit. This was intended to solve the problem of diversities in Cameroon.
- Finally the seventh point, they proposed a progressive system of population elections in the less advance areas. In the more advanced areas, they called for election based on full adult suffrage⁵²

Although the document did not become “the-talk-of-town” immediately because many reunificationists had to be cautious due to the UPC guerrilla warfare that was ravaging French Cameroon, it however laid the basis for future discussion. Here it could be argued that it was this document that transformed the vagueness and obscured nature of reunification notion from its theoretical stance in to concrete and practical reality. It became the lantern that lit the path on which pro-reunificationists were to traverse. Its publications was timely because it was time that the Bamenda Conference (may 28 to June 1, 1956) was being convened to prepare for the

⁵¹ Atem, *Kamerun Unification*;, 1956,p.6-8

⁵² Ibid, pp. 18-19.

1957 London Conference which included on its agenda a review of the political process in the Southern Cameroon. Epale through this publication therefore greatly influence the reunification debate.⁵³

Despite the French Cameroonian domination of the UPC, the British colonial authorities and the Commissioner of the Southern Cameroons, J.O. Field, welcome the party and declared that it had the right to exist in the territory like any other political party⁵⁴. According to Field, there was no problem having many political parties in the Southern Cameroons. Furthermore, the UPC refugees in the Southern Cameroons were not communists, as it was alleged in French Cameroon. The British authorities convinced Dr. Emmanuel Endeley to accept the participation of the UPC in the politics of the Southern Cameroons.

The UPC therefore organized public lectures in Victoria, Bota, Buea, Kumba, Mamfe, Bamenda, Tiko, Muyuka and Missellele in 1956. Under the leadership of Abel Kingue, Felix Roland Moumie and Paul Soppo Priso, the party also wrote several petitions to the UN in favour of reunification. It is reported that French Cameroonian pressurized the UN to get reunification more than the Southern Cameroonians. For example, in 1957 alone, about 4.840 communications in the form of reports resolutions, motions, and memoranda, petitions of protest and appeal letter were written to the UN by these settlers requesting the reunification of the Cameroons. Many of these communications were marked “sous maquis” while others carried addresses in the Southern Cameroons.⁵⁵

This hospitality accorded the UPC was not shared by all the Cameroonians, especially when party failed to cooperate with John Ngu Foncha and to accept his idea of gradual rather than immediate reunification. French Cameroonian UPC leaders were not invited to Bamenda Conference of May-June 1956, which was aimed at adopting a common platform for the Southern Cameroons that would be presented to the British Government at the 1957 Constitutional Conference.⁵⁶

The absence of the UPC on the list of parties to attend this conference was petitioned by the UPC local committee of Missellele represented by Libogue Bernard and Buye Isaac. They wrote to the Governor in Lagos on May 18, 1956 requesting for UPC representation at the Bamenda. This action came after the UPC was banned in French Cameroun in 1955 and

⁵³ Aka, *British Southern Cameroon*, p. 203

⁵⁴ Ngoh, *History of Cameroon*, p. 211.

⁵⁵ NAB, file vb/b1956/5, Petitions Concerning British and French Cameroons, p. 24.

⁵⁶ NAB, file vb/b1956/1, UPC, p. 9.

the party hierarchy decided to carry the activities of the party to British Southern Cameroons where they participated in the 1957 general elections. The party had zero seats out of the thirteen seats in the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly. UPC was then banned in Southern Cameroons when the party promised that they will start violence activities accusing the KNC for rigging the elections.⁵⁷

It was the CNF as a national organization that made the first written demand for Cameroon unification.⁵⁸ All of the resolutions of the inaugural meeting of the CNF, held on the 14th and 15th of May, 1949, were later presented to the UN Visiting Mission as petitions. During this meeting, the Bangwa Native Authority, referred to the Anglo –French partition of the Cameroon and raised the issue of unification. The petition stated, among other things, that:

If the UNO cannot unite both the so-called French and British Cameroons into one country it should for the interest of the common people, do its utmost to rectify the present Boundaries so that people of the same tribe, now divided between British and French Cameroons, begin to enjoy life under one Government. In this way, we the people of Bangwa would be joint together with the Dschang people now under French Rule.⁵⁹

Still in the meeting, Nerius Namaso Mbile, like the leaders of the CWU, CYL and CFU also raised the issue of unification. He was interested in the preservation of the identity of Southern Cameroons and the autonomy of the Southern Cameroons within Nigeria. Unification was not his pre occupation. During the same meeting, a motion tabled by Raphael B. Nana (a French Cameroonian and the president of the Baminyam Improvement Union, representing the interest of French Cameroonians (Bamileke) in the Southern Cameroons) advocated:

(Re) unification of the Cameroons in principle with details to be worked out later, the removal of all types of frontier restrictions, the teaching of the French and English languages in all schools of the Cameroons, British or French.⁶⁰

The memo of the BIU drafted at a conference in Kumba in 1949 also called for the removal of the boundary and customs regulations between the two Cameroons. French Cameroonians were therefore those advocating unification within the CNF. If unification featured amongst the demands of the CNF, it was on the insistence of the FCWU⁶¹ and BIU.

⁵⁷Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, p.300.

⁵⁸ Johnson, *Cameroon Federation*, p.119.

⁵⁹A.E. Aka, *British Southern Cameroons*, p. 185-186.

⁶⁰ UN. Doc. T/pet.4/16-T/pet.5/7. 9, December 1949, p.119.

⁶¹ A pressure group created in Southern Cameroons by French Cameroon smugglers who traded in goods smuggled across inter- Cameroon boundary. It was later changed to East Kamerun Welfare Union(EKWU)

Besides, Dr. Emmanuel Endeley, the CNF leader did not himself believe in unification. He only condoned unification because he wanted the votes of French Cameroons. The British-trained Dr. Emmanuel Endeley, who knew little about French Cameroon and who did not know a word in French was not sincere about unification. He was only paying lip service to it. He also advocated unification mainly as a means of developing the Southern Cameroons. In fact, the CNF leaders used unification largely as a threat, as a method of calling attention to the neglected conditions of the territory and to win a measure of autonomy from Nigeria. This issue of unification because British Cameroons was lagging behind both Nigeria and French Cameroon. It was believed that unification would make the Cameroons an economic unit with better prospects of standing on its own feet.⁶² To Dr. Emmanuel Endeley and his group within the CNF, unification was seen only as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. As Emmanuel Chiabi puts it, the Anglophone who talked about unification in the 1940s demonstrated more of a political flexing muscle than a serious concrete attempt to achieve reunification

Even the CFU which presented one of the longest petitions in 1949 failed to raise the idea of reunification. The CFU only drew attention to the economic potentials of the Southern Cameroons and made several suggestions for the development of the territory. The petition pointed out that for more than thirty years, the British trust territories of the Cameroons had suffered from much neglect because it was administered within Nigeria. The petitioners however advocated the teaching of English and French in the British and French Cameroons, the promotion of trade between the two territories and the establishment of a joint consultative assembly to discuss matters of common interest affecting citizens of both territories. Complete reunification as advocated by Raphael Nana was never contemplated. Since the CFU leadership was virtually the CNF leadership minus the Cameroonians, the CFU stance was further proof that the CNF demand for reunification was largely influenced by French Cameroonians membership

Again, the formation of KUNC played an important role in promoting the idea of unification in Southern Cameroons because it brought together the populations of French Cameroon found major towns in territory to remind all the sundry of the unity of Cameroon during the German rule. These migrants fell into two categories. The first were the German trained elites, mostly from the Douala and Yaounde regions and residing in Buea, Tiko,

⁶² Ebune, *Growth of Political Parties*, p.132.

Victoria, and Kumba district. The French Cameroonians were also found in Mamfe especially the Bamum. In Mamfe they were known as the Hausas because of the similarity in culture they had with Northerners. The population usually called them the Hausas. With the popular song “Hausa for Mamfe na so so Bamum”.⁶³ Due to the white garments that they wore, the Bamum and the Bamileke in Mamfe exploited the dynamic commercial traffic across the frontier to settle in their numbers in many of these towns in Southern Cameroons.

At its thirteenth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 1282 (XIII) concerning both the Cameroons under British and the Cameroons under French administration in which among others, it mentioned that the Cameroon under United Kingdom administration was expected to achieve independent in 1960. The objectives set forth in Article 766 of the Charter of the United Nations requested the Trusteeship Council to examine the report of the UN visiting mission to the Cameroons and to transmit them with its observation and recommendations to the General Assembly before 20 February 1959. This was to enable the Assembly to take into consideration the terms of reference the visiting mission had been requested to include in the report on the Cameroons under British administration its views on the method of consultation which should be adopted when the time would come for the people of the territory to express their wishes concerning their future. The Federation of Nigeria which was expected to become independent on 1 October 1960, and the Cameroon under the French administration expected to gain independence on 1 January 1960 had all expressed their willingness to have the Cameroons under British administration join the people of territory they do so desire⁶⁴.

The mission equally recalled the circumstances which had led the British portion to be administered in Nigeria in the first place and why they were administered separately in Nigeria in the second place. The mission was convinced that a realistic appraisal of the situation in the Trust Territory as well as a realistic approach to the question of its future required that the Territory should not be regarded as an entity but should be considered in terms of two parts and two groups of peoples, Northern and Southern parts. People whose history and development had taken distinct different courses and between which there now existed profound differences both in administrative system and in political attitudes and loyalties. The visiting mission

⁶³ Interview with Besong Ayuk Moses, 56 Years, Teacher, Mbakang, 12th February 2020.

⁶⁴ Report of the United Nations Commissioner for the Supervision of the Plebiscite in the Southern and Northern Parts of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, 30th March 1961, pp.11-12.

informed the people of the Trust Territory to be determined separately, their historical and political development, which it set forth in its report.

In February 1959, the General Assembly resumed its thirteenth session to consider the question of the future of the Trust Territories of the Cameroons under French administration and the Cameroons under the United Kingdom administration. The Assembly after considering the report of the visiting mission adopted resolution concerning the Cameroon under United Kingdom administration in which it recommended that the administering authority, in pursuance of Article 76 b of the Charter of the United Nations took steps in consultations with a United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner, to organize under the supervision of the United Nations separate plebiscites in the two Cameroons under United Kingdom administration for the people to decide their future.

With respect to Northern Cameroons, the Assembly recommended that the plebiscite should take place about the middle of November 1959. With respect to the Southern Cameroons, plebiscite should be conducted during the dry season between the beginning of December 1959 and the end of April 1960 and that the alternative and qualifications for voting in the plebiscite should be discussed and considered at the fourth session of the General Assembly. The session ended up without any proper decision. All attempts to reconcile the Southern Cameroons politicians and the chiefs, representative of the Native Authorities and other groups failed.

The Southern Cameroons were then sent to resolve their problem at home. The outcome was a conference which was held at Mamfe and presided over by an independent chairman, Sir Sidney Philip son. At Mamfe the Premier, J.N. Foncha (KNDP) and N. Ntumazah (OK) all stood on party lines and supported their party's views on the issue of plebiscite. They failed to come into a consensus that would prevent the UN conducted plebiscite.⁶⁵

Following the failure of the Mamfe Conference which was aimed at reconciling various groups of Southern Cameroons as concern the territory's future, at the 898th Meeting of the Fourth Committee, Mr Foncha and Mr Endeley informed the Committee that, they had agreed on the voting qualification. This voting qualification was put forward in a draft resolution submitted by Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Libya, Mexico, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, the United Arab Republic and the United States of America. It was approved on the 9th October 1959 and adopted by the General Assembly at its 829th Meeting on 16 October 1959. By this resolution,

⁶⁵ Ibid, pp.15 – 18.

the Assembly noted the statements that had been made at the 898th Meeting of the Fourth Committee and decided that the arrangements for the plebiscite in the Southern Cameroons should begin on 30 September 1960, and that the plebiscite should be concluded not later than March 1961. It recommended that the two questions to be put at the plebiscite should be:

- a) Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the Independent Federation of Nigeria?
- b) Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the Independent Republic of Cameroon?⁶⁶

The Assembly also recommended that only persons born in the Southern Cameroons should vote in the plebiscite. It further recommended that the Administering Authority, in consultation with the Government of Southern Cameroons, should take steps to implement the separation of the administration of Southern Cameroons from that of the Federation of Nigeria, not later than 1 October 1960.

The Plebiscite Conference of August 1959

The Mamfe Plebiscite Conference of 1959 was organised to enable Southern Cameroon's politicians to reach a common agreement on the Southern Cameroons' independence situation.. The resolutions of the conference were submitted to the United Nations High Commissioner for the territory, which would be later forwarded to the United Nations for final decision to be taken as concerned the independence of the territory. The conference met from 11th to the 12th of August 1959. It was attended by the representatives of five (5) political parties, 10 chiefs and representatives of Cameroon Society, Students Union and Native Authorities⁶⁷.

Before the conference, the idea to organise a plebiscite in Southern Cameroon had been accepted by the main political parties in the territory. Nevertheless, there was no agreement on the questions to be put before the electorates and the eligibility of voters. This of course preoccupied the discussion during the conference. In his memorandum to the conference, the chairperson outlined three (3) main options open to the territory. One; that the territory could become a self-governing region within an independent federation of Nigeria. Two; that the territory could separate from Nigeria with a period under the trusteeship and that the territory could separate from Nigeria with the opening of early negotiations with the acceptable terms. Three, for unification with French Cameroon, the memorandum stated that the eligibility of voters should be 21 years old and above, should be either a British subject or British protected

⁶⁶ Ngoh, *The Untold Story of Cameroon Reunification*. 22.

⁶⁷ Aka, *The British Southern Cameroons 1922-1961*, pp. 220 -226.

person, be a native of Southern Cameroons or be a person who has resided in the territory for a continue period of 10 years.⁶⁸

As the conference deliberations unfolded, the chair, Sir Sidney Phillipson cautioned the political leaders to work on the best interest of the people they represented. He reminded the representatives for the need for a compromise rather than allowing the United Nations to decide for the people, as quoted below:

If we fail to agree, it necessarily follows that the responsibility for deciding on the next step to be taken to ascertain the peoples wishes will pass to the united nations... it would plainly be to the interest of this country and its inhabitants for the manner of consultation with the people to be agreed upon here rather than to be settled by an external authority.⁶⁹

Notwithstanding, the political leaders still continue with a lot of disagreements over the choice of members of the steering committee that was supposed to prepare the agenda and other important items to be presented for discussion at the conference. For example, the KNDP and the KNC/KPP alliance, fail to agree on only one person to represent the Wum and NKambe native authority. In addition, because of this, the idea to form a steering committee was cancelled.

Other Participants at the Plebiscite Conference

Civil Society and student associations were not left out from the crucial Mamfe plebiscite conference of 1959. They contributed their quota during the conference. These groups include the Kamerun Society, the National Union for Kamerun Students (NUKS) and the Traditional Rulers.

The Kamerun Society (KS) was one of the Southern Cameroons stakeholders, which also attended the Mamfe plebiscite conference. Nicolas Akeh Ngwa, a Roman Catholic Secondary school teacher, represented it. The association did not support Kale or Foncha. Nevertheless, they used the results of all the general elections in Southern Cameroons from 1953 to 1959 to advance their viewpoint at the conference. They argued that the majority of Southern Cameroonians supported the idea of integration with Nigeria or secession alone from it. It was not just for Southern Cameroonians to be called to vote on reunification, which they knew nothing about. According to the KS, reunification was out of place and so it should not be put on the table for discussion. It was, therefore paramount for integration with Nigeria and

⁶⁸Ibid. pp. 222-223.

⁶⁹Ibid. p.222.

secession alone from it to be the issues for the plebiscite. As concerned qualification of voters, the KS was very clear that only “indigenous persons should be allowed to vote because the plebiscite was a purely Southern Cameroon affair”.

The National Union for Kamerun Students (NUKS) was represented at the conference by Thomas Chofor Nchinda, a medical student from French Cameroon who was studying in Nigeria. The students attended the plebiscite conference with an objective to secede from Nigeria and to achieve reunification with French Cameroon.⁷⁰ The students were against KNDP’s view that Southern Cameroons should have an extended period of trusteeship before independence. To the students, secession might either end in the creation of Southern Cameroons dependency on Britain or a small unstable state which will serve as a fertile spot for communist infiltration into Africa. The students were therefore against any attempt to make Southern Cameroons a weak and unviable state. For the qualification of voters, the students held the view that there was no difference between the British and French Cameroonians. In other words, French and Southern Cameroonians living in Southern Cameroons who had attained the voting age should be allowed to vote.

The Chiefs were also present at the conference. Seventeen native authorities attended. out of the 17, 11 supported Foncha on the issue of the alternation of the plebiscite, which was integration with Nigeria versus secession, 6 of them supported Endeley, Ntumanza and the students. The 6 wanted secession or reunification as the alternatives of the plebiscite. Even though the Chiefs were divided on the issues their spokesperson summed up the opinion of the positions of those of the grasslands and those of the forest region as secession and independence for Southern Cameroons. The Fon of Bafut, Achirimbi put it as follows:

We believe on two points during a conference in Bamenda in which Dr Endeley and Foncha were present. I was the chairman of that conference. We rejected Dr. Endeley because he wanted to take us to Nigeria. If Mr Foncha tries to take us to French Cameroons, we shall also run away from him. To me French Cameroons is “fire” and Nigeria is “water”. Sir, I support secession without unification.⁷¹

The stance of chiefs at the conference instead brought more complications to the already worse situation, given that the first speakers did not come to a consensus. The chief’s ad vocation was for secessions without unifications pure and simple. The chiefs said Kale or any other political leader who would support secession would surely have their support and that if the worst came

⁷⁰ Ngoh, *The Untold Story of Cameroon Reunification*, p.20.
Chem-Langhëë, “[The Kamerun Plebiscites 1959-1961: Perception and Strategies,” p.178.

to the worst Southern Cameroons would choose integration with Nigeria and not unification with French Cameroon. Southern Cameroons would choose “water’ and reject ‘fire’”⁷²

The Mamfe plebiscite conference ended without a consensus opinion amongst the participants. According to Chem-Langhëë, the “Mamfe plebiscite conference changed a lot but changed nothing”.⁷³ The British officials following the development at the conference discovered that Southern Cameroonians themselves were not united on a common alternative. They moved from one confusion to the other. The representative of the British acting as the chair resolved that two alternatives should be involved, but did not state the second alternative and who should vote at the plebiscite. It was on this basis that they turned to the United Nations for the final decision.

Reactions to Sheds of Opinion at the Conference

Reactions to different sheds of opinion at the Mamfe plebiscite questions started coming immediately the conference ended in 1959. The reactions came from some political leaders, native authorities and students.

The first reaction came from Chief Nyenti Eyong and his newly created political party Cameroons Commoners Congress (CCC), which some detractors referred to as “Cameroons Cheap Cargo”. The CCC was founded in 1959 but it remained inactive until early 1960. Chief Nyenti was precise on opinions which were not directed towards the independence of Southern Cameroons. His ideas were centred on three different approaches, firstly an independent state of Southern Cameroons, which had no connection with Nigeria or the Republic of Cameroon, except diplomatic and trade relations. Secondly, the independent state of Southern Cameroons would be a member of the Commonwealth and United Nations on its own rights. Thirdly, this independent state of Southern Cameroons would unanimously decide in an indefinite future possibility of joining Nigeria or the Republic of Cameroon. Chief Nyenti was completely against the reunification. According to him, if Southern Cameroonians were asked to vote on reunification, they would be voting for something they knew nothing about. He sent serious appeals to those with good conscience and those that United Nations consulted to argue in favour of the third alternative for the plebiscite.⁷⁴

Unfortunately, chief Nyenti’s approach was not given the attention it deserved. He therefore called on his supporters and sympathizers to boycott the UN plebiscite, which was to

⁷² Ibid, p. 178.

⁷³ Aka, *The British Southern Cameroons 1922-1961*, p.228.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 213.

take place in February 1961. He blamed the United Nations for not respecting the United Nations Charter and for denying Southern Cameroonians the right to self-determination.

The second reaction to the outcome of the plebiscite conference came from Chief Jesco Manga Williams of Victoria who founded the Cameroons Indigenes Party (CIP) in October 1960. His detractors called it “Cameron Ignorant Party”. Manga Williams, was the chief the British selected to sit in the Nigeria Central Legislature counsel in Lagos following the implementation of the Clifford’s Constitution in 1922. He also sat in the Regional Legislative Council in Enugu following the putting in place of the Richard’s Constitution. It was however, no coincidence that chiefs founded both the CCC and the CIP and the founder of KUP was also related to a royal family.

The CIP was created after the Mamfe Plebiscite Conference and could not participate in the conference or to meet the representatives of the United Nations until January 19, 1961. When Jesco Manga Williams had the opportunity to meet the officials, he put forward his party’s stance on the issue of the plebiscite. The CIP requested the United Nations to provide the third alternative. Although participants at the conference had disagreed on the two alternatives provided, nevertheless if the United Nations did not provide the third alternative of separate independence for Southern Cameroon, the party would boycott the voting as the CCC had indicated.⁷⁵

The Chiefs, CIP and KUP called on the United Nations to examine the number of registered voters who did not vote because of the absence of the third alternative in January 19, 1959 general election into Southern Cameroons House of Assembly. He blamed Endeley and Foncha for accepting two alternatives for the plebiscite without first consulting with their people. He said the people of the forest zone would not take it lightly if the United Nations did not reverse their decision, that the two alternatives were a plan for a “civil war” if the third alternative was not added to permit the people make a rightful choice on the plebiscite day. Chief Manga Williams went further to say that neither of the territories the United Nations wanted Southern Cameroonians to join i.e. Nigeria and Republic of Cameroon achieved their own independent through a plebiscite to join another nation. The Southern Cameroon is a sovereign trusteeship state that should be given self-government without other conditions.

The third reaction to the decision of the United Nations to organize a plebiscite in Southern Cameroons with only two alternatives also came from the Chief Enow Atabe of

⁷⁵ NAB, File No. 1499/S.1 Vc/b 1959/24, Plebiscite Southern Cameroons Mamfe Division, and p.12.

Ntenako village and the Chief Agbortoko of Ndekwei. They joined their own voices and those of their councillors on July 30, 1960 to plead on the United Nations to change its mind on the two alternative questions. Chiefs Enow and Agbor called on the United Nations to add the popular alternative that was the independent of Southern Cameroons. They said the two alternatives provided were an imposition against the will of the people and thus they contested it very strongly.⁷⁶

The Southern Cameroons did not need either of the two countries, that is Nigeria or Republic of Cameroon to be independence. The idea that Southern Cameroons was not economically and politically viable to stand by itself was a pretext to refuse the people of their legitimate right. The two chiefs went further to state that if the territory in the future needed any financial assistance, they would freely ask the British their former trusteeship master. The ideas of Endeley and Foncha to join a neighbouring country was not a popular one because Southern Cameroonians wanted their independence as a sovereign state.⁷⁷

Out of the 11 territories that were placed under the UN trusteeship in December 1946, none was obliged to gain its independence by attaching itself to an already nation except Southern Cameroons. All would go on to become independent nation state; or merge with other territories before acceding to independence as a single sovereign entity. French Cameroon and French Togoland acceded to independence as full nation states in 1960. Samoa achieved independence in 1962. The Ruanda- Urundi trust territory gained independence separately as Rwanda and Burundi in 1962. In 1961, Tanganyika was granted independence; and would later federate with the former British protectorate of Zanzibar in 1964 to form Tanzania. In Papua New Guinea; the two entities (Papua and New Guinea), though administratively unified after the Second World War, were legally unified in 1975 and granted independence as Papua New Guinea. Southern Cameroons is the only such territory that never acceded to self-determination and no longer exist as an entity today.⁷⁸

The KNC/KPP Convention of June 1960

The Convention of the Kamerun National Congress and Kamerun People's Party took place in Mamfe on the 1st of July 1960. It was convened by the leaders of the KNC and the KPP to enable the two political parties prepare for the UN Plebiscite, which was slated for 11th February 1961. It was therefore a joint venture of the two main opposition in the Southern

⁷⁶Interview with Peter Ayuk Enow, 65 Years, Driver, Ntenako, 21ST April 2021.

⁷⁷Ibid.214.

⁷⁸ Abang, Southern Cameroon Negotiating an Existence, Bamenda, Writivism,, pp.190-191.

Cameroons. The KNC was created in 1953 by the members of the Benevolent Neutrality block in Eastern Regional Crisis of April 1953. The aim of the party was to fight for a separate region of Southern Cameroons. It was initially the ruling party of Southern Cameroons. A few months after the creation of the KNC, members of the Mbile block created an rival political party the (KPP) to challenge the KNC political position towards Southern Cameroons.

It was in Mamfe, that the KNC was created following the amalgamation of the two main pressure groups of the territory, namely the Cameroon National Federation (CNF) led by E.M.L. Endeley and the Kamerun United National Congress (KUNC) led by R.K. Dibongue. In the same year, the KPP was formed by N.N. Mbile who was the Secretary General of the KUNC who was relieved of his duties and dismissed from the pressure group. When Mbile created KPP, P.M. .Kale was the chair person. The party continued with its link to the NCNC political party of Nnamdi Azikiwe, preaching association with the Eastern Region of Nigeria.⁷⁹

In the course of time, the gap between the ideologies of the two political parties widened, especially on the issue of autonomy of Southern Cameroons. The gap only narrowed in 1959 when the two political parties formed an alliance called the KNC/KPP. Many observers described this alliance as a marriage of convenient i.e. it was not going to last. They saw it as an alliance that was created to challenge the KNDP in the January 1959 general election into the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly. It should be noted that, the Kamerun National Democratic party (KNDP) was created in March 1955 due to Endeley abandonment of the secession option in favour of integration with Nigeria. The party was created to satisfy the aspiration or the interest of the people of Southern Cameroonians who wanted Secession at all cost.

In order to prove to the population that it was the people's party, the leaders of the parties adopted the Pidgin English slogan "Koki neva deny pot".⁸⁰ This made the party very popular and created fear amongst the ranks of KNC and the KPP political parties. This fear made the KNC and the KPP to think of coming together to put a powerful force which would enable them challenge the KNDP. A convention was organized in Mamfe with the main objective to concretise their newly born alliance and equally to examine the possibility of

⁷⁹ Eyongetah and Brain. *A History of Cameroon*, P.156.

⁸⁰ By this pidgin slogan, it meant that the party was able to move to any direction the people wanted it to move especially to secession side, which was very popular at the time.. Endeley failure to respect the benevolent neutrality policy adopted in 1953 Southern Cameroons to stay away from the political activities in Nigeria and to form separate region caused J.N.Foncha to create KNDP to oppose the KNC. .The pidgin slogan was used to attract the masses. The party was to swing to any direction the people might want. In 1990 equally, the SDF adopted the pidgin slogan, suffer don finished to attract more militants to it side.

creating a single political party which would campaign for continuous association with Nigeria. There was no doubt that the coming together of the two political parties would make them forget some of their old political differences. Their main identical objective was the reason for which they have to form this alliance so as to defeat the KNDP and Foncha in the 11th February 1961 UN plebiscite.

At Mamfe convention, the Cameroon People's National Convention (CPNC) was created a new name derived from the KNC and KPP political parties. The delegates at the conference juggled with letters and came out with the new appellation, Letter K, which the two parties used formally to remind them of the old German period was dropped and replaced with letter C, as the English spelled Cameroon. The reason was to enable them continue enjoy the English culture which Britain had introduced in Nigeria. P was picked from the KPP and N, from the KNC.⁸¹ The last letter C was added to stand for Convention. At the end the draft constitution was drawn up with Dr. E.M.L. Endeley as the president, N.N Mbile, vice president; P.M. Motomby Woleta, secretary general; F.N. Ajabe/ Sone, assistant secretary; E.A. Arrey, treasurer.

P.M Kale one of the founding fathers of the KPP was not in the Mamfe for the convention because he abandoned the KPP and created his own political party the Kamerun United Party (KUP). KUP demanded the option of an independent Southern Cameroons whose objective contradicted that of the CPNC which advocated for the continuous integration with Nigeria. The CPNC was opposed to reunification and claim that Southern Cameroons could best maintain its territorial identity within the federation of Nigeria.⁸² It also claimed that the Cameroon republic had not given the same assurance for self-government as Nigeria. A new political party maintained that joining the Cameroon Republic, they would lose their house of chief, suffer from a system of land tenure where the French expropriated native's land and introduced the policy of "*mis en valeur*"⁸³ which encouraged the production of cash crops to feed the French home industries. They also foresaw a period of depression to befall a Cameroon Republic in the years ahead. For these reasons, the CPNC considered association with Nigeria

⁸¹N.N. Mbile, Cameroon Political Story Memories of an Authentic Eye Witness, 1999.p.139-140.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³ It was one of the French colonial policies practiced in Africa in General and French Cameroon in particular aimed at encouraging the natives to produce more cash crops than food crops. Cash crops such as coffee, cotton, rubber and palms needed in France as raw materials. The policy was to exploit the colony to the benefit of France. The policy introduced by Albert Sarraut. In order to facilitate economic exploitation of the territory. Through this roads and railways lines were constructed to ensure easy evacuation of raw materials to France.

to be the best option. At Mamfe, the KUP representative who attended the convention wanted an independent Southern Cameroons state without integration or reunification.

Mamfe town thus hosted an important historical convention for integrationists; those who wanted Southern Cameroons should remain in Nigeria. The convention took place in Mamfe, the place where the inhabitants were against continuous association with Nigeria because the people of the division had generally developed hatred for Nigerians and the Igbo in particular due to their tyrannical and domination tendencies. The people stood for secession from Nigeria pure and simple and unification could be decided in the nearest future. However, the UN on the 11th of February 1961, decided to organise a plebiscite in Mamfe Division like other five divisions in Southern Cameroons with the timetable ⁸⁴as shown on timetable 2;

Table 2: Timetable for the Plebiscite of 11th February 1961.

Time Table	Days	Event
1 st – 15 th October 1960	15	First public enlightenment campaign. Registration staff move to briefing centre.
16 th – 19 th October 1960	4	Briefing of registration staff.
20 th – 25 th October 1960	6	Registration staff move to registration areas
26 th October – 22 nd November 1960	28	Registration
23 rd November – 27 th December 1960	35	Preparation and publication of preliminary. Second public enlightenment campaign. Sitting of polling stations.
28 th December – 11 th January 1961	15	Submission of claims and objections.
12 th – 26 th January 1961	15	Determination of claims and objections. Polling staff move to briefing, centres.
27 th January – 10 February 1961	15	Preparation and publication of final register. Briefing of polling staff. Polling staff move to polling stations.
11 th February 1961	1	Polling day.
21 st February 1961		Last day for lodging petitions.

Source: Report of the United Nations Commissioner for the Supervision of the Plebiscite in the Southern and Northern Parts of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration., p.152.

78 Report of the United Nations Commissioner for the Supervision of the Plebiscite in Southern and Northern parts of Cameroons under the United Kingdom administration. From United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner to the Secretary General , signed by Djalal Abdoh. ,30th March 1961P.42.

February 11th 1961 Plebiscite in Mamfe Division

A plebiscite specifies a decision made upon a political question by the votes of all qualified citizens in a given area or colony. It refers to the ordinance of the people. It is a political issue by which questions are submitted to a 'national' vote instead of it being determined by parliamentary representatives. On the 11th February 1961, the UN conducted plebiscites separate in the two parts of British Cameroon to decide about the fate of the people as concerning their independence. They were organised in British Northern and British Southern Cameroons. One division of Southern Cameroon where the plebiscite procedures were worked out was Mamfe Division.

The UN conducted plebiscite of 1961 took place in the Mamfe Division like the other five (5) Divisions of Southern Cameroons. Like other divisions, the Mamfe Division electorates were equally faced with integration and reunification. The option of integration with Nigeria was not popular in the division given that their close collaboration and integrations with the Nigerians living in the divisions brought a lot of discontents and dissatisfactions with them. As concerned reunification with the Republic of Cameroon, many Mamfe inhabitants and its environs supported the view that the United Nation should consult with the British and French authorities and set up machinery for organising a plebiscite in the division.

The Meaning of the vote in Mamfe Division

In getting a clear meaning of the votes for the division, it would be important for us to examine the plebiscite vote by districts. If possible the results from villages shall also be useful to us in this study. The approach to analyse results from each district is determined by the amount of evidence available. The evidence would enable the reader have a clearer picture of the situation of plebiscite in Mamfe Division. To start, it might be better to put the results of plebiscite of Mamfe Division on a table in order that the reader might see who actually voted for what alternative.

Mamfe Division had the longest border with Nigeria and an insignificant boundary with the Republic of Cameroon, only at the Bangwa area. The Division was not populated as compared to Bamenda which was the most populated in Southern Cameroons. Its culture and tradition was not adulterated at the time of the plebiscite. Mamfe Division was also the most politically well organized, combining its traditional system with the British system of Indirect Rule as we had explained in Chapter One of the work to produce cohesive Mamfe system. During the plebiscite the inhabitants of the division had different shed of opinions depending

where they were located. The different shed of opinions ranges from Secession which was more popular, to continue integration with Nigeria, and reunification with French Cameroon. When secession was kept aside, the inhabitants of Mamfe decided to turn to the old adage which says “If you have not seen what you like, like what you have.” The division was against N.N. Mbile’s idea that Victoria, Kumba and Mamfe (Vikuma) should join resources to fight the Bamenda grassland and if possible, the three Divisions should send away the grass Landers from these Divisions. This proposal was out rightly rejected by the good will people of Mamfe. They find anything wrong which the grass-Landers had done, so it was not for them to use force of arms on the peace loving people. They were allowed to campaign in the division like any other Southern Cameroonians politicians.⁸⁵

The Mamfe inhabitants diffused the tension and violence that would have characterised the campaign period of the plebiscite. The division did not cooperate with Victoria and Kumba to cause the disorder, consequently the absence of Mamfe led to the failure of this planned violent conflict. This planned violent was confirmed based on chief Manga William’s declaration “the people of the coastal belt had guns and cutlasses ready for a civil war and that the solution was either the provision of a third question for the plebiscite of the creation of a smaller Kamerun state”⁸⁶ Unfortunately, the Mamfe people who did not seem to blame Bamenda very much for everything that went on or was going wrong, did not indicate what reunification meant to them after the plebiscite. The content of the Mamfe people vote for reunification must be sought within the framework of the KNDP manifesto, which was centred on reunification.

At Mamfe, Endeley under the banner of CPNC on his part acknowledged that he knew his people aspired for secession from Nigeria with no reunification, but he insisted that the alternative of the plebiscite be integration with Nigeria versus reunification. At the same time, he asked the United Nations to make integration with Nigeria versus secession to oppose reunification as an option at the plebiscite. Table 3 explains the plebiscite results in Mamfe West.

⁸⁵Chem-Langhëë, *The Kamerun Plebiscites 1959-1961*, P.245.

⁸⁶ Ibid. 246.

Table 3: Plebiscite Results in Mamfe West

(a) Name of polling station	(b) Votes Cast for FIRST ALTERNATIVE	(c) Rejected votes	(d) Votes Cast for SECOND ALTERNATIVE	(e) Rejected Votes	(f) TOTAL VOTES CAST	(g) Estimated Number of Ballot papers mutilated
Besengabang						
B.M. Compound						
(1)	49	Nil	308	Nil	357	Nil
(2)	76	Nil	228	Nil	304	Nil
Mamfe Appeal Court						
(1)	51	Nil	302	2	355	Nil
(2)	69	Nil	384	N/L	453	Nil
Mamfe R.C.M School						
(1)	114	Nil	268	Nil	382	Nil
(2)	156	Nil	283	Nil	439	1
Mamfe Govt. School	180	Nil	165	Nil	345	Nil
Kembong B.M School	55	1	487	3	546	Nil
Kembong Appeal Court	79	Nil	309	Nil	388	Nil
Registration Area Total	134	1	796	3	934	/
Afap R.C.M School	55	1	487	3	469	Nil
(1)	8	Nil	411	Nil	419	Nil
(2)	13	Nil	208	1	222	Nil
(3)	16	Nil	210	Nil	286	Nil
Mfuni N.A. School	33	Nil	334	1	368	Nil
Ntenako B.M. School						
(1)	296	Nil	107	Nil	403	Nil
(2)	87	Nil	186	Nil	273	Nil

Source: Plebiscite voting in Mamfe Division, file N° vc/b/1961/34NAB.

Mamfe West referred to Mamfe central, Eyumojock and Upper Banyang sub-divisions today. The electorates in this Division were divided among unificationists and integrationists. But the results of the plebiscite in Mamfe West showed that the people did not want to stay in Nigeria any longer especially due to anti-Igbo sentiments which made them to tilt their support to

reunification. Things were even worse when Endeley went for campaign and insulted the people of Mamfe when he began to boast to the people, as seen in these words, “Their chiefs would never produce a son like him”⁸⁷. This statement was taken by Mamfe electorate as a serious sign of provocation for somebody who needed their votes. This reason made very few pooling centres to vote for the CPNC candidate, EML Endeley. The next electoral district is Mamfe North. Table 4, therefore below illustrates the results of the plebiscite in that area.

Table 4: Plebiscite Results in Mamfe North

(a) Name of polling station	(b) Votes Cast for FIRST ALTERNATIVE	(c) Rejected votes	(d) Votes Cast for SECOND ALTERNATIVE	(e) Rejected Votes	(f) TOTAL VOTES CAST	(g) Estimated Number of Ballot papers mutilated
Wdekom	6		522	1	529	Nil
Befang	8		383	1	408	Nil
Diche	8		548		557	Nil
Eka	2		488	1	491	Nil
Numba	2		316		318	Nil
Ayokaba	Nil		332		332	Nil
Menka	24		533		557	Nil
Awi	18		392		410	Nil
Anjack	32		181		213	Nil
Akanunku	4		559		513	Nil
Mbulu	271		630		631	Nil
Akwa	135		305		440	Nil
Amassi	1		388		395	Nil
Plebiscite district total	517		5324	3	5844	

Source: Plebiscite voting in Mamfe Division, file N° vc/b/1961/34NAB

Mamfe North referred to Akwaya sub-division of today administrative division of Cameroon. In the Mamfe North, reunificationists did not have it easy given that the people of Mamfe North have very close relationship with Nigeria. Nigeria was closer to them than French Cameroon which was further. However, because of the anti-Nigerian sentiment due to Igbo’s atrocities in their land, people preferred to vote for reunification as seen in table 4 above. Out of the 5,844

⁸⁷E..A Aka, *The British Southern Cameroons 1922- 1961*, p. 194.

voters cast, 5,324 voted for reunification and only a handful of voters i.e. 517 voted for integration.

Table 5: Plebiscite Results in Mamfe South

(a) Name of polling station	(b) Votes Cast for FIRST ALTERNATIVE	(c) Rejected votes	(d) Votes Cast for SECOND ALTERNATIVE	(e) Rejected Votes	(f) TOTAL VOTES CAST	(g) Estimated Number of Ballot papers mutilated
Mbetta	38	-	436	-	474	Nil
Fonjungo	8	-	650	-	658	Nil
Nguti	6	-	313	-	319	Nil
Hunyampe	1	-	427	-	428	Nil
		-				Nil
B/F	632	1	6349	5	6981	Nil
Plebiscite District Total	685	1	8175	5	8860	

Source: Plebiscite voting in Mamfe Division, file N° vc/b/1961/34NAB

Mamfe South referred to today's Nguti sub-division. Mamfe South also shared close relations with a good number of French Cameroon especially from the Bakossi and Mbo areas. These groups were divided during the Anglo-French partition of Cameroon in 1916 which one part went to the French and another part to the British. The people wanted to join their brothers and sisters of French Cameroon as it was during the German period. This opportunity came during the plebiscite of 1961 which the people of Mamfe South used the opportunity to unite once again with French Cameroon as seen in the table above. 8860 votes were cast and 8175 were in favour of reunification and only 685 voted for integration with Nigeria. The last electoral district to be examined is Mamfe East. Table 5 above depicts result of the plebiscite in this area.

Table 6: Plebiscite Results in Mamfe East

(a) Name of polling station	(b) Votes Cast for FIRST ALTERNATIVE	(c) Rejected votes	(d) Votes Cast for SECOND ALTERNATIVE	(e) Rejected Votes	(f) TOTAL VOTES CAST	(g) Estimated Number of Ballot papers mutilated
Atoangeh	02	-	425	-	427	Nil
Menji	05	-	848	-	853	Nil
Nje'eh	0	-	370	1	371	Nil
Mbeoh	0	-	670	-	670	Nil
Bellah-ngeh	01	-	536	-	537	Nil
Belluah	0	-	407	-	407	Nil
Letia	01	-	1091	-	1092	Nil
Mbindia	10	-	644	-	654	Nil
Nveur	03	-	702	-	705	Nil
Ncheubeluri	04	-	378	-	382	Nil
Njenache	01	-	974	01	976	Nil
Nchenallah	04	-	634	-	638	Nil
Njogwi	01	-	463	-	464	Nil
Nteseh	02	-	619	-	631	Nil
Nwenchen	08	-	489	04	501	Nil
Plebiscite district total	42		9250	06	9308	

Source: Plebiscite voting in Mamfe Division, File N^o vc/b/1961/34NAB

Mamfe East referred to Lebialem division in the present administrative dispensation. The people from the inception of the Anglo-French partition of Cameroon were not happy with the way which Cameroon was arbitrarily petitioned between Britain and France without considering the history, culture and linguistic relationship the people had with the Dschang of the western Region. This explains why during the mandate and trusteeship periods, the Bangwa native authority demanded that the frontiers between West and East Cameroons be readjusted to allow Bangwa and Dschang to come together under a single administrative unit. The opportunity came in 1961 during the plebiscite, which they used to satisfy their aspiration. The number of votes cast in favour of reunification confirmed that they were not happy being under British administration in Nigeria. From the result, it was actually a sanction for integration with Nigeria. The total number of 9250 out of 9308 voted in favour of reunification. These statistics had very serious signals to send across as stated in table 6 above.

Table 7: The Summary of the Plebiscite Results per Electoral District in Mamfe Division

Administrative Division of Mamfe and plebiscite district	Number of votes for Nigeria	Number of votes for Cameroon
Mamfe West	2,039	8,505
Mamfe North	5,432	6,410
Mamfe South	685	8,175
Mamfe East	1,894	10,177
Total	10,070	33,267

Source: Southern Cameroon Press Release No. 1217- Southern Cameroons Plebiscite.

A summary of the plebiscite result in Mamfe division as seen in table 7 above shows that 33,267 votes were cast for reunification and 10,070 votes were cast for integration with Nigeria. Mamfe East came first with the highest number of votes cast for reunification. This was not strange because the Bangwa native authority had before this time submitted a petition to Britain and France against the partition of Cameroons and equally raised the issue of reunification. As expressed in these words below:

“If the UN cannot unite both the so called French and British Cameroons into one country, it should for the interest of the common people, do its utmost to rectify the present boundaries so that the people of the same tribes, now divided between British and French Cameroon, begin to enjoy life under one government. In this way, we the people of Bangwa will be join together with the Dschang people now under French rule”.⁸⁸

Equally the highest vote cast for integration with Nigeria came from Mamfe North 5,432 votes cast. The reason was simple; the people of Akwaya had close linguistic and cultural relations with the Nigerians especially around the Ogoja local government area.

Victory and Defeat of the Conducted in Mamfe Division

The total number of votes cast in the Mamfe Division in favour of reunification was surprising to many given that Nigeria is very closed to the division and that the people share the same culture, history and even language with some communities of that country. Many people asked to know why the people of Mamfe decided to vote for reunification to join French Cameroons located about 400km to 500km from the division. As a matter of fact, the people were voting their interest and not any historical link. A popular African adage says “ a good friend is better

⁸⁸Aka. The British Southern Cameroons 1922- 1961, pp. 185-186.

than a bad brother”. However, there are number of reasons to explain why the people of Mamfe voted in favour of reunification.

The dislike for Igbophobia was one of the most important reason why the people of Mamfe preferred reunification to integration. The Igbo domination and tyranny in the division was seen in many spheres of life: in the market, farm, politics and other areas. One needed just to price an item in the markets they were selling and he or she was compelled to buy. If you had no money and decided to carry the matter to the police, You would definitely meet another Nigerian who handled the matter. In the transport sector, the Igbos equally dominated it. For example Pa.Orji from Abakiliki in the Ebony state Nigeria popularly known as ‘man no rest’ was the most popular bus driver of 1950s, 1960s and 1970s who transporting passengers from Mamfe to Kumba, as they were the only ones in this sector. The worse was that they talked to passengers very sulkily especially those who entered the buses with mud on their shoes. The people were not pleased with the way they treated their passengers. This unpleasant attitude made them to send the Nigerians out of their land during the 1961 plebiscite. Again, during the campaign for the plebiscite, the Igbos in Mamfe threatened that if integration won the people would lose their wives and other valuable items to them. This created an atmosphere of fear, hatred for the Igbos. This explains the relatively low vote cast in favour of integration.⁸⁹

Furthermore, the victory of unification over the integration was explained from the misunderstanding of the plebiscite options in Southern Cameroons in general and in Mamfe Division in particular. In the first place, there was much confusion and misunderstanding about the plebiscite questions. There was much complain that those who had voted for reunification mistook it for secession; others misunderstood reunification as an alliance between the two states and not an all lasting political fusion. In other words, they thought reunification was temporal and that at any time they would decide to bring it to an end. This misunderstanding of the plebiscite options and their hatred for Nigerians, gave Mamfe people the opportunity to massively vote for reunification.⁹⁰

Another glaring reason for the victory of the reunification in Mamfe Division was the absence of third option. The failure of the United Nations to accept the third option of achieving independence as an entity led to the rejection of integration and the victory of reunificationists. Reunification was initially unpopular even within the KNDP, which later on supported it. When he began to support reunification, Militants of the party threatened to replace Foncha as the chairman of the party. The issue of getting independence through association with Nigeria or the Republic of Cameroon was still not popular. The most popular option was independence as

⁸⁹ Interview with Chief Dr. Oben Godson Oroch, chief of Small Mamfe, 73 years, Mamfe, 23rd March 2022

⁹⁰Nfi, Nigerians on mission on the British Southern Cameroons, University of Buea, 2015 pp 33-34.

a separate state. This was the view of P.M. Kale who had left the KNC/KPP alliance in early 1959 and founded the KUP. He was supported by Chief Nyenti who founded the CCC in late 1959 to support the independence Southern Cameroons in its own right. The population and politicians put enormous pressure on politicians to review the UN Resolution 1352(XIV) of 16 October 1959 to organise a plebiscite with only two questions in February 11, 1961.⁹¹

Consequently, a delegation comprising the Southern Cameroons commissioner J.O. Fields, the KNDP representative Foncha, KNC representative Endeley and P.M Kale travelled to London to see if they could convince the British government to call on the UN to see how they could review the October 1959 UN resolution. Unfortunately, they failed in their mission as they were told that the issue had already been settled and the UN would not reopen any file on it again. The delegation returned to the territory and did not explain to the people what had happened. The population considered that their request had been granted. So when the people of Mamfe were voting on the 11th of February without the third option, they were forced to vote reunification reluctantly.⁹²

Endeley's alleged arrogance helped to ruin his call for integration with Nigeria. His alleged disrespect for people in some of his public statements helped to destroy his political career. For instance, during his campaign meetings in Kumba and Mamfe, he challenged the people that it would take them at least 20 years to produce a son like him. Such statements caused his failure during the plebiscite.⁹³

Nigerian Questions

When Nigerian laws completely replaced German laws in Southern Cameroons, there was an influx of Nigerians into the territory who came as administrators. By 1923 many Nigerian government departments had branches in Cameroon: posts and telegraphs, police, prisons, agriculture, medicine, education, customs, marine, west African Frontier Force, and public works. All these branches were headed by Nigerians. As some scholars have observed, Nigerians occupied the position of the “dominant alien community” normally reserved for nationals of the European colonial power elsewhere in Africa. The Southern Cameroons was administratively treated as a Nigerian colony with Nigerians as colonial masters heading all the strategic services.

Although no Nigerian became a commissioner or Resident Officer in Cameroon, all the Resident Officers, British subjects, were transferred from Nigeria to the Cameroons. Nigerians occupied senior posts like that of District Officers and Head of Services such as Customs, Public Works, Post and telecommunications, Education, Labour, Health, Forestry, Agriculture, Police etc. indeed, in the late 1940s, the first African Assistant District Officer appointed in Manyu was a Nigerian. This was followed with the appointment of other Nigerians to assist the DOs

⁹¹ Ngoh, “The Southern Cameroons KNDP led government had a raw deal by excluding legal experts in the various constitutional talks” *Summit magazine*, Reunification story special edition, October – December 2013, p.15.

⁹² Report of the United Nations Commissioner for the Supervision of the Plebiscite in the Southern and Northern Parts of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration, 30th March 1961, pp.17-18.

⁹³ Ibid. p.19.

in the interior and the Resident Officers in the Cameroons and Bamenda provinces. At the end of 1946, proposals were put forward for a settlement scheme to enable Nigerians settle in the Cameroons with the consent of and under the control of the Native Authorities. Nigerianisation and colonization were therefore officially contemplated and this was to be achieved through the settlement of Nigerians in the territory.⁹⁴

The British blamed the influx of Nigerian administrators into the Southern Cameroons from the 1920s to the early 1940s, on absence of qualified or educated Cameroonians ready for recruitment. The British claimed that Nigerians knew the English language and were already acculturated within the British imperial system and could supply the manpower to fill the lower ranks of the civil service. There were not enough trained Cameroonians in the English system to fill the positions or to compete with Nigerians.⁹⁵

This was not convincing enough. The fact was that the British never contemplated administering Cameroon as an autonomous territory but as a sub-territory of Nigeria meaning that the Nigerian administrators were in their backyard. The Southern Cameroons were therefore the destination for the less qualified, less educated and less viable Igbo migrant labour. This was the case with Victor Odewale Oni, born in Lagos 1890 who at the age of 42 was appointed District Officer for Mamfe. He was so inefficient that the Resident at Buea recommended his retirement because his work was so unsatisfactory as not to justify his high salary of 170 pounds per annum. Reporting on Adewale, the resident, E.J. Arnett stated that:

He might under direct supervision be useful as a second or third class Clerk in a large office, but placed in charge of a District Officer he has shown himself to be quite hopeless, even though the volume of work is comparatively small. He is untidy and lacks any sense of method and order. His knowledge of rules and regulations such as might be expected to a First Class Clerk is poor. His work during the past years has been below standard. Retirement seems advisable⁹⁶

Another example of worthless and mediocre colonial officials was Vincent Osi Ajayi who served as Second Class Clerk at the Provincial Administration, Buea from July 27 to October 24, 1922. He was terminated because he was not up to standard of a Second Class Clerk. He was recruited by the Secretariat in Lagos for service in the Cameroons and later given a second-class clerkship on appointment at the time when there was a great boom in trade and the then distaste of Nigerians to serve in the Cameroons.⁹⁷

⁹⁴Ibid. pp.33-34.

⁹⁵ NAB, File oa/b. ONI/I, ONI, Mr Victor Odewale

⁹⁶Nfi, Nigerians on mission on the British Southern Cameroons, p.54.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

The use of Cameroon as a dumping ground for less qualified Nigerians was also confirmed by Igbo workers in the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) interviewed by Ardener in 1960. They stated that they preferred the Southern Cameroons because of the many opportunities for employment for men “without standard 6” some professionals who could not find jobs in Nigeria were given jobs in other domains in Cameroon. This was the case with Sylvester Nwakuna Osuji who trained as an Igbo language interpreter but was used in Cameroon as a clerk.

The bulk of Nigerians on mission in the Southern Cameroons came from Igbo and Ibibio country sides. In 1952, of the 61,700 Nigerians in the Southern Cameroons, 25,800 were Igbo and 10,300 were Efik-Ibibio. The majority of the Igbo came from either Owerri or Okigwi Division alone. This belt had one of the highest population densities in Eastern Nigeria with some places reaching 1000 persons per square mile. The proposed settlement scheme in the Southern Cameroons was therefore a way to solve the overpopulation problem experienced in some parts of Nigeria.⁹⁸ The table below explains the number of Nigerians who migrated to Southern Cameroons because of their desire to break away from cultural inhabition such as the Igbo Osu system of slavery.⁹⁹ This cause many of them to migrate to some major towns in Southern Cameroons like Mamfe, Kumba, Bamenda, Tiko, Victoria, Nkambe and Muyuka. The migration statistics are portrayed in table 8 below.

⁹⁸NAB, File pa/1940/8, Training and Mobilization of Reservists, Nigerian Regiment, p.5

⁹⁹ The system made Osu slaves and their descendants to be perpetually ostracized in the community. They were also forbidden to marry free born in the community and were considered as second-class citizens in their community.

Table 8: Ethnic Distribution of Nigerian Population in the British Southern Cameroons, 1952

Nigerian Groups	Cameroon Province	Bamenda Province	Total
Igbo	25200	600	25800
Efik-Ibibio	10300	--	10300
Ijaw	5800	--	5800
Tiv	1700	--	1700
Yoruba	900	--	900
Edo	100	300	400
Others	16300	500	16800
Total	60300	1400	61700

Source: Adopted from Joseph L. Nfi, *Nigerians on Mission in British Cameroons*, p.36.

Closely linked to the problem of overpopulation, was the increasing rate of unemployment in Nigeria after the Second World War. After the war, there was a drastic drop in the prices of tropical raw materials and a decline in British investments in Nigeria given that Britain had to grapple with post war reconstruction. To solve this problem, many youths were recruited and sent to the Southern Cameroons. This was the case with Daniel Sunday Osuegbu Third Class Clerk who came to Cameroon on July 5, 1949. He was sent to Cameroon to solve the unemployment problem in Nigeria following protest and petitions from the unemployed Ex-service Men's Union at Enugu. Ex-service Men from Nigeria were employed in Cameroon as road Overseers, Native authority Messengers, leather workers and tailors. It should be recalled that from 1934, vocational training was carried out in the Nigerian Regiment to assist soldiers to find work after service.¹⁰⁰

Southern Cameroonians depended on workers from Nigeria which was deliberate policy of the British and Nigerian administrators. The administration education, health and public works departments were mostly occupied by the Nigerians. This was done to eliminate the training of Southern Cameroonians in these fields. It was only in the 1930s that some Southern Cameroonians were trained as sanitary inspectors. Before this time, all the sanitary inspectors from Southern Cameroons came from Nigeria. The most popular of these sanitary inspectors was Ukpong Esien sanitary inspector for Kumba Division. The fact that most of this work was done by the Nigerians angered the people of Mamfe in particular and southern Cameroon in

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Tabot Robert Nkwai, retired CDC Headman, 74 Years, Bachuo ntai, 27th January 2017.

general. This explains why they did not vote the first option in the plebiscite to join Nigeria. Their greatest fear was that, if Southern Cameroon joins Nigeria, the people of Mamfe would become total slaves under the Nigerian administration.

Another important aspect that infuriated the people of Mamfe as concerned the Nigerians was at the domain of medical field. Before 1947, only Nigerians served as medical doctors in southern Cameroons with names such as: Dr. Kwo Sagoe, Dr. A.O. Majekodunmi serving as medical doctors in Mamfe Division and equally Dr. J.K. Kowan serving as medical doctor in the Bamenda Division. Quite a deliberate attempt to let Southern Cameroons to depend only on Nigerians for its health needs. Southern Cameroonians could not do without a Nigerian medical doctor. The absence of Southern Cameroonian doctor within the territory was due to the British government inability to grant scholarships to Southern Cameroonians to be trained as medical doctors in Nigeria and in Britain. Also, the absence of the British to open professional medical institutes also contributed to the absence of Southern Cameroonians medical doctors.¹⁰¹

The transport domain was also dominated by Nigerians. They were the owners of transport vehicles which transported passengers from Mamfe to Kumba, Mamfe - Bamenda. These drivers were so provocative to passengers travelling along the Mamfe Kumba road. A popular drive that was known at that time was “man no rest” who did not allow passengers to enter his car if their shoes had mud on it. This was no welcoming policy given that the whole of Mamfe was muddy and even the main road was not tarred. The Nigerians exploited the indigenes through high transport fare and prevented the indigenes from venturing into this sector. The Nigerians set up a Trade Union called Association of Motor Transports Worker (AMTW) with Simon Owukencha as the president and Dickson Ijeoma as secretary. The head quarter of this association was in Tiko.

The aim of this association was to ensure that no other Southern Cameroonian join this transport sector in attempt to bring down the transport fare.¹⁰² One native in Mamfe by name Arrey, 1951 created a Rival driver Union group called Cameroon Motor Transport Union (CMTU) to promote the transport sector in the territory and to fight against Nigeria domination of the transport sector in the territory. The Igbo as usual since they were out to kick away Southern Cameroonians in all the domains of lives wrote a petition to the Resident in Buea against the new union. People of Mamfe considered it as an insult in that, the Nigerians

¹⁰¹ Abang, Southern Cameroons Negotiating an existence, Writism, Bamenda, 2019, pp.135-136.

¹⁰² NAB, File si /1951/9 , Cameroon Motor Transport Union, p. 22.

considered them as poor people who could not buy their own vehicles to be used for transportation. With these, the people hated the Nigerians with all their spirits and did not see any reason to vote the Nigerians during the plebiscite. The plates 4 and 5 below show the Nigerian domination in the transport sector in Southern Cameroons. They exploited the indigenes through their high transport fare and preventing them from venturing into this sector. One popular bus driver Pa Orji also known as “Man No Rest” who is still alive today transported passengers from Mamfe to Kumba and Mamfe to Ikom in Nigeria. He maltreated passengers who entered his bus with mud on their shoes with this, so many people hated him but they had no option because the Nigerian were the only drivers transporting passengers.

Plate 4: Pa Orji also known as “Man No Rest” a popular driver in Mamfe.



Source: <https://www.fda.gov>

Plate 5: One of the popular buses owed by one Nigerian



Source: <https://www.fda.gov>

The Nigerians also dominated the trade sector of Southern Cameroon in all its facets between 1922-1924, 90 per cent of internal trade i.e. exports and imports were in the hands of the Nigerians especially the Igbos. The trade items included; cattle, cocoa, palm oil and palm kernel, rubber etc. from Southern Cameroon and finished goods such as cloths, drinks, and cigarette and foodstuffs like rice, gari and yam came from Nigeria. The Nigerians especially the Efik and Igbo in Calabar had for several years played the role of the middleman trade monopoly¹⁰³ Between the European group in Southern Cameroon through the Banyangs middle men. They were therefore more experienced and aggressive in trade than Southern Cameroonians. Consequently, they had all the benefits and dividends that came out of the trade.¹⁰⁴

This rendered the Banyangs middle men losers in all forms of trade thus; they developed hatred for the Igbo and so did not want to see the Igbo again in the territory. Still in trade, the Nigerians controlled almost 80 per cent of the trade. They were hookers, drug distributors, petty traders, liquor vendors, anti-Nigerian tailors, restaurant operators, motor mechanic, fashion designers, hair dressers etc. in markets especially Mamfe market and other markets of Southern

¹⁰³ It referred to the intermediary role that Banyangs and the Efik traders played during the pre-colonial trade. They bought goods from the natives in the interior at a very low price and sold the goods to the European traders at a higher price. The Europeans had no powers to trade with the natives directly. They must pass through the local chiefs to the coast.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.,49.

Cameroon, traders dealing with materials introduced “touch and buy policy”¹⁰⁵ and this made them unpopular with the natives. Profits from the trade were never invested in Cameroon but were remitted to major towns in the Eastern part of Nigeria such as Enugu, Onitsha, Calabar, Aba where these profits were invested. Nigerians in Southern Cameroon were out to exploit the territory for the benefits of their territory and not to develop the territory where they were carrying out their business.¹⁰⁶

The Agricultural domain was not equally left out by the Nigerian domination. The British and the Nigerians neglected farmers in Southern Cameroons. The first Agricultural Official was appointed to the territory in 1927 but his activity was limited to the coastal Division of Mamfe, Kumba and Victoria. British did not care about the agricultural sector of the territory, because of this, they permitted the German plantation in the territory to be purchased by the Nigerian Planters to an extent that in 1946 Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) was created but the headquarters was in Lagos rather than in Buea. This also showed the extent to which the Nigerians had dominated the territory and the populations of Southern Cameroon were relegated to the background. The CDC officials were appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Nigerian ordinance No 39 of 1946. The policy of the CDC was determined by the Nigerian officials.

The problem of unemployment among Southern Cameroonians was a serious call for concern. The people of Mamfe in particular accused the Nigerian for blocking their way into the public service of Southern Cameroons. One glaring example of Igbo obstruction of Mamfe indigene was the case of Dickson Tiku whose application to work with the forestry was turned down by an Igbo clerk. Despite the fact he fulfilled all the requirements outlined for the job, but his application was rejected because he was a Southern Cameroonian. Tiku and his brother Stephen Nyenti after moving around in Southern Cameroons for many years without a job were forced to move to Lagos to work as a stenographer. Peter E. Ayuk also complained that Mr. Funniel in charge of public work department in Victoria refused to recruit Southern Cameroonians and wanted only Igbo workers to work in that sector. And even Southern Cameroonians that were already working were poorly treated. This and many other complains in Southern Cameroons and in Mamfe Division were clear testimonies that Nigeria in Southern Cameroon were out to colonise the territory, dominate the public service, work force, the

¹⁰⁵Touch and buy policy was a policy that was introduced in major markets in Southern Cameroon towns in which any indigene that touch a trade item in the market to price he/she was compelled to buy it. If it was a piece of cloth, the Igbo trader would immediately cut and throw to the customer to pay, if not he or she would be severely beaten.

¹⁰⁶ Nfi, Nigerians on mission on the British Southern Cameroons, p.57.

military and to render southern Cameroonians very poor. This was due to the Nigerian selfish interest in southern Cameroon. The example of Mr. Tiku and others made many Mamfe inhabitants to consider Nigerians as enemy of their progress and not friends of development. This justifies why the inhabitants of Mamfe voted against integration during the plebiscite.¹⁰⁷

The Derivation of the 1961 Plebiscite

In 1959, the most delicate issue in Southern Cameroons was with what form it would achieve independence. A plebiscite became an obvious answer to this worry. The origin of the plebiscite in the Southern Cameroons can be traced to the differences that existed between the two major political factions in the decolonization struggle of the territory during the final phase of the trusteeship. Two opposing camps emerged in the territory following the establishment of the KNDP in March 1955 by a faction that split from the KNC. The KNDP took on the pro-secessionist stance, launching the territory into a bitter struggle between “integrationists” (those desiring integration with Nigeria) and “secessionists” (those desiring secession from Nigeria).¹⁰⁸

Before the formation of the KNDP, the KNC had in the 1953 elections campaigned on a secessionist platform against the Kamerun People’s Party (KPP) in the struggle for the thirteen Southern Cameroons’ seats in the Eastern Nigerian Regional House of Assembly. The KPP was formed in the midst of the 1953 crisis in the Eastern Nigerian Regional House to support continuous association with Nigeria. Scholars have observed that the alignment of forces in the territory changed in 1954 when the KNC gradually became less enthusiastic about secession following the granting of a regional status to the Southern Cameroons by the Lyttelton’s Constitution in 1954.¹⁰⁹

The lack of enthusiasm for secession from Nigeria on the part of the KNC led to the conclusion that its leaders were not true secessionists. Le Vine¹¹⁰ has classified the KNC leadership as integrationists who took up a secessionist platform during the struggle for a regional status to force the Administering Authority to grant their request for a separate region for the Southern Cameroons. He further argues that there is little question that at this point Endeley had slight genuine interest in reunification; actual reunification was something that might or might not occur in the future. His primary concern was to find political influence with

¹⁰⁷Nfi, *Nigerians on mission on the British Southern Cameroons*, p.55.

¹⁰⁸NAB,Vb/b/1959/1, “Kamerun National Democratic Party,” pp.1–15.

¹⁰⁹Amaazee, *The Eastern Nigerian Crisis and the Destiny of the British Southern Cameroons, 1953-1954*, Yaounde, University Press, Yaoundé, 2000; pp.98-99.

¹¹⁰LeVine, *The Cameroons from Mandate to Independence*, Los Angeles, University of California, 1964, p.203.

which to interfere into the Southern Cameroons' politics within but not away from Nigeria. Clear signals for the division of the Southern Cameroons political environment into two opposing camps became visible with the formation of the Kamerun National Democratic Party in 1955, but it was not until the formation of an alliance between the KNC and the KPP in December 1958 that the dividing line became unmistakable.

However, as observed by the 1958 Fourth United Nations Visiting Mission to the territory, none of the camps was in a position to overwhelmingly dictate the political future of the territory. It noted that two words possessing special meaning "integration" and "secession" have come to signify the two main trends of political opinion in the Southern Cameroons. Integration for which its protagonists would now prefer to substitute with "association" to mean the KNC/KPP alliance and its goal of regional status for the Southern Cameroons within an independent Federation of Nigeria. "Secession" meant the KNDP and its objective of immediate separation from Nigeria which the leaders of the party regarded as an essential first step to enable the Southern Cameroons to see the objective of a greater Cameroons.¹¹¹

Available records reveal that in the run off to the January 23rd, 1959 general elections, the protagonists strongly canvassed support for their positions. The integrationist KNC/KPP alliance conclusively cautioned against unification with the Republic of Cameroon. They argued that as the country has already pointed out, unification of the two Trust Territories will lead to a lot of complications because of divergent forms of administration and different economic systems. Difficulties in blending the two forms of local government systems, two forms of legal and educational systems and, worst of all, harmonizing the British and French cultures were factors to be reckoned with. The camp of Endeley was not prepared to forgo the benefits derived from the British Government and that neither were the French Cameroonians prepared to cut their connections with the French Union.¹¹²

The KNDP on the other hand did not heed the warning from their opponents nor did they concern themselves with the negative consequences of integration with Nigeria. Rather, it dwelt exclusively on the importance attached to the policy of 'secession' by the inhabitants of the territory.¹¹³ The January 1959 elections did not succeed in narrowing the divide. The

¹¹¹United Nations, Document, No. T/1440, "United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, Report on the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration," New York, 1959, p. 18.

¹¹²United Nations; Document No. T/1440; "Extracts from a Memorandum, dated 31 October, 1958 of the Kamerun National Congress/Kamerun People's Party KNC/KPP Alliance," New York, 1959, pp.53 – 54.

¹¹³ United Nations, Document No. T/1440, "Extracts from a Memorandum, dated, 2 November 1958, by the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP)," New York, 1959, pp. 54-55.

outcome was inconclusive as far as determining the future of the territory was concerned. With fourteen seats for the secessionist KNDP and twelve for the integrationist, KNC and the KPP alliance that merged to create the Cameroon Peoples' National Convention (CPNC) in May 1960 in the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly (SCHA).¹¹⁴ It was obvious that the inhabitants of Southern Cameroons were yet to be convinced about which choice to make with regards to their future. The inconclusive poll ushered the need to further consult the people of the territory, as had been suggested before the election. The 1958 UN Visiting Mission to the territory had indicated in their report that a plebiscite would be needed to resolve the basic issues seeing that "the results of the elections of 1959 cannot be regarded as decisive as far as the future of the Southern Cameroons was concerned."¹¹⁵

The decision to use a plebiscite to resolve the future of the Southern Cameroons was the final option. The urgency with which it was pursued could not be avoided, particularly as Nigeria, to which it had been administratively attached by the Trusteeship Agreement was on the threshold of independence. A plebiscite for the Southern Cameroons thus originated from the need to decide on what would become of the territory after October 1, 1960, the date fixed for Nigeria's independence.

The subject of alternatives to be presented to the people of the Southern Cameroons was the central element in the political debate when it became certain that only a plebiscite could break the deadlock in the territory.¹¹⁶ A close look at the policies pursued by the opposing camps reveals that they had clearly distinguishable goals. However, when it came to deciding on what alternative questions should put to the people, there was almost insurmountable difficulty in reaching a consensus.¹¹⁷

A keen look at negotiations on alternatives revealed that there was no disagreement on the first alternative, which reflected the view of those who favoured 'integration' with Nigeria. All the parties involved in the negotiations agreed that the first alternative should read "regional status within an independent Nigeria."¹¹⁸ However, when it came to the second alternative, which expressed the opinion of the 'secessionists', the two main political blocs were again

¹¹⁴ S.T Ngarka, "The Third Alternative Element in the 1961 Southern Cameroons Plebiscite: Issues and Perspectives", Ph.D. Thesis, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Nigeria, 1984.p.6.

¹¹⁵ United Nations, Document No. T/1440, The Leading Political Parties had all suggested a Plebiscite as the Final Solution in the Event and Inconclusive Poll," 1960, p.38.

¹¹⁶ NAB File No: 1303, VC/a (1961) 4.5, "Southern Cameroons Plebiscite," 1961, p.8.

¹¹⁷ Mbile, Cameroon Political Story Memories of an Authentic Eye Witness, p.190.

¹¹⁸ United Nations, Document No.4,A/4404, "Report of the Trusteeship Council ,7 August, 1959-30 June, 1960,"NewYork,1960, p.100.

widely divided on what that alternative should be. The lack of agreement on the second alternative was eventually handled by the United Nations General Assembly which, as it were, forced the Foncha-led KNDP to accept as alternative, ‘independence by joining French Cameroon’.¹¹⁹ This was a position that did not properly capture what the party had been bargaining for.

It is possible to associate the controversy that enveloped the second alternative to the fact that although the KNDP had championed the course of secession from Nigeria, when it came to the plebiscite question the party did not want to be rushed into reunification with French Cameroon. Rather than seek for immediate reunification with French Cameroons, the party was now advocating “separation from Nigeria and continuation of trusteeship for a limited period after which a decision could be made.”¹²⁰ The opposition rejected this new position, arguing that the second option must contain the element of reunification with French Cameroons, given that it was on that motion that the KNDP had campaigned and won the 1959 general elections, which enabled it to form the government in the territory.¹²¹ A further analysis of the situation would reveal that the KNC/KPP rejection might somehow revise KNDP’s original position, so they were propelled by the fear that should the new KNDP position be accepted, the balance would be tilted against them.

The complex issue of alternatives for the Southern Cameroons plebiscite constituted the main subject of discussion on Cameroon at the Fourteenth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1959.¹²² No agreement had been reached in efforts before that session, indicating that none of the camps was ready to shift its position. Nevertheless, the session witnessed what looked like a cooling-off strategy in which the protagonists, still unable to reach agreement in informal talks jointly issued a statement demanding for administrative separation of the Southern Cameroons from Nigeria, should Nigeria become independent on October 1, 1960, as scheduled.¹²³

Scholars have observed that the joint statement coming from leaders of the KNDP and the KNC/KPP could have opened a positive avenue towards achieving the demands in Article

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Ibid., pp. 100 – 101.

¹²¹ NAB, File No. Vc/b, 1959/6, “Statement to the Fourth Committee on 24th September, 1959, by Dr. E. M.L. Endeley, Leader of the Opposition in the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly,” 1959, pp.2-5.

¹²² United Nations, Document No. A/C4/414, “September 30, 1959 UN Document No. 4A/4404, An unrealistic date for the plebiscite in the Southern Cameroons had earlier been fixed for between the beginning of December 1959 and the end of April,” 1960, p.100.

¹²³ NAB, File No. Vc/b, 1959/6, “Statement to the Fourth Committee on 24th September, pp.2-5.

76(b). Chapter XII of the UN Charter explicitly, that called on Britain and France, the Administering Authorities ‘to administer the inhabitants of their respective spheres of Cameroon towards independence or self-government.’¹²⁴ It rejected the unwarranted intervention of members of the General Assembly, particularly the African members of Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Libya, Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia and the United Arab Republic. Rather than reasoning with the joint position, these countries decided to sponsor informal talks to instead pressurize the protagonists to accept a formula drawn by the General Assembly.¹²⁵

The third group in the decolonization of Southern Cameroons were supporters of reunification pure and simple headed by Ndeh Ntumazah. They argued that there should not be any plebiscite in Southern Cameroons and that the UN should unilaterally unite the two Cameroons. The fourth group believed in Secession and independence. It was the view which advocated an independent Southern Cameroons separation from Nigeria and from the Republic of Cameroons. It was a neutral position, which sought to avoid the unknown complexities that could result from joining either side of the divide.¹²⁶ The view was propagated by the Kamerun United Party (KUP), the Chiefs Conference, Cameroons Commoners Congress (CCC) and later Cameroons Indigenes’ Party (CIP).¹²⁷

In the face of this political divide, a plebiscite was the last resort expected to break the deadlock, resulting from the lack of consensus among leaders of the territory, who were torn between integration with or secession from Nigeria and union or not with the Republic of Cameroon. In the build up to the plebiscite, the United Nations was pressured to endorse only ‘two alternatives, rejecting the plea for the inclusion of a ‘third alternative’ by what was then described as ‘minority parties’. A conference was therefore held on the 10th and 11th August 1959 under the leadership of Sir Sydney Phillipson. The conference was attended by the KNC, KNDP, OK, CCC and the KUP. At the conference, the KNDP was given eight seats; the KNC-KPP alliance had six; the OK, KUP, Kamerun Society and the National Union of Kamerun Students (NUKS) had one seat. Each of the Seventeen Native Authorities had one seat each and traditional rulers were reserved ten seats.¹²⁸

¹²⁴Ngoh, *The Untold Story of Cameroon Reunification: 1955-1961*, p.4. See also U. N, “Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47,” New York, Kraus Reprint, 1974, p.839.

¹²⁵Le Vine, *The Cameroons from Mandate to Independence*, pp. 209-210.

¹²⁶ Interview with E.M.A. Epie, Traditional Ruler, 60 Years, Kumba, 16th May 1994.

¹²⁷ P. M. Kale, *Political Evolution in the Cameroons*, p. 70.

¹²⁸U. N, “Year book of the United Nations 1946-47,” York, Kraus Reprint, 1974, p.40.

The conference discussed two principal issues, namely the qualification of voters in the plebiscite and the question to be posed to the electorates. After a hard debate, no conclusion was arrived at concerning the plebiscite questions. Once more, the Conference failed to resolve the Southern Cameroons Plebiscite question and because of this deadlock, the representatives of the various political parties in the territory were all invited to attend a UN session in 1959. The last resort was the General Assembly formula which was expected to provide a solution to the deadlock between the contending forces in the territory. Among other things, it stated that“(1) a plebiscite was to be held not later than March 1961; (2) the questions to be put were to state clear alternatives between joining Nigeria or the Cameroun Republic.”¹²⁹ The two alternatives were later defined by UN General Assembly Resolution 1352 (XIV) of October 16th 1959 as follows:

- (a) Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Federation of Nigeria?
- (b) Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Republic of Cameroun?¹³⁰

The UN decision of only two alternatives was received with mixed feelings in the Southern Cameroons and sharply criticized by some politicians because the opinion of chiefs was not taken into consideration. The three smaller political parties such as CCC of Chief Nyenti Stephen Eyong, Cameroon Indigenous Party of Chief Manga William and Kamerun United Party of P.M. Kale abandoned the plebiscite campaign since their alternatives was rejected.¹³¹ Meanwhile some chiefs, despite their annoyance did not remain indifferent in; they still played an important role in the plebiscite by registering and educating voters as well as maintaining law and order.

Still in connection with the plebiscite campaign, the K N D P twisted the two alternatives to suit the group of voters it was addressing at a particular time. In certain areas, according to Chem-Langhëë ¹³² it was believed that the KNDP told the voters that the two alternatives were: a) “Do you like Dr. Endeley, the Bakweri man? Or Do you like Foncha, the Bamenda man?” In the majority of areas, the two alternatives were framed as follows: “do you wish to sell your Country, Cameroons? Or Do you wish to sell your Country to the Igbo who will dethrone your Chiefs and take away all your land and property”? The modification of the Plebiscite questions confused many voters to vote for Foncha without knowing what they were voting for, especially

¹²⁹Ibid, p. 210.

¹³⁰ NAB, “Southern Cameroons Gazette,” Vol. 7 No. 4, Buea, Government Press, January 27th 1961, p.3.

¹³¹Chem- Langhëë, “The Kamerun Plebiscites 1959 -1961: Perception and Strategies,” p.325.

¹³²Ibid.

the chiefs of Mamfe Division who were very close to Nigeria and feared that they might lose their chiefly offices to the Igbos.¹³³ In addition it was that, the British claimed that Nigerians knew the English language and were already acculturated within the British imperial system and would be supplying the manpower to fill the lower ranks of administration in the Southern Cameroons. The chiefs did everything possible to convince their subjects to vote for Foncha.¹³⁴

It is not difficult to explain why the KNDP wanted separation from Nigeria and continuation of trusteeship, with reunification to be negotiated after the achievement of independence. Available records reveal that the KNDP had misgivings over the content of the second alternative was because they feared that the KNC/KPP would turn it to their advantage, given the fact that at the time of the adoption of the two alternatives, there was intense political unrest in French Cameroon.¹³⁵

Results of the Plebiscite

At the end of the polls, a total number of votes cast 331, 342. Foncha received 233,571 votes while Endeley received 97,741.¹³⁶ In all, four of the six administrative divisions voted for Foncha's KNDP for reunification, while only two divisions voted for Endeley's KNC/KPP alliance to integrate with Nigeria. It should be noted that because the supervisory authorities had interest in the first option, they favoured the integration of Southern Cameroons with the Federal Republic of Nigeria by inflating the results during the votes counting process of the plebiscite in Mamfe Division to read 10,070 instead of 10,050. In other words the extra 20 votes was not due to calculation error but a calculated attempt by the supervisory authorities, mostly the British to manipulate the plebiscite results in favour of integration with Nigeria. Table 9 below depicts election results.

¹³³Interview with Tambe David, 58 Years, Physician and USA (MECDA) President, Limbe, 2017.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵NAB,File No. Vc/b. 1959/6 "Statement to the Fourth Committee on 24th September, 1959 by J. N. Foncha, Premier of the Southern Cameroons," 1959, p. 6.

¹³⁶B. Chem Langhëë, "The Kamerun Plebiscites 1959-1961: Perception and Strategies, p.306.

Table 9: Results of the 1961 Plebiscite in then Mamfe Division and the whole of Southern Cameroons' Divisions

Administrative Divisions	Plebiscite Districts	Votes for Nigeria	Votes for Cameroon
Mamfe			
	Mamfe West	2039	8505
	Mamfe North	5432	6410
	Mamfe South	685	8175
	Mamfe East	1894	10177
	Total	10070	33267
Victoria			
	Victoria South West	2552	3756
	Victoria South East	1329	4870
	Victoria North West	4744	4205
	Victoria North East	3291	9251
	Total	11916	22082
Bamenda			
	Bamenda North	8073	18839
	Bamenda East	1822	17856
	Bamenda Central West	1230	18027
	Bamenda Central East	529	18193
	Bamenda West	467	16142
	Bamenda South	220	19426
	Total	12341	108485
Wum			
	Wum North	1485	7322
	Wum Central	3644	3211
	Wum East	1518	13133
	Wum West	2139	3449
	Total	8786	27115
Kumba			
	Kumba North East	9466	11991
	Kumba North West	14738	555
	Kumba South East	6105	12827
	Kumba South West	2424	2227
	Total	32733	27600
Nkambe			
	Nkambe North	5962	1917
	Nkambe East	3845	5896
	Nkambe Central	5095	4288
	Nkambe South	7051	2921
	Total	21917	15022
Grand Total		97741	233571

Source: NAB, File No. Vc/b/1961/34, "Plebiscite Voting in Mamfe Division," 1961, p.4.

From the statistics above, we realized that Mamfe, Victoria, Bamenda and Wum Divisions voted for reunification to join the Republic of Cameroon while Kumba and Nkambe Divisions voted for integration to remain with the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Nevertheless, many did not welcome the outcome of the plebiscite. For instance, the KUP of P M Kale that advocated for the independence of the territory, as well as the CCC of Chief Nyenti and the CIP of Jesco Manga William rejected the results.

These political parties' together with the traditional rulers who opted for secession without reunification or integration pressurized the UN to cancel the plebiscite results and to bring in the third alternative. This proposal was echoed at the Southern Cameroons Chiefs Conference that took place at Mamfe in 1964.¹³⁷ Fon Achirimbi II, the Chair of the Chiefs Conference, presented the neutral position of the chiefs once again. When he said:

We believed on two points during a Conference in Bamenda in which Dr. Endeley and Foncha were present. We rejected Dr. Endeley because he wanted to take us to Nigeria. If Mr. Foncha tries to take us to French Cameroon, we shall also run away from him. To me the French Cameroons is 'fire' and Nigeria is 'water'. Sir, I support secession without unification.¹³⁸

Still in the Chiefs Conference in Mamfe, at the end of the deliberations, the Chiefs came out with a joint strongly worded statement signed by Fon Achirimbi II of Bafut, its chair, Hon. Chief Manga William of Victoria and Chief E.M.L. Endeley of Buea that stated:

We the Fons and Chiefs are above party politics and the question of Southern Cameroon secession from or Integration with an independent Federation of Nigeria is also above party politics. This is why no political party without the express wishes of the Natural Rulers and their People at the polls could decide this question by mere logical and legislative debates, now that the secessionists have Captured the Southern Cameroons Government. The question of a possible Plebiscite is simplified and almost, the Southern Cameroon Chiefs Conference and the Southern Cameroon Masses shall not slacken the grip till secession is irrevocably sealed. Lovers of Southern Cameroons unity and her progressive nationhood, sons and daughters of the Southern Cameroons at home and abroad are congratulated for the roles so far played and are urged to continue to strive to the end.¹³⁹

From the above quotation, the chiefs made it loud and clear that a separate political entity was the best alternative for the then British Southern Cameroons and not either integration with the Federal Republic of Nigeria or reunification with the Republic of Cameroon was better.

¹³⁷Interview with George Atem.

¹³⁸Achirimbi Fon of Bafut in, Statement at the Mamfe Conference August 10 –11, 1959 Cited in P.M. Kale, *Political Evolution in the Cameroons*, Buea, Government Printer Buea, 1968, p.69. See also Ngarka, "The Third Alternative Element in the 1961 Southern Cameroons Plebiscite: Issues and Perspectives", p.12.

¹³⁹ NAB, File No.Cl. 1256, Ia/ 1959/2, "On Southern Cameroons," p.2.

However, due to egoism, leading Politicians of the territory like Endeley and Foncha did not see in that line at the time. Therefore, conclusion could be drawn from these words, from the motto of Southern Cameroons National Council that “the force of the argument is not necessary the argument of force.”¹⁴⁰ This will take us to examine the third option of the plebiscite in its entirety.

Mamfe and the Third Option in the Plebiscite

The third option owes its origin to the conflicting views¹⁴¹ in the British Southern Cameroons about the future of the territory in the 1950s. In Southern Cameroons, the path to or the process of independence was characterized by divergence of opinions between the nationalist leaders like E.M.L. Endeley and J.N. Foncha: political parties such as KNC, KPP and KNDP traditional rulers and pressure groups such as National Union of Kamerun Students (NUKS) and the Kamerun Society. In concrete terms, the distinguishing feature of the decolonization of the Southern Cameroons was the separation among the leaders, movements, traditional ruler and students about the future of the territory. There were three main sheds of opinion on the future of the British Southern Cameroons namely: secession, integration and reunification. These were the option that dominated political discourse before the January 1959 General Elections.¹⁴²

The most important political outcome of the Eastern Regional crisis of 1953 was the creation of indigenous political parties in the Southern Cameroons. The first was the Kamerun National (KNC) led by E.M.L. Endeley and the second was the Kamerun People’s Party (KPP) of P.M Kale and Nerius N. Mbile. The third party, the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) of John Ngu Foncha and Augustine N. Jua was founded in 1955 and was an offshoot of the KNC. These parties and their leaders espoused divergent and or conflicting views concerning the political future of the British Southern Cameroons as we have seen earlier.

The three main parties in the British Southern Cameroons supported divergent views on the political future of the territory. The KNC initially wanted a separate region for the territory and reunification with French Cameroon in 1953. It toyed with the idea of reunification but finally removed the question of reunification out of the realm of urgency and priority because of the way the French were crushing UPC activities in French Cameroon. The KPP and the chiefs wanted independence of the territory in collaboration with the NCNC in Nigeria. The

¹⁴⁰Interview with Enow Botela Enow.

¹⁴¹ Conflict is a contradiction arising from differences in interest, ideas, ideologies, orientations and precipitous tendencies. Conflict is real, part of life and cannot be sanctioned from society. As groups, ethnic communities, there is bound to be conflict. Conflict is part and parcel of life.

¹⁴²Chem-Langhëë’the Road to the Unitary State of Cameroon, 1959-1972” in Paideuma, Book Two, 1995, p .10.

KNDP for its part appeared to be the sounding board of all possible options as it dilly-dallied from separation with ultimate reunification, evolutionary reunification, secession and independence as a separate political entity to secession while the territory is allowed to “determine its future at a later date”.¹⁴³

To narrow the cleavage between the “integrationists” led by E.M.L. Endeley and the “reunification” led by John Ngu Foncha in the Southern Cameroons, Britain, the administering authority of the territory organized the London Constitutional Conference in 1957 and 1958 and the Mamfe Plebiscite Conference of 1959. During all these meetings, the British tried but failed to reconcile the leaders of British Southern Cameroons in favour of association with Nigeria and those in favour of reunification with French Cameroon.¹⁴⁴

As the debate between integration and reunification unfolded, a third view or option about the political future of Southern Cameroons emerged in 1959. The view advocated the independence of Southern Cameroons as a separate political entity. This implied that Southern Cameroons should attain independence without integration with Nigeria and without reunification with French Cameroon. This was the view code named “the third option” and its chief advocate was P.M. Kale who, in 1959, withdrew from the KPP and founded the Kamerun United Party (KUP). Other adherents of the option in Southern Cameroons were Chief Nyenti Stephen Eyong of the CCC (the total opinion about the party would be seen later), Samson A. George and Jesco Manga William of the CIP.¹⁴⁵ The KUP demand for independence was equally supported by the traditional leaders led by their spokesperson, Fon Achirimbi II of Bafut. During the Mamfe Plebiscite Conference, he warned Endeley and Foncha against joining Nigeria and French Cameroon respectively because he described Nigeria as the “deep sea” and French Cameroon as “fire.”¹⁴⁶

The holding of the Mamfe Plebiscite Conference in August 1959 provided the forum for the advocates of the third option to sell the idea to British officials, Southern Cameroons politicians, Fons, chiefs, native authorities and pressure groups. While the British were hoping to use the Mamfe Conference to work out a political consensus between the supporters of integration and reunification, P.M. Kale of KUP argued strongly that the Southern Cameroons

¹⁴³ Ngoh, *The Untold story of Cameroon Reunification: 1955-61*, pp.8-9.

¹⁴⁴ Mbile, *Cameroon Political Story Memories of An Authentic Eye Witness*, pp.198-202.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* pp.19-28.

¹⁴⁶ Ngarka, “The Third Alternative Element in the 1961 Southern Cameroons Plebiscite: Issues and Perspectives”, p.10.

should achieve independence as a separate political entity.¹⁴⁷ The British who intended to use the Mamfe Conference as an opportunity of coaxing the Southern Cameroons towards association with Nigeria were greatly embarrassed by the emergence of the third view on the political future of the territory, which was seemingly very popular.¹⁴⁸

In September-October 1959, the delegates from the Southern Cameroons were invited to the UN in New York in another attempt to hammer out a consensus. At the UN, Foncha maintained his stance for the separation of the Southern Cameroons from Nigeria because ‘it would leave the door wide open for the building of a greater Cameroon.’ Endeley, on the other hand argued strongly in favour of association with Nigeria because he did not want ‘Foncha and KNDP to take the Southern Cameroons and its people a joy ride to an unknown destination.’ He went further to state that it will be unwise to abandon a secured and floating vessel which offers us sure landing to allow ourselves to drift in an open life boat because we hope to be picked up by a new and better vessel which we have not even seen on the horizon.’¹⁴⁹ During the UN debates, the KUP of P.M. Kale argued that the Southern Cameroons should achieve independence as a separate territory but this option was rejected even though it was the most popular.

The Antagonism that Surrounded the Third Alternative

It is possible to locate the reason why in spite of the petitions, threats and intimidation from the advocates of the Third Alternative, the UN rejected its inclusion in the plebiscite for the Southern Cameroons. It is not convincing to suggest as presented by J. O. Field that the ‘third alternative’ could not be admitted for placement on the ballot because it was raised after the final decision on the alternatives had been taken.¹⁵⁰ An in-depth analysis would show that the rejection was influenced more by political and economic considerations, than by anything else. Politically, in the run up to the termination of the trusteeship in the Southern Cameroons, leading politicians in the territory were more concerned with immediate election victories than at the future beyond the elections.

They lacked the vision to look ahead into the future to behold what the impact of integration with Nigeria or reunification with French Cameroon would yield in the long term.

¹⁴⁷Ibid. pp. 20-21.

¹⁴⁸Ngoh, (ed), *Cameroon: From a Federal to a Unitary State, 1961-1972, A Critical Study*. Limbe, Design House, 2004, p.48-49.

¹⁴⁹Ngoh, *The Untold story of Cameroon Reunification: 1955-61*, pp. 21-22.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

Election campaigns were all centred on the negative aspects of opposing views with no thought of how to avoid the two impending uncertainties. Foncha and his KNDP centred their campaign on the 'Igbo scare', while Endeley capitalized on the political violence that characterized French Cameroon at the time as well as on the uncertainties of the unknown French system and culture.¹⁵¹

The Trusteeship Council and the Administering Authority on their part were apparently concerned with the termination of the trusteeship irrespective of whether granting independence that denied the Southern Cameroons its unique identity or was in keeping with the objectives of the Trusteeship system. Actually, politically Britain was very hopeful that the integration option would be successful to her. Thus, they did not see any need considering the third option if all it could give them would be the promotion of British interests which could be achieved through integrating the territory with Nigeria.¹⁵²

Economic arguments were also advanced for the rejection of the 'third alternative'. Opponents of the third option argued that a Southern Cameroons nation could not be economically viable because it would no longer enjoy the financial subvention that came from Nigeria and the United Kingdom. This argument took note of the threat made by the British Colonial Secretary in 1957 to the effect that should Southern Cameroons elect not to integrate with Nigeria, it should not count on British financial support.¹⁵³ The threat and persuasion for the territory to integrate with Nigeria on economic grounds was later strengthened by a report prepared in 1959 by Sir Sydney Phillipson at the request of the Government of Southern Cameroons on the "Financial, Economic and Administrative Consequence to the Southern Cameroons separation from the Federation of Nigeria".¹⁵⁴

The report held that if the Southern Cameroons seceded from Nigeria to stand on its own for a short period before deciding to join French Cameroons, its economy would not be able to sustain it during the interval.¹⁵⁵ The report greatly influenced politicians in the Southern Cameroons to the extent that it could not have any hope in the economic survival of their territory without its being united with either Nigeria or French Cameroon. It has been noted that even when the politicians spoke of the great economic endowments of the territory, they lacked

¹⁵¹ NAB, File No. Vc/b, 1959/6, "Fourth Committee of United Nations Organisation," 1959, pp.242-246.

¹⁵² NAB, Colonial Office, Document. File No. 340, "Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration: Report for the Year 1958," London, 1958, p. 127.

¹⁵³ NAB, No.Vc/b, 1959/6, pp. 242-246.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ S.Phillipson, "Financial, Economic and Administrative Consequences to the Southern Cameroons of Separation from the Federation of Nigeria," Buea, 1959, p. 34.

the conviction to join the advocates of the third alternative. For example, in 1959 when J. N. Foncha, KNDP Premier of the Southern Cameroons, catalogued the economic potentials of the territory, it was expected that he would eliminate the idea of reunification from his party agenda and emphasized the sovereignty of the territory, but he rather continued to stress the ultimate goal of ‘building up of the greater Cameroons Nation’.¹⁵⁶

The newly independent Asian and African countries also influenced the UN not to take the third option into consideration. They rejected the independence of Southern Cameroons as a separate entity because it would lead to the further balkanization of Africa. Statesmen like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana argued that it would be an obstacle to the dream of creating the United States of Africa which was a vision that was popular among the newly independent African states at the time. The Afro-Asian Bloc at the UN voted against the independence of the Southern Cameroons. This made the UN not to include the third option in the plebiscite questions.¹⁵⁷

However, it is on record that the leading opposing political forces in the territory joined the United Nations in rejecting the idea of a third option. In rejecting the idea, the KNC/KPP on its part naively argued that they would not subscribe to the idea of a second independent Cameroons state wedged between two independent African States,¹⁵⁸ while the KNDP on the other hand approached the call for a ‘third alternative’ by uniquely advocating a short period of independence for the Southern Cameroons to serve as a first step to reunification with French Cameroons. It should be observed, however, that the insistence by the KNDP that reunification should not be included in the second alternative did not mean a change to supporting the third alternative.¹⁵⁹

The adoption by the UN General Assembly Resolution 1352 (XII) further intensified the resolve of advocates of an independent Southern Cameroons nation with the CIP joining their ranks at the beginning of 1960. The United Nations received several petitions requesting the inclusion of the ‘third alternative’ in the questions to be put to the people of Southern

¹⁵⁶ United Nations, Document. No. T/1440 “Election Broadcast by J. N. Foncha, President-General of the KNDP, 16th January 1959,” p. 65.

¹⁵⁷ U.N, Document. No.4A/4404, “Report of the Trusteeship Council 7 August, 1959-30 June, 1960,” 1960, p.100

¹⁵⁸ NAB, File No.Vc/b, 1959/6, “Statement to the Fourth Committee on 24th September, 1959 by Dr. E. M. L. Endeley,” p.5.

¹⁵⁹ NAB, File No.Vc/b, 1959/6, “Statement to the Fourth Committee on 24th September, 1959 by J. N. Finch,” p.4.

Cameroons in the plebiscite.¹⁶⁰ The Trusteeship Council also received reports from the Administering Authority and some other personalities on the actual situation in the territory. One of such reports submitted during the twenty-sixth session of May 1960 of the Trusteeship Council was by the Special Representative of the Administering Authority in the territory, J. O. Field, in which he argued against the inclusion of a third alternative. He said:

There was undoubtedly a body of opinion in favour of independence for the Southern Cameroons but it was difficult to say how large it was. The political parties proposing independence had made their appearance only after the General Assembly had determined what the plebiscite questions should be; there had been no general election since then or any other means of testing their strength, and it was therefore very difficult to measure the degree of support they enjoyed.¹⁶¹

Many have classified the above statement by J. O. Field as a misrepresentation of the actual situation that existed in the Southern Cameroons at the time. Drawing from the discussion above, it can be observed that the idea of a ‘third alternative’ had been articulated before the adoption of General Assembly Resolution 1352 (XIV) of October 16, 1959.¹⁶² As noted, only the Cameroons Indigenes’ Party (CIP) was formed after the passing of that resolution while the Kamerun United Party (KUP), the leading proponent was formed before the Mamfe Conference. CCC came after the Mamfe Conference but ahead of the opening of the Fourteenth Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The time when it was presented, therefore, could not have been an excuse for its rejection.¹⁶³

The Chiefs and some political leaders waged an important war that was never supported by the people that matter at the time in Southern Cameroons. The stance of the chiefs would be accepted by any conscious Southern Cameroonian who thought first of national interest before personal interest. But in the above situation, personal interest took precedence over national interest and this was confirmed from the statement made by one of the architects of Reunification, Dr John Ngu Foncha when he declared in December 1994 after he resigned from the ruling Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement (CPDM) on the 9th of June 1994 that: “The people of Southern Cameroons would never have voted unification if it had not been for assurances given that the resulting union would take the form of a federation.”¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰Chem-Langhëë and M. Z. Njeuma; “The Pan-Kamerun Movement, 1964-1961” in Ndiva Kofele-Kale ,pp.52-53.

¹⁶¹U N, Document. No. T/SR, 1086. “Trusteeship Council, Twenty-sixth Session,” New York, 1960, p.242.

¹⁶²U N “Yearbook of the United Nations 1946-47,” New York, Kraus Reprint, 1974, p.839.

¹⁶³Interview with Enow Botela Enow.

¹⁶⁴ See Foncha’s Letter of Resignation to His Excellency Paul Biya, National Chair of the CPDM, 9th June 1990, Cited in W.T.T. Samah, “Chiefs (Traditional Rulers in Anglophone Cameroon and Modern Governance, 1961-2000).”p.361.

Ramifications of the Third Option

Rejection of the ‘third alternative’ by the Twenty-sixth session of the Trusteeship Council intensified the efforts of campaigners in the second half of 1960. Parties championing the course resorted to threats and other intimidating efforts so as to realize their objectives. They are credited with having “threatened not only civil war, but also the disruption of the plebiscite by either boycotting it or by mutilating the ballot papers.”¹⁶⁵ The radical posture of the advocates of the third alternative was presented in a letter addressed to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld, by the Kamerun United Party (KUP) on September 20, 1960. The letter, in part stated: “Judging from your silence, it would appear that both the government of the United Kingdom and the General Assembly of the United Nations Organisation have turned down the K U P’s request for a third question to be put during the forthcoming Plebiscite.”¹⁶⁶

Therefore, the KUP had no alternative but to pursue resolution; a boycott of the Plebiscite as a protest against the plebiscite on the 11th day of February 1961. It was the only way left open for democratically minded Cameroonians to approach the issue.¹⁶⁷ Radical approaches by advocates of the third alternative like that of the KUP had some impact on leading politicians in Southern Cameroons who attempted some initiatives at re-considering the third option. The Cameroons People National Convention (CPNC), (a merger of the KNC and the KPP), suggested the abandonment of the plebiscite and requested that the United Nations should give the Southern Cameroons independence separately, outside Nigeria and Cameroon.¹⁶⁸

The KNDP on the other hand initially rejected the CPNC acceptance of the ‘third alternative’ and rather opened up negotiations with the independent Republic of French Cameroun on the subject of a confederation. However, when negotiations with French Cameroon failed, it went ahead to arrange a conference in London to consider among other issues, the CPNC suggestion of abandoning the plebiscite.¹⁶⁹ The KNDP initiated the “London November 1960 Talks” which was the last opportunity opened to those who sought independence for the Southern Cameroons to push forward their case. The abandonment of the plebiscite as suggested by the

¹⁶⁵Chem- Langhëë and M. Z. Njeuma, “The Pan-Kamerun Movement, 1964-1961”, p.53.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ NAB, File No.Vc/b,1960/1 “London November Talks, Press Release No. 1084 Southern Cameroons Information Service”. October -November, 1960,p.10 .

¹⁶⁸ Chem-Langhëë and Njeuma, “The Pan-Kamerun Movement,1964-1961,”in Ndiva Kofele-Kale (ed) *An African Experiment in Nation Building: The Bilingual Cameroon Republic since Reunification.*,p.53.

¹⁶⁹.NAB, No.Vc/b, 1960/1 “London November Talks,” p.12.

CPNC could have led to the realization of the dreams of ‘third alternative’ advocates but no consensus was achieved on the subject in spite of the great attention it received at the Talks.

Kale¹⁷⁰ observes that the Colonial Secretary and the Commissioner for the Cameroons both supported the idea of a middle course with promises of forwarding the matter to the United Nations but when the final agreement was about to be reached the talks collapsed. As a ‘third alternative’ advocate delegate to the Talks, he recorded that at one stage it appeared as if the agreement was going to be reached on this point by all concerned, but after some time, the atmosphere changed dramatically with a diversity of views and so these other round table talks also ended in smoke.

It further resulted in the overwhelming victory of the advocates of the reunification option during the plebiscite of 11th February 1961. The dropping of the third option namely: independence of the Southern Cameroons as a separate political entity left the voters in the Southern Cameroons with the choice of voting for reunification alternative and only 97,741 voted for the integration alternative.¹⁷¹ As Victor Ngoh concisely puts it, “the overwhelming reunification victory because a respectable section of the Southern Cameroons electorate thought that the reunification option had been replaced with “secession and independence as a separate political entity” and they voted for it.¹⁷²

The dropping of the third option was for the Southern Cameroons to obtain independence before choosing to join either Nigeria or the Republic of Cameroon as some people had wished. This explains why the fate of the Southern Cameroons was sealed at the Founban Constitutional Conference of 1961. The conference was a huge victory for Ahmadou Ahidjo and his political programme. The bargaining position of Southern Cameroons delegates was greatly weakened because they had voted in the plebiscite of 1961 to achieve independence by reunifying with the Republic of Cameroon.¹⁷³

The above analyses of the issues surrounding the February 11, 1961 United Nations organised plebiscite in the Southern Cameroons Trusteeship territory enables us to make some conclusive remarks. It is evident from the study that the Administering Authority and the United Nations did not work to provide for the territory a future in accordance with Article 76 of the UN Charter. We noted a lack of vision where at the height of the decolonization struggle

¹⁷⁰ Kale, *Political Evolution in the Cameroons*, p.70.

¹⁷¹ Le Vine, *Historical Dictionary*, p.100.

¹⁷² Ngoh, *The Untold story of Cameroon Reunification: 1955-61*, p 15.

¹⁷³ Interview with Botela Enow.

in the territory, the main issues beckoning for a plebiscite were rather integration with Nigeria or reunification with French Cameroons and not complete independence for the territory. Besides, the limited voices that came from some masses, traditional rulers and some party leaders were totally against two alternatives. Politically, there was no difference between joining either Nigeria or French Cameroons because either way, the identity of the Southern Cameroons would have eventually been lost. An approach was simply going to pass the territory from European to African colonialism.

However, considering determined efforts by third alternative advocates like the Southern Cameroons Chiefs Conference, Chief Nyenti's CCC and Kale's KUP, we can suggest that adopting the third option would have saved the territory and the United Nations from its present embarrassment from Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) and the present socio-political crisis currently plaguing the two English speaking regions of Cameroon since 2016. It is not out of place to observe that the United Nations did not get it right in the Southern Cameroons.

Finally, the dropping of the third option laid ground for Anglophone problem in Cameroon. The seed of the problem was sown by the failure of the UN to include the third option in the plebiscite questions. The Anglophone problem is one of the topics of contemporary Cameroon history and most neglected conflict by the international community. The problem has exhibited itself in various ways but of its greatest manifestations has been the continuous call by the Southern Cameroons National Council(SCNC)on the UN to grant the independence of the Southern Cameroons which had attained the status of a full Region in Nigeria by 1959.The Anglophone problem is a threat to national unity and integration in Cameroon because some radical SCNC members were even advocating secession by the English speaking region of Cameroon. This introduces us to a political party created by a chief of the Mamfe Division to fight for a single political entity for Southern Cameroons.

Conclusion

We have argued in this chapter that the role played by Mamfe in the struggle for the reunification of Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon was very positive. Positive because, prior to unification, numerous conferences and plebiscite conferences were held in Mamfe town and its politicians participated actively. We discussed the Petitions Conference that laid the foundation for the decolonisation process. The Plebiscite Conference that contributed enormously to the conduct of the vote on the 11th February 1961 and the eventual reunification. The chapter further analysed a number of Shared opinions during the plebiscite

debate. We concluded that the conferences and the people of Mamfe contributed positively to reunification of Cameroon. Conferences such as the Provincial Conference of 1948, the conference of May 1953 and other conferences made reunification a success in the division. This now leads us to treat the Mamfe Division in the reunification new and the developments in the federal and unitary systems of government in Cameroon.

CHAPTER FOUR

MAMFE DIVISION IN THE FACE OF FEDERAL AND UNITARY SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENT IN CAMEROON

Introduction

Chapter four is concerned with Mamfe Division during the period following the plebiscite, particularly the federal and unitary systems of government in Cameroon. In the federation, Southern Cameroons became the State of West Cameroon, while the Republic of Cameroon became the State of East Cameroon. The Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs became the West Cameroon House of Chiefs (WCHC). On 1st September 1966, the country moved from a multi-party state to a one party-state. The second part of the chapter discusses the unitary system of government from 1972 and the restructuring of the country former two states were transformed into numerous provinces. Mamfe division became known as Manyu Division and subjected to central control and not any more state power control. Part of the old Mamfe Division was detached and named Lebiale Division. The work is aimed at relating the position of Mamfe Division in the unitary setup in Cameroon. The work argues that under the federal system Mamfe people had a sense of belonging than in the unitary system where they look more an annex territory. How did the change from federal to the unitary set-ups in Cameroon affect the political, economic and social activities in Mamfe Division?

The Drawing of a New Political Map

After the plebiscite of February 11, 1961 in which the people of Southern Cameroons overwhelmingly voted to join the Republic of Cameroon, the delegates of Southern Cameroons led by Foncha and those from the Republic of Cameroon led by Ahmadou Ahidjo met in Fommban where they agreed on the terms of the constitution that would govern the reunified states. There was therefore the need to put in place constitutional and administrative reforms to meet up with the challenges of the new political dispensation. The final document of the Federal Constitution was adopted at the Yaounde Tripartite Conference in August 1961.¹

Following the adoption of the federal system, Southern Cameroons became the state of West Cameroon while the Republic of Cameroon became the state of East Cameroon in the Federal Republic of Cameroon. Against this backdrop, on August 30, 1968 the name Mamfe Division was modified and it became Manyu Division. Although there were many reasons,

¹Fanso, Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges, p.342

which led to the creation of a Federal Republic in 1961, it was short lived because in 1972 Ahidjo abrogated the federation and put in place a unitary state known as the United Republic of Cameroon. Another modification in February 1984 changed the name of the country from the United Republic to simply the Republic of Cameroon. It would be also important for us to discuss how Southern Cameroons had been struggling to assert her identity for her existence.

Southern Cameroon's Negotiating her Identity

The history of Southern Cameroons since 1922 when the territory was administered as a part of Nigeria to the period of independence and even after independence had been that of continuous negotiation of her identity or self-determination. It was uncertain about the future of the territory since it was administered an appendage of Nigeria and not as a separate bloc with a distinct international status. It was not even administered as a separate region within Nigeria but as a province of a region. This was the origin of the Cameroon frustration in the Nigerian frame-work which triggered the quest for identity through the creation of a separate region which would have the right to its aspirations as a people. It sums that the connection of Southern Cameroons to the Federation of Nigeria by Britain, was a single handed decision which worked less to the advantage of Southern Cameroons' sovereignty and ambitions. But the British were determined to administer Southern Cameroons as a separate region in Nigeria and not as an autonomous region in Nigerian. The absence of such recognized status for Southern Cameroons frustrated the territory's political, economic and social ambitions.²

The request for a separate autonomous region for Southern Cameroons in line with the other regions of Nigeria became a topical issue during the numerous conferences held in, Nigeria, London, the UN headquarters and Southern Cameroons on matters concerning colonial administration. During the various forums, Southern Cameroonians had the opportunities to express their grievances against colonial administration in Nigeria. Southern Cameroonians showed its dissatisfaction through pressure groups, political parties, delegations, and on individual basis by writing petitions, making public speeches and open debates in the various forums. It should be noted that Southern Cameroons was not out for complete autonomy at the time, but rather wanted a separate region within the existing federal frame work in Nigeria.

The available sources reveal that the first reaction to the British policies in Southern Cameroons in request for a regional status was raised in 1939 by the Cameroon Welfare Union

² M. A. Adig, "The Question of British Southern Cameroons Autonomy in the Evolution 1945-1961", *International Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, May 2017, p. 216.

(CWU) formed by G.J. Mbene It wrote petitions to the British, requesting representation for the Southern Cameroons in the Nigerian Central Legislative Assembly in Lagos. This request was a direct challenge to the British political reorganization of Southern Cameroon. Only the three regions (North, West and East) into which Nigeria was divided were represented at Lagos in their own rights. Southern Cameroons was as part of the Eastern region and could not, therefore be represented at Lagos in its own right. British reacted by putting in place the Macpherson constitution in 1951 because only these three political unite represented were at Lagos in their own right. Southern Cameroons was completely relegated; she was only attached to the Eastern part of Nigeria and could not be represented at Lagos in its own right. She was ruled from Enugu, the capital of Eastern Nigeria. The Southern Cameroons requested for a representation at Lagos was, therefore, fundamentally a request for the constitution of Southern Cameroons as a political unit equal in all respects to the other political unit of Nigeria. In an attempt to impose the identity of Southern Kamerun within the framework of Nigeria the Victoria branch of CWU set this pressure group into action by requesting the British to reorganise Southern Cameroons.³

The CWU, asserted a distinctive identity for Southern Cameroons and its inhabitants, in itself not a mean feat. But, this identity was to be within the framework of Nigeria. The desire of the CYL to have a nation for Southern Cameroon when beyond that. To be sure, a Southern Cameroon nation could remain within the framework of Nigeria in the form of either a federation or a confederation. The British did not intend to administer Southern Cameroons as a separate political entity from Nigeria. In every stage of moving forward Southern Cameroon needed to press hard before achieving one step in her way for self-government. The expectancy for Cameroon autonomy gave birth to a new movement called the Cameroon Youth League (CYL) on the expectancy for Cameroon autonomy gave birth March 27, 1940 which replaced the CWU which had dwindled into oblivion.⁴

The CYL which took the same structure like the NYM thus became the first organization formed, to stimulate interest in the establishment of a Southern Cameroons region, especially when it had gained the international status as a trust territory. The aim of the CYL was to redress the economic, educational, political and social grievances of British Cameroonians. Politically it aimed at arousing the national consciousness of British Cameroonians as well as seeking a recognized status for the Southern Cameroons. By seeking for a **recognized** status, the CYL was requesting the creation of a Southern Cameroons region within Nigerian.

³ Ibid.p. 217.

⁴. Adig, *The Question of British Southern Cameroons' Autonomy in the Evolution 1945-196* , p. 217.

It would however appear that the eventual demand by the CYL, for an autonomous region from the Eastern region was not initially thought of otherwise it would not have participated in the formation of, and allied itself with the NCNC. The idea only evolved, notwithstanding its alliance with the NCNC, as the years went by the territory was being exploited by Nigeria⁵ Even if the Southern Cameroons separated from the Eastern region, the possibility of ultimately seceding from the federation of Nigeria might have been ruled out, by that time. In fact, a number of Southern Cameroons leaders stated that separation from the Eastern region (would not mean) complete secession from Nigeria, but represented popular wish.⁶

In 1947, when the Richards' constitution came into force, Endeley founded a political discussion group called, the Cameroon Federal Union (CFU), against Igbo domination, arrogance and monopoly in trade. Its main request was for a separate regional status for the Southern Cameroons. This regional status was seen by Dr. Emmanuel Endeley and his group as the surest way to eradicate Igbo supremacy in politics and business or simply reduce Igbo influence in the Southern Cameroons. The CFU therefore simply kept alive the objectives first suggested by the CYL. The CFU petition pointed out that for more than thirty years, the British trust territories of the Cameroons had suffered from much neglect because it was administered as an integral part of Nigeria.⁷

Although it was after the promulgation of the Richards constitution into law in 1947 that the request for a separate region became vigorously pursued, Southern Cameroonians strongly criticized the constitution for not having granted the territory a regional status. At the same time the strongly criticized constitution, constituted the cradle of regionalism for Nigerians, though it left the *status quo ante* little change for Southern Cameroonians.⁸ To foster Southern Cameroons demand, P.M. Kale joined a seven man NCNC delegation to London to petition against the Richards Constitution to the secretary of State for colonies, Arthur Creech Jones. Kale's request for a regional status for Southern Cameroons was unequivocally rejected by Creech Jones that, it was difficult because the Cameroons was a Trust Territory... (Which) was incorporated in the political and economic life of Nigeria'.⁹ In an organized procession by the NCNC delegation through the streets of London in 1947 which ended with a meeting at Trafalgar square, speaker after speaker, expressed their grievances and disappointment with

⁵ Ibid..

⁶ Ngoh, Cameroon 1884-Present,(2018), The History of a People , p.160..

B.Chem-Langhëë, "The Kamerun Plebiscites 1959-1961: Perception and Strategies," p.45.

⁹ Ibid.

response from the Secretary of State for Colonies. On taking the podium, Kale called for the independence of Nigeria with Southern Cameroons as a region within it.

When Southern Cameroon got her independence on the 1st October 1961, she negotiated at Foumban to have federal system with the Republic of Cameroon after five days of intensive deliberations. The federation was at last concluded and it existed only for eleven years as president Ahidjo did see any good about it. It was abrogated in 1972. The Unitary system adopted thereafter, took away one of the star on flag of the country. By taking one of these stars, West Cameroon lost its identity. The territory finally lost its identity on the 4th February 1984 when modifications were made in the constitution. The name of the state was changed from United Republic to simply Republic of Cameroon,¹⁰ the name French Cameroon had in 1960 when she achieved her independence from France. By returning to this old name the English speaking Cameroonians finally lost its identity to their French speaking counterparts'. Southern Cameroons has then been struggling to assert her identity. Details for Southern Cameroons struggle to attain self-determination is explained in chapter five of our work. However, it is important for us to discuss why the Federal system was replaced with the unitary system in 1972.

From Federal to Unitary System 1961 – 1972

On the 11th February 1961, the UN organized a plebiscite in the British Southern Cameroons, the people voted overwhelmingly to join the Republic of Cameroon. On 1st October 1961, British Southern Cameroons achieved her independence by joining the Republic of Cameroon. This resulted to the creation of Federal Republic of Cameroon consisting of East and West Cameroon from 1961 to 1972. The architects of this Union were John Ngu Foncha and Ahmadou Ahidjo. The two leaders were attracted for Federalism due to; cultural and ethnic diversity for over forty years of separation. It was hoped that Federalism would create a viable international entity and provide general economic and social advantage to the people of both federated states¹¹. Federal system of government in Cameroon lasted exactly for ten years and eight months before being supplanted in 20th May 1972, Peaceful Revolution. Many factors or forces dictated the dissolution of the Federal System government.

Federal System of government was too expensive for a young nation like Cameroon. This is because huge sums of money were lavished to maintain numerous assemblies and

¹⁰ Fanso, Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges, p.360.

¹¹.Ngoh , Abrogation of Federalism I Cameroon 1972, p.2.

government in a small country like Cameroon. In dispense of the decision to liquidate the Federal structure in 1972. President Ahmadou Ahidjo in 1972 said the Federal structure was costly since it required the support for four separate legislature; a fifty member Federal legislature, hundred member legislature in East Cameroon, and a 37 member legislative Assembly and 26 member House of Chiefs in West Cameroon. The financial burden was rather too heavy for Cameroon that Lig Sam, a veteran journalist with *Cameroon Outlook* and a critic of the government, stated that “Cameroonians could not afford the luxury of four Houses of Assembly with over 300 parliamentarians”¹². The cost of maintaining the Federal System drained the country’s financing. The young government was losing billions of C.F.A annually which could have been used in socio-economic and cultural development of the entire country. Thus, the demise of the federal structure was geared to harmonizing the institutions in a bid to mitigate the duplications or overlapping of services whilst at the same time minimizing cost.

Another economic consideration that occasioned the dismantling of the federal structure centers on the fragile nature of the economy of West Cameroon. Throughout the period of the Federation, West Cameroon was continually unable to balance its budgets despite that most services had been placed under the federal Republic and the Federal Government gave assistance to the state. The precarious economic and financial difficulties of West Cameroon made the state more dependent on the financial largesse of the Federal Government.

The disastrous situation in West Cameroon was so bad that Peter M. Effange, Permanent Secretary in the office of the Prime Minister of West Cameroon vividly presented in a confidential report of 20 February 1967 as follows:

Our needs to continue to outstrip our resources and we are continuing to maintain a rather precarious equilibrium by balancing as it were on a razor’s edge. The present situation is so critical that a clearly defined financial policy for Government is imperative otherwise we shall continue to be tossed about like a boat in the high seas without a rudder¹³

The poor financial situation made Cameroon Bank and West Cameroon unable to honour cheques issued by the Treasury for them to pay the salaries of civil servants. The financial hardship of West Cameroon Government led to a loan of 400,000,000 C.F.A.F from the Federal Government to enable it make urgent payments in 1966. In the same year, the federal Government subsidized the West Cameroon to the tune of 60 percent of its budget. In

¹² I bid p.5.

¹³ A.Ndi, *National Integration and Nation Building in Cameroon The Golden Age of Southern(West) Cameroon Impact of Christianity*, Bamenda, 2005, p.115.

July 1966, the financial situation of West Cameroon deteriorated in way that the Prime Minister A.N. Jua created a Commission of inquiry chaired by Simon-Joseph Epale to investigate the financial situation of West Cameroon state. The Commission recommended that all contracts in West Cameroon should be registered as in East Cameroon (which in effect meant that Cameroon because it guaranteed checks and balances. The commission also said free Primary Education should be abolished; and that, C.D.C should pay rents on the land she held¹⁴

In addition, Ahidjo abolished the Federal system because of the need to concretize the economic harmonization of Cameroon. There were gross salary or wage disparities between workers in East and West Cameroon Government. If that was not enough, the West Cameroon Government could not pay the salaries of West Cameroon civil servants in 1966. The situation led to a fall in standard of living and per capital income in for the territory. A sum of 46,000 CFA francs in East Cameroon and 19,000 CFA francs in West Cameroon. The importance of “bread and butter issue” made West Cameroon civil servant to welcome the idea for the unitary system where salaries shall be equal. This view was vividly captured in editorial of Cameroon outlook “Salary Harmonization Dream comes True” stated as follow: West Cameroon workers especially Civil Servants have argued and rightly too, that the salary structure should be one throughout the federation... We would like harmonization to spread quickly into the private sector. Both those in private sector as well as civil servants buy from the same market....¹⁵

The eclipse of the Federal structure in Cameroon was equally due to the discovery of vast deposits of petroleum or crude oil at Cape limbo in Victoria (Limbe) in 1964, personally. Ahidjo did not enumerate this among the arguments which he declared in May 1972 as the justification for the discovery of oil in West Cameroon increased his determination to demolish the Federal System and replaced it with the Unitary Government. This was partly because Ahidjo suspected that the oil wealth would make the state of West Cameroon financially less dependent on the Federal Government and in that case, he would no longer imposed his whims and caprices on the state, even more important was the fact that the discovery of oil aroused fears that it might fuel demands for secession by the Anglophones (West Cameroons)¹⁶

In the political domain, the impact or the domino effect of the Nigerian (Biafra) Civil War of 1967-70. During the war, many Anglophones (West Cameroons) sympathized with the breaking away Eastern Region of Nigeria (Biafra) and were more inclined to facilitate the

¹⁴ Ibid p.6

¹⁵ Ngoh, P. 73.

¹⁶ Fanzo, Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges, p.362.

independence of Biafra. There was also rumour that some West Cameroon politicians and business men were secretly importing arms to declare the secession and independence of West Cameroon. The rumours were taken seriously given that former British Southern Cameroon had once been administered as an appendage of the Eastern Region of Nigeria for administrative convenience from 1922 to 1961. The fear was genuine because many countries in the world such as Tanzania, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Portugal, France, Denmark, Canada and others recognized the independence of Biafra in April 1968. All of these frightened Ahidjo because he felt West Cameroon might emulate the example of Biafra and secede from the Federation of Cameroon. The abolition of the Federal system in favour of a Unitary system was, therefore, necessary in order to kill any secessionist attempt¹⁷. The close collaboration that existed between contractors in West Cameroon and East Cameroon was strong that, they demanded for abrogation of the Federal Structure. This would enable them gain better contact if Cameroon is united.

For example, Nangah Company Ltd gained lucrative business in East Cameroon to construct, an Agricultural school in Dschang and Nkolbison in (Yaounde) and also the forest School in Mbalmayo; ILO building in Yaounde was built by Che Joint Stock Ltd. The business community were so happy that Unitary system should be put in place so much that, Lucas Muki Managing Director of Cameroon International Trading Company (CINTRACO) had this to say:

Tomorrow's referendum is one of the best things Cameroon will ever achieved if it becomes a Unitary state. We in the private sector enjoyed good international relations. from the stability of the Cameroon government. With Unitary structure, we for see...vast advantages especially to investors¹⁸

Besides, the Federal system was adopted in 1961 as a temporal measure to satisfy Foncha and West Cameroon politicians. From the beginning of the reunification Ahidjo and his collaborators from the Republic of Cameroon wanted a strong centralized Unitary state instead of a loose federation or confederation advocated by the West Cameroon leaders, by 1972 Ahidjo argued the fundamental differences which warranted federalism had disappeared . Consequently, Cameroonians were ripe for unitary type of government that maximized his presidential powers. This explains why in September 1966, Cameroon National Union (CNU) was created by Ahidjo to clear all obstacles on his path to the Unitary state. This was done by

¹⁷Ngoh , Abrogation of Federalism I Cameroon 1972. p.24 .

¹⁸.Ibid.p.25.

the dismissal of A.N. Jua considered as pro-federalist and the appointment of S.T. Muna Pro-Unificationist as the Prime Minister of West Cameroon in 1968.

Again, it was believed that the federation undermined National unity and fostered cleavages and conflicts between the Anglophones and Francophones who regarded themselves as members of separate states. A case in point was the Bakossi- Bamileke war in 1966 which was a threat to peace and unity in Cameroon. Additionally, Ahidjo liquidated the Federal structure because he wanted to consolidate national unity and integration, and promote bilingualism and turn Cameroon into a plural-cultural state. By national unity Ahidjo intended to make Cameroonians feel free in all parts of the country and enhance the spirit of patriotism.¹⁹

The press also played an important role in calling for an end to the Federal System. In March 1961, the influential catholic newspaper *L'Effort Camerounais* expressed the views of most French Cameroonians when in an editorial it said that “today we need a federation. But we need a basically temporary transitional federation whose impetus will thrust forward as fast as possible toward a Unitary state”... In 1970, Ahidjo let it be known once more that;

We [the Cameroonian people] freely opted for the creation of a federation of the state But this does not mean that there are two states of Cameroon, with its citizens all over the nation²⁰

Similarly, in West Cameroon, some politicians like Peter Motomby-Woleta expressed their view in newspapers such as the *Cameroon Champions* for and end of the Federation. He complained that Federalism was very expensive and that “the ideal constitution for a country or the size population and resources as the on envisaged in unitary” He added that the creation of VIKUMA (Victoria, Kumba-Mamfe) by Walter Wilson Mesumbe in November 1964 was partly to advocate for a Unitary State in order to contain the perceived marginalization of the people of the forest Zone (zone (present-day South West Region). According to the founder of Vikuma, a Unitary State would end the perceived marginalization²¹

Measures Ahidjo adopted to dissolve the Federal system

Even though president Ahidjo and others pro-unification activists advanced many reasons against the Federal structure in which some were convincing and some were not. The seven provinces and seven governors created after the referendum 1972 made the Unitary System even more expensive than two states under the Federal system. However, it was well

¹⁹.Ngoh, Abrogation of Federalism. 1972. P, 26.

²⁰Ibid. p.10.

²¹ Ibid. pp.11-12.

established at inception that the federation was never in the agenda of Ahidjo that is why he gave a bad name to kill it, in other words it was like “given a bad name to dog in order to kill it”

Ahidjo as early as 25th of October 1961. Signed a decree No.61/DF/15 of October 25 1961 divided the Federal Republic of Cameroon into 6 administrative regions headed by Federal inspectors of administration. By this decree West Cameroon was reduced to any of the 5 regions that were carved out of East Cameroon. It equally restricted the power of taking initiatives and independent actions by the state authorities especially in the West Cameroon. Jean Claude Ngoh was the first and longest serving Federal inspector in West Cameroon. He was the direct representative of the president, headed each of the administrative unit of the region. In West Cameroon, he was a Francophone and had wider power than the Federal Prime Minister.²²The Federal inspector controlled and coordinated the activities of Federal services and could initiate and investigate both federal and state officials. The application of the decree virtually transformed West Cameroon into a mere administrative region and West Cameroon Prime Minister into a glorified “Puppet”. This directly put the Federal system into jeopardy. This proved that the Federal system would last because there are clear signs to kill it.

Ahidjo’s system of appointing his ministers was a glaring proof that the Federation was a temporal arrangement as very few English speaking Cameroonians were appointed to ministerial positions in the federal government. For example in October 1961, out of 16 ministers, West Cameroon had only one full minister and in 1971 out of 22 ministers West Cameroon had only 3. With this attitude it made West Cameroon to start losing its full Federal status. These were signs for the disillusion of the Federal system. Ahidjo’s intention to progressively and surely erase the Anglophone component and achieve a unitary structure.²³

The creation of the federal university in 1962 which adopted only the French system was a clear indication that the system was out to assimilate the Anglophones and kill the Federal system. Though in June 1961 in Bamenda the English speaking Cameroonians proposed that higher education to be a Federal subject in order that it should be financed with federal funds and it would likely attract foreign financial assistance than a regional university²⁴It was called the University of Cameroon. The monotonous used of French language in the University sent many West Cameroonians to Nigeria to further especially science students. One retired Medical

²² A.Ndi, National Integration and Nation Building in Cameroon The Golden Age of Southern (West) p.117.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ngoh Cameroon 1884- present (2018) the History of people, Revised and updated Edition of Cameroon.231.

Doctor told the researcher that, “ I went to Nigeria to further my studies not because I like to travel but because courses in the Federal University were dominated by French language”²⁵. Still in the educational domain, in the 1960s the emphasis was on the teaching of French in West Cameroon with little or no effort made to teach English in East Cameroon. In 1963 a presidential decree ordered the modification of the West Cameroon school system in favour of that of the East Cameroon schools.

Again, in line to kill the federal spirit among West Cameroons, 11th February was used as a National Youth Day. Ahidjo in 1966 declared February 11 as the National Youth Day in honour of the Cameroonian Youth ²⁶ though the day was carefully chosen to remind the youth of the plebiscite but as the years went by nobody seem to talk of the significance of the day. Therefore, it was a calculating attempt to choose the day was to cause attraction that would divert the Southern Cameroonians from understanding the significance of the day and gradually the idea. The 11th Feb 1961, day the Southern Cameroons voted in an UN conducted plebiscite to unite with the Republic of Cameroon would be gradually wiped out of the minds of Cameroonians especially the youths.

In September 1966, the Cameroon National Union (CNU) was formed through the fusion of existing parties in West Cameroon and East Cameroon. West Cameroon political parties were dissolved. CUC was dissolved on August 6, KNDP on August 13th, UC on August 21st and CPNC on August 27th 1966. Therefore, Cameroon became a one party state, by implication; this new system destroyed the parliamentary democracies that characterized West Cameroon Assembly which was full of constructive debate checks and balances and appointment through competences. It was reduced to “rubber stamp” Assembly where no serious debate was carried out.

In 1968, Ahidjo removed an important obstacle on his way towards a unitary system. Ahidjo dismissed Pro-Federalist A.N. Jua as the Prime minister of West Cameroon and appointed S.T. Muna to the position. A few years later, S.T. Muna was appointed to replace J.N. Ngu Foncha as the Vice president. He amended the constitution to allow S.T. Muna retained the post of Prime Minister of West Cameroon. On 9th May 1972 Ahidjo convened an emergency of the Federal National Assembly that he would like the Cameroonian people to show by voting whether they wanted a federal or a unitary government. He then ordered the

²⁵. Interview with Ayuk Etang Michael ,68 Years, Retired Medical Doctor, Tiko, March 2017.

²⁶ W. Dze-Ngwa, “A Historical Analysis; 1960-2011”, *Summit magazine* No.22 special edition, Oct .– Dec .2013. P.11

Federal Government to mobilize and prepare groundwork for the holding of a referendum was set and it read:

“Do you approve with the view of consolidating National Unity and accelerating the economic, social and cultural development of the Nation, the draft constitution submitted ... by the president Instituting a republic, one and indivisible, to be styled the United Re-united Republic of Cameroon”? Cameroonians were to vote either “yes” represented by the White Ballot Paper or “No”²⁷ represented by the Black Ballot paper to the above question.²⁸

Before the 20th of May, Ahidjo mobilized the public relations office of the CNU party. Campaign officials were sent to all parts of the country. They were instructed to ensure massive turn out by voters and an overwhelming vote for the “Yes” option. The overwhelming “Yes” vote during the referendum was the event that marked the final collapse of the Federation. On the 20th May 1972, came to confirm Ahidjo’s intention to completely wipe away the federal system. On that day Cameroonians voters streamed to the polling stations. 3.326.280 Cameroonians voted ‘Yes” and only 176 vote “No” to the question asked. The results showed that 99.9 percent Cameroonian approved the abolition of the Federal system and establishment of a unitary system.²⁹ In Manyu a total of 67.880 were cast for “Yes” giving a percentage of 100% and no one voted for No. when we interviewed some Manyu elements in Mamfe and Yaounde many said they voted for option “Yes” thinking they were voting for the full independence now. Many said when Foncha campaigned in Mamfe during the plebiscite; he told them joining Republic of Cameroon was just for a short time. And when another election came a few years, they voted with the hope to gain the independence they cherish most³⁰

Ahidjo adopted economic measures which were convincing and helped to change the mind of many Cameroonians to accept the unitary system. In April 1962, the Pounds sterling was squeezed out of West Cameroon and the East Cameroon CFA Franc was adopted for the whole country. This move was intended to take country towards economic harmonization. A branch of the Cameroon Development Bank was established in West Cameroon and it kept state accounts. West Cameroon lost its financial independence. Its finances were controlled from Yaounde, Ahidjo’s federal government helped to destroy the West Cameroon Development Agency in 1962 when its government ordered it to stop the sale of petrol. To consolidate his rule and promote unitary system which would in the long run kill Federal structure, there was the

²⁷ Ngoh, Cameroon 1884- present (2018) the History of people, p.264.

²⁸ Ibid.p.28.

²⁹ Ngoh, Cameroon 1884- present (2018) the History of people, p.264.

³⁰ Interview with Arrey Peters, 77 years farmer, Mamfe 12th August 2018.

construction of roads linking Douala and Victoria, Kumba and Loum, Bafoussam and Bamenda; railway lines linking Kumba, Mbang and Douala. The construction of the bridge over the Mungo River was completed in 1969 and this facilitated movement between West and East Cameroon.

Ahidjo's government closed the Tiko international Airport to the advantage of Douala International Airport. Tiko, Bota and Victoria (seaport) were closed down in favour of Douala seaport. This made the Agro-Industrial firm in West Cameroon like the CDC and Pamol were compelled to make use of the Douala seaport to export their produce. This was intended to facilitate economic integration of the national economy. In the 1950 the Tiko International Airport was like bee- hive because of its busy economic activities." I left London in 1953 and landed in the Tiko International Airport from my studies in London"³¹ Another pertinent aspect that is discussed in our study is the form of State and the New Administrative Units and how it modified the administrative set-up of Manyu Division.

The Form of State and the New Administrative Units

The reunification of Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon on February 11th 1961 saw the establishment of a central federation in Cameroon. However, on May 9, 1972, President Ahidjo announced to the Federal Assembly his wish to consult the Cameroon people on the need for a unitary state in a referendum. The said referendum was organised on May 20th, 1972. Out of the vote cast of 3,226,280, a negligible 176 voted against a unitary state, while 3, 226,104 (99.9%) voted in favour of it.³² With this, Cameroon became a unitary state with the new appellation "United Republic of Cameroon". Thereafter, May 20th became the country's National Day.

Following Decree no 72/249 of 24 July 1972,³³ Seven provinces were carved out of two states: former East Cameroon had Central South with headquarters in Yaounde, East with headquarters in Bertoua, Littoral with headquarters in Douala, West with headquarters in Bafoussam and grand North with headquarters in Garoua. The State of West Cameroon was also divided into two Provinces-North West with headquarters in Bamenda and South West with headquarters in Buea. However, later, the number of provinces changed from seven to ten in October 1983. The grand North province with headquarters in Garoua was divided into three provinces namely; Adamawa with headquarters in Ngaoundere, Far North with headquarters in

³¹ Interview with Pa. Awasum Simon, 91 Years, Retired Medical Doctor, Yaounde, 28th December 2022.

³² Ngoh, Cameroon 1884- present (2018) the History of people, p.266.

³³ Ibid. p.46.

Maroua and the Former North itself with the same Headquarters in Garoua. While the Central-South was divided into two to create the Centre with headquarters in Yaounde and South Province with headquarters in Ebolowa. The reunification brought about federal system, unitary system, the republic and decentralised unitary state of government in Cameroon. All these forms of government restructured Manyu division politically, Socio-culturally and economically.

Political Organisation of Manyu Division

In this domain, the entire regional, divisional, sub-divisional organisations and as well as local administration are discussed. The creation of political organisations in the division and organisation of national elections in the division like parliamentary and presidential are examined.

The Regional Administration

In December 2008, a presidential decree transformed the provinces of Cameroon into regions. This was in keeping with the liberty law of December 19th, 1990 and 1996 Constitutional amendment. As already seen, the Republic of Cameroon was divided into ten regions. A region in Cameroon was and is still the largest administrative unit. A Governor appointed by the head of State headed the region. He was the highest executive officer in the region and he was answerable to the President of the nation especially when he has to report about the activities in the province. Consequently, the Governor was the direct government representative at regional level. The Governor, the Senior Divisional Officers or Prefects and Divisional Officers or Sub-Prefects are under the supervision of the Minister of Territorial Administration. This was following Decree no 422 of 26 August 1974 that created the Ministry of Territorial Administration.³⁴

The Divisional Administration

A division was the second largest administrative unit in Cameroon. At the head of a division was the Senior Divisional Officer or perfect appointed by the Head of State. Assisted by two assistant Senior Divisional Officers or Perfects all appointed by the Head of State. The Senior Divisional Officer or Perfect, like his assistants, was a civil servant and he was responsible to the governor. The First Assistant SDO in case of any absence performed the duties of the SDO. The SDO was in-charged of controlling and co-ordinating the activities of Divisional Officers

³⁴M. Fonju, K. Ngabe (eds), *Civil For Colleges*, Buea ,Anucam Book,2002,p. 85.

(DO) within his division. He She was to ensure the maintenance of law and order in the division and SDO controlled all the personnel of the various administrative services in the division. Manyu Division constituted one of the fifty-eight divisions of the Republic of Cameroon and one of the six divisions of the South West region. It should be recalled that the number of divisions were increased from four to six in 1992 as result of a Presidential decree that created Lebialem and Kupe-Maneguba.³⁵

The Sub divisional Administration

A Divisional Officer in collaboration with an assistant headed a sub-division. The President of the Republic appointed them all. The DO was in-charge of co-ordinating the activities of the various District Officer within the area of jurisdiction, the DO was accountable to the SDO when executing government order, maintained law and order within the sub-division and executed the social and economic programmes for the sub-division.

Due to the new order in the country, things were no longer going to be the same in Mamfe Division. Even though the headquarter of the division was still maintain at Mamfe, the division saw part of her territory transferred to other divisions. Widikum subdivision went to Momo division of the North West region then province and Nguti subdivision went to Meme division of the South West region then province. Mamfe Division now Manyu division was left with four subdivisions, namely: Eyumojock with headquarter at Eyumojock town, Akwaya with headquarter at Akwaya town, Mamfe Central with headquarter at Mamfe town and Fontem with headquarter at Fontem town. Later, in 1992, as we earlier said, the division lost her former Fontem subdivision, as the subdivision was transformed into Lebialem Division. Meanwhile, a new subdivision was created in Manyu Division called Upper Banyang subdivision with headquarter at Tinto.³⁶

Local Administration (Village)

The division never had any district as an administrative unit. The villages constituted local administrative units. Chiefs headed villages. After the reorganization of chieftaincies under Ministry of Territorial Administration (MINAT), Degree No 77/245 of July 15, 1977, MINAT became the sole organizer of chiefdoms, fondoms and Lamibes. To determine the rightful heir, three things were taken into consideration: the genealogy of the future heir, customs and tradition of enthronement and geriatric witnesses. Although sections 10 and 11 of the same

³⁵ H. G. Ngwane, "The search of a Cameroonian Identity," 1992, p. 23.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 89.

degree, the government put the coronation or appointment in the hands of MINAT, it still prescribes for MINAT to follow the customs and traditions of each kingdom. Consequently, MINAT through the Sub Divisional Officer (SDO) or Divisional Officer (DO) could not unilaterally appoint a chief without the vetting process.

The 1977 decree organized traditional chiefdoms on a territorial basis following a pyramid of three, the highest of which is the First Class chiefdom or the paramount chiefs found at the divisional headquarters, like Mamfe. This legal instrument represented a precise taking over of legislation on the same subject under the French colonial administration (Order No. 224 of 4 February 1933 defining the status of indigenous chiefs).³⁷ The First Class chiefdoms were those which area of jurisdiction covered at least two of that of Second Class chiefdoms and its territorial boundaries did not in principle exceed those of a division. Only one of these was found in Manyu Division (Mamfe Town). Table 10 below presents the first class chiefdoms in South West Province in 1978. The current paramount chief of Manyu division is Chief Dr. Godson Oben.

Table 10: First-Class Chiefdoms in the South West Province in 1978

Name of Chiefdom	Name of Chief	Population Size	Annual Emolument
Mamfe Town	S.B.Oben	10,051	125,416FFCFA
Fontem	Defang	15,962	125,416 FCFA
Bamumbu	Lekunze	16,831	125,416FCFA
Kumba Town	Abel Mukete	40,131	200,619FCFA
Victoria Town	M. Williams	30,252	151,260FCFA
Buea Town	G.M.Endeley	19,140	145,764FCFA

Source: NAB, Decree No. 77/245, “Concerning the Reorganization of Chieftaincy and Traditional Authority in the National Territory,” 1978, p.5.

Second Class chiefdoms had jurisdiction over at least two of the Third Class chiefdoms with boundaries that did not exceed those of a sub-division. There were seven of these in Manyu namely; Besongabang, Ossing, Kembong, Otu, Bachuo-Ntai Tinto and Akwaya.³⁸

Third Class chiefdoms corresponded to a village or a neighbourhood in rural areas and in urban areas like. Ntenako, Eban, Mfuni, Egbekaw, Eyang, Mkpote and Small Mamfe. It was

³⁷ Nkwi, *Traditional Government and Social Change: A study of the political institutions among the Kom and the Cameroon Grassfields*, Frigbourg, University Press, pp.99-115.

³⁸ Interview with Felix Tanyi Nkongho, Pharmacist, 54 Years, Muea, 6th April. 2019.

suggested that the legislator's attempted attachment of traditional rulers to the State was intended to confine the ambit of their powers to subjects in identifiable and predefined geographical areas.³⁹ The attachment of traditional authority to the Ministry of Territorial Administration was intriguing when considered within the context of decentralization and the effective governance role that these authorities played. Most specifically, the decree would seem to be out of harmony with the ambit and the realities of the exercise of traditional authority. Traditional chiefs had no legal powers of arrest and were not considered to be above the law. Palace guards were meant to full fill strictly ceremonial functions and appeared not to have any formal legal status.

The One-Party System

The creation of the one party state in 1966 was a very decisive stage in the introduction of a unitary state in 1972. The dissolution of all political parties in the country eliminated any serious opposition to Ahidjo. This was so especially because parliament became a rubber stamp while West Cameroonian politicians could not raise a finger against Ahidjo once they all came under the umbrella of the Cameroon National Union (CNU). In 1968, Ahidjo dismissed A.N. Jua as Prime Minister of West Cameroon because of his ardent support for the federal constitution. His replacement by S.T. Muna seemingly loyal to Ahidjo, prepared the ground for the institution of a unitary state.

At independence, the new ruling class did little to question the administration left behind by Britain and France concerning the form of state. It was in the interest of the new ruling class to play down on the importance of grass root administration as they sought to affirm their modern authority. This situation led many modernization theorists to think that grass root administration, as agents of administration would soon become outmoded and replaced by over centralisation of power in Yaounde.

However, the Federal constitution did not ban divisional and regional administrations. Having maintained their political parties such as KNDP and CPNC , House of Assembly and House of Chiefs, West Cameroonians concentrated on these political parties and institutions in their own state for nation building. Nevertheless, little blame should be laid on the West Cameroonian politicians in the moves by Ahidjo to create a one party state. They took up the refrain of the singsong of African democracy and Ahidjo transformed the quest for unity to

³⁹C.N. Mback, 'La chefferie traditionnelle au Cameroun: ambiguïtés juridiques et dérives politiques', *Africa Development*, Vol.XXV (3 and 4). 2000, p.84.

personal rule. The birth of the single party was an important step in the kind of democracy that Ahidjo envisaged for Cameroon. This in essence, meant maximizing his power and authority, but this process could only be completed, if the federal system was not destroyed⁴⁰.

The abolition of the federal structure and the introduction of single party system made Ahmadou Ahidjo to concentrate power in his hand, as he became a dictator. He consolidated power in both West and East Cameroons. After 1966, the CNU controlled the federal and State legislatures and councils. Through the CNU, West Cameroonians came under a single party. It took Mamfe Division very far from national politics and administration. There was an end to political competition as the KNDP, CPNC political parties were suppressed, and CNU became a political monopoly. Legislative and Presidential elections became a matter of formalities with the CNU always scoring 99.9% victory.⁴¹

At local front, traditional rulers were relegated to political wilderness leading to frustration and dependency. Socialist theorists did conclude that the chieftaincy institution was not going to survive. This was because to them, the institution was lacking in her ability to mobilize social and political change since it was largely dominant. This view became apparent because the traditional authorities became part of the new trend in African politics after independence, and the one party state. The new members of the elite used the pretext of African democracy to almost put an end to local administration.

The attitude of the government and politicians towards the people of Manyu Division depended on how politically important they saw them. Under the one-party state, the only partner the people of Manyu had in politics was the CNU party. There were no political competitors to derail the people and their local rulers. The fact that the local rulers were paid, made it imperative for them to support the lone party if they were to guarantee their monthly income. As such, they became functionaries of the sole CNU party. This explains why most petitions from the chiefs to the minister of Territorial Administration centred on salary problems. However, the manner in which the chiefs were controlled only reminded them that once they had gotten themselves into politics and came out as losers, they had to submit to the politicians. The chiefs were involved in the sale of party's membership cards and as candidates in elections. According to article 1 of Decree No.77/245 of 15 July 1977, the state stood to assure the protection of the chiefs against risk, violence, interference, defamation in the exercise of this function. Article II of it stated that the state would repair any prejudices suffered by

⁴⁰ J. F. Bayart, "The Neutralisation of Anglophones," In R. Richard (ed.), *Gaullist Africa, Cameroon under Ahmadou Ahidjo* Enugu, Fourth Dimension Publisher, 1978, p.88.

chiefs. However lofty the new decree was, it did not change anything on the fact that the chiefs had become agents of the party. They were assured of government protection but that only made them more dependent on the state and the party.⁴²

Consequently, the people of the division needed to toe the party line even if they never wanted to be openly partisan. Colonialism brought misfortunes and since then, things have not been the same for the status, prestige, power and authority of the people of division. The political fortunes of the division continued to dwindle under the C.P.D.M. One way or the other they had allowed themselves to become tools of politicians who used them to attain their political gains. In the 1990s, a new chapter was opened in Cameroon with the reintroduction of multiparty politics. The chiefs of the division who had seen themselves tossed in one way or the other under multiparty politics and as agents of the single party once again became the centre of attention by politicians. A new era opened for the chieftaincy institution.

With the abolition of Multi-party politics, the chiefs of then Mamfe Division as well as those of the rest of Cameroon lost their political power. Under the one-party system in 1966, politicians did not need the support of traditional rulers to win elections again. As a matter of fact, the creation of the CNU was meant to serve as an important apparatus for national unity and integration. The chiefs were no longer forced to participate actively in political life of the nation due to the absence of political competition. The chiefs were no longer called again to give unflinching support to the ruling party and its chairperson, Ahidjo.

According to Kaptue,⁴³ Ahidjo was rather ready to eliminate any chief who failed to co-operate or who stood as obstacles to him in achieving his goals. Chiefs started parting with their past political experience and habits as they joined the one party and became active supporters of the ruling party without being persuaded. This could be confirmed out of Cameroon, whereby, the resilience and efforts to silence chieftaincy institution can be appraised from the politic⁴⁴s of the Convention People Party (CCP) of Nkwame Nkrumah of Ghana towards the chiefs.

According to Rathbone, the CPP waged a long campaign to win control of the Ghanaian countryside from the traditional rulers. As such, the CPP frustrated attempts to democratize

⁴² Ibid. 89.

⁴³ K. Leon, "Prise entre le martau et enclum, le pouvoir traditionnel choist-il de se prostituer au Cameroun, endosopie de la situation de 1884 a1992" paper presented during the international colloquim on: Rois et chefs dan les etats Africines de la veille des independence a la fin du xxesiecle Paris 8, 9 et10 Novembre 1999.

⁴⁴ R. Rathbone, Nkrumah and the Chiefs The Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana, 1957-1960, Athene, Ohio University Press, 2000,p.2.

local government and the chiefs mounted a bitter campaign to resist their political marginalization. Actually, Ahidjo did not want a drawn-out tussle with the chiefs. However, the chiefs were either unwilling or were not prepared to defend their rights. Consequently, the demise of the federal system saw the reduction of the influence of the chieftaincy institution. The chiefs climbed onto the bandwagon of the state and sought to achieve whatever they could from it.

The transition from Ahidjo to Biya did not see a change in the image of the chiefs as viewed by the administration. The traditional rulers continued to be side lined. As the state apparatus continued, the chiefs found themselves more and more integrated into the single party. In 1985 the CNU was transformed into the Cameroon Peoples' Democratic Movement (CPDM). In 1986, president Biya promised political reforms in his book *Communal Liberalism and the National Charter of Freedoms*.⁴⁵ While the first was meant to address the inequalities in the Socio-economic sector, the second was designed to guarantee all freedoms including thought, expression and equality before the law and secularity of the state. Takougang and Kreiger posit that many political observers saw these measures as shallow and tailor to prevent any serious challenges to the regime. Nevertheless, they did indicate a change from the authoritarian rule of Ahidjo. Biya continued to hold onto the one party state until 1990 when Cameroon was caught up in the lightening of the democratic revolution.

This explains why after the re-introduction of Multi-party politics in 1990; the people of Manyu Division like elsewhere in the national triangle of Cameroon identified themselves strongly in national politics. However, the State needed the services of the people of Manyu in nation is building through many other avenues. It was mostly by means of government appointments, independent participation in politics and general administration.

Democratic Transition in Manyu

It should be recalled that on September 1st 1966, the political space was closed in Cameroon following the introduction of single party system. However, the introduction of democracy⁴⁶ in Cameroon in 1990 and the return to multiparty politics, the government in power opened the political space once more with the introduction of democratic principles like; the right to freedom of expression, one of the most fundamental principles in any democratic system of

⁴⁵ P. Biya, *Communal Liberalism*, London, Macmillan Publisher, 1987, PP. 51-52.

⁴⁶ Democracy can be defined as the free and equal right of every person to participate in a system of government often practiced by elected representatives of the people by the Majority of the people or "Democracy is like the experience of life itself- always changing, infinite in its variety ,sometimes turbulent and the more valuable for having been tested adversity" Jimmy Carter's Speech to Parliament in India, 2nd June , 1978.

government, the right to association and the right to movement. In the light of this, the people of Manyu Division as well as other in Cameroon were in the situation of dilemma on whether to continue to mediate in the ruling party close to power (CPDM) or choose any political opposition party of their choice.

It became incumbent for the people of Manyu division to exercise their democratic rights freely by belonging to any political party of their choice but they were denied this right of democratic principle by their Chiefs.⁴⁷ Most of the chiefs of Manyu Division made it compulsory for their subjects to belong to the ruling party which happened to be the finger that was feeding them and it was thought one could not bite the finger that fed him or her. The chiefs found it necessary to force their subjects to move to the same direction with them. Being the “Fathers of all”, they believed that they knew what was good for their children. Conversely, some schools of thought rather hold that since chiefs are considered “fathers of all,” it will be more appropriate for them to remain neutral in politics and serve as referees. This would encourage democracy, free, fair and creditable elections and above all nation building.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, since the prime aim of any political party and political leader was to win election and come to power, there seemed to be the dire need to solicit the support of chiefs who were at the grassroots to convince their subjects. None of the politicians would like to see a chief support the other opponents. In this prevailing context, most of the chiefs of Many Division decided to give their support to the party in power, the Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement (CPDM) as against political parties like the Social Democratic Front (SDF), National Union for Democracy and Progress (UNDP), *Union Democratique Camerounaise* (UDC) and *Union des Populations du Camerounaise* (UPC).

The moment a subject was identified with another political party other than CPDM, they were immediately considered as “an enemy in the house.” There was therefore need to intimidate such chiefs to discover that they were on the wrong side of the political divide. In the face of this, some people would be incited to be against their chief. In case of chiefs who were businessmen, they would witness an increase in their taxes. Since every human being is a political animal, and no political animal can be apolitical, chiefs were not to be the first.⁴⁹ Therefore, since chiefs could not allow the political atmosphere to be friendly, conducive

⁴⁷ S. Myers, (eds)., *Democracy is a Discussion Civic Engagement in Old and New Democracies*, New London, Connecticut College U S A, 1997, p.32.

⁴⁸ Ibid.,p.33.

⁴⁹O.Abarisade, *Local Government and the Traditional Rulers in Nigeria*, Ife, University of Ife Press, 1985, p.89.

and relaxed to their people and all politicians. There was bound to be crisis in some chiefdoms where the subjects seemed to know their rights.

Formation of Political Parties

The constitution of Cameroon permitted the existence of a pluralistic political system. Although the CPDM was the lone existing political party, the constitution accommodated the idea of multi-party politics. It was this constitutional provision that barred the government from obstructing the launching of the SDF in May 26, 1990. This event led to the killing of Six militants of SDF in Bamenda. In Mamfe, the Upper Sixth Arts students of Government High School Mamfe took to the street on May 26, 1990 protesting for the opening of political space. Many of them were arrested and detained for several days. One of them Mbi Livinus Tataw in an event to escape from the hands of the government officials jumped from upstairs building of the SDO's office in Mamfe and sustained a serious injury on the leg.⁵⁰

The opening of political space gave the people of Manyu division the green light to create their own political parties. First Manyu indigenous political party was Conservative Republican Party (CRP) created by Dr. Ben Agbor Besong, an indigene of Kembong village based in Yaounde. The Party was created in 1992 and participated in the 1997 parliamentary and presidential elections in Manyu division. CRP competed in these elections with CPDM, SDF, NUDP and scored zero per cent.⁵¹

The second indigenous political party created in Manyu division after reintroduction of Multi-party politics was People's Action Party (PAP) created by Paul Ayah Abine, Jurist from Akwaya Sub-division based in Buea. The party chair was a staunch member of the CPDM and former member of Parliament from Akwaya constituency under CPDM ticket. He resigned from CPDM in 2011 and created this own party. PAP took part in 2011 presidential elections and had nothing to ride home about⁵² PAP, supported a federal system of government in Cameroon. In this light the party created a Coalition of Cameroon Federalist Groups and Activist (CCFGA) for parties and opinion holders and members of the civil society who for once, saw the need to come together under a common platform to push forth the return to federalism in Cameroon. (see Appendix 7 for the full version of the press statement).

⁵⁰Interview with Alfred Eyong Tabot, 54 Years, Senior Translator and Interpreter, Presidency of the Republic, Yaounde, February 16th, 2022.

⁵¹Interview with Peter Peter Ayuk, 67 Years, retired Military Man, Buea, January 21st2022.

⁵²Ibid.

Disappointed by the inhuman turn of the political practice that has no more democracy than the appellation in Cameroon, Judge Paul Ayah Abine resigned on Monday, March 4, 2019 from the presidency of the Party then Popular Action Party (PAP). The party he created after his resignation from the ruling party, the CPDM, of which he had been deputy and president of the Committee of Foreign Affairs at the National Assembly between 2002 and 2011. The resignation letter reads as follow:

“I wish to inform the national and international community that political leadership and commitment in Cameroon today, in a context marked by the gratuitous, ruthless and systematic destruction of human life and property, as well as anarchic repression civil rights and human rights, are incompatible with my conscience,” wrote to the politician and magistrate who was also general counsel to the Supreme Court. As a result, I left the post of National President of the People’s Action Party (PAP), with effect from this day, Monday, March 4, 2019, at noon local time”⁵³

The resignation of Justice Ayah Abine came after his eight months frustration in prison for exhorting the regime to abandon the military solution to the Anglophone crisis and to opt for dialogue. He was accused of playing the game of secessionists, and regained his freedom only after President Biya’s move to free some English-speaking leaders in the hope of appeasement. Justice Paul Ayah Abine had decided to become an advocate for political prisoners. A week before the resignation of Justice Ayah Abine from the leadership of PAP, the party had announced that it would boycott all upcoming elections in Cameroon if the Anglophone crisis was not resolved. In addition, the PAP demanded not only the resignation of President Biya because of his inability to resolve the Anglophone crisis, but also the release of all the militants Cameroon of Renaissance Movement (CRM) of Prof. Maurice Kamto and the revision of the Electoral Code.

Between 1990 and 2018 a number of political parties competed for political space in Manyu Division, notably CPDM, SDF, NUDP, UPC, PAP, CDP and ANDP concentrated their campaigning on wooing tribal and professional groups based in Mamfe to their sides. Such tribal groups under persuasion included the Akwaya, the Bangwa, the Hausa, and various other settlers from the North West Region. The bargain, on the table, varied from material assistance to positions offered on the candidates' lists. Anonymously, some of the groups contacted by eager parties hinted that they asked for chairs to equip their cultural halls, improvement of streets into their quarters or any other thing that would satisfy their collective interests.

⁵³Cameroon-Info-Net , Yaounde, 17 February, 2022,p.2

Political Elections

In a democratic framework, the enthronement of political leaders is done through the mechanism of political consultations (elections), which quite often may produce some adverse consequences on the society and human relationships. Conflict is rife because during the election exercise there is enthusiasm, excitement and euphoria. The atmosphere of battle and contest prevails. Prospects exist for victory as well as defeat. The air is that of uncertainty, fears and hopes. The possibilities for change and continuity exist side by side in peoples' immediate consciousness. Voters reflect on the record of the past leaders and the promises of the new aspirants for power. At the end of the exercise, there must be victory and defeat.

The new context of multiparty democracy with strong divisive forces certainly presented stronger challenges to the people in Manyu Division. The people nevertheless remained attached to the old philosophy and demonstrated a strong commitment to the ruling party. It was in keeping with this practice that the situation resulted to the conflict of interests between the chiefs and their subjects. The chiefs' intentions to implement "guided democracy" as democracy that took deep and firmed roots at the grassroots was met with strong resistance from their subjects who thought that the playground should be left open and level for all. That democracy must not defeat its own essence of the greatest happiness of many, justice, peace and stability in the society.⁵⁴ Introducing such a conflict-provocative framework was considered by the subjects as undemocratic.

After some delay, the first multiparty legislative elections took place on the 1st of March 1992. Of the major opposition parties, the UPC and UNDP contested in the elections. However, the SDF boycotted the elections on grounds that the election would not be free and fair and also on principle that "no good laws no election" Since it was the first pluralistic elections at independence, the political map of Cameroon was not known. Various competing political parties went to the periphery to seek local support in Manyu Division and political leaders did everything possible to involve the traditional rulers in the political competition. The political atmosphere became very tense. During such moments, the ruling party expected all state employees to campaign for it.⁵⁵ Scapegoats were transferred from urban centres to remote and enslaved or rural areas to vote.

⁵⁴ A.Ambang, "Legal and Political Questions Surrounding the Gentleman's Agreement in Manyu-Division," Yaounde, 2007, pp.39-40.

⁵⁵ W. Samah "Anglophone Cameroon," p.318.

The involvement of Manyu chiefs in elections was for them to convince their subjects to vote for the ruling party. It became a common practice for chiefs to slam a curse on any person resisting to be part of the CPDM campaign trail. In Mamfe town, the female association called *Moh-awa* had to perform a ritual in stark nakedness meant to curse anybody who would vote for any other political party rather than the CPDM.⁵⁶ The *Ekpe* society, the regulatory society in Many Divisions also fixed a heavy fine on any defaulter.⁵⁷

This political manoeuvring notwithstanding, the UNDP swept all the three available seats in the division at the end of the first multiparty political consultation. Although international observers noted a number of irregularities on the polling day, these were not believed to have had a serious impact on the results and the monitors considered the elections as generally free and fair. In the national results, the CPDM of Paul Biya won 88 seats, the UNDP of Maigari Bello Bouba, won 68 seats, UPC of Augustine Frederick Koudock won 18 seats, and the Movement for Defence of Republic (MDR) of Dakolle Dai Salle won 6. Since CPDM never had majority in the House, the party negotiated an alliance with the MDR and got 6 seats to constitute a simple majority in the parliament. Many came to the conclusion that some opinion leaders were not fighting for the interest of Cameroonians as a whole but for their personal and family interests. This was so because the 6 seats were very essential to turn the political table and change the fate of Cameroon if the 6 seats were used to form an alliance with the rest of opposition parties.⁵⁸

The SDO, DOS and chiefs of Manyu Division were surprised to discover that the three available seats for the division were all taken by the opposition UNDP. Under the ticket of UNDP, Rose Abunaw Makai won in Mamfe Central and Upper Banyang subdivision, Besong Bessem Ayuk won in Eyumojock subdivision and Achua in Akwaya subdivision. This was a clear testimony that chiefs could not dictate the political leaning of their people to an extent. They struggled within their power to influence the outcome of the poll to no avail because this election was slightly free and fair. The chiefs were caught into an atmosphere of fear and panic that their position as the auxiliaries of administration was threatened.⁵⁹

Against this backdrop, Amaazee⁶⁰ believes that the chiefs' claim that they brought down E.M. L Endeley from power in favour of J.N Foncha in 1959 needs re-examination. On the

⁵⁶ Interview with Elizabeth Takor Ayuk, 70 Years, Businesswoman, Mamfe, 21st October 2019.

⁵⁷ Interview with Rose Abunaw Makai, 68 Years Educationist and Politician, Mamfe, 14th December 2021

⁵⁸ Interview with Botela Enow Enow, 57 Years, Teacher, Buea, 23rd March 2019.

⁵⁹ Interview with Egbe Ben Besong, 54 Years, Driver, Yaounde, 12th November 2020.

⁶⁰ Amaazee, *Traditional Rulers (Chiefs) and Politics in Cameroon*, 2002, p.83.

contrary, Chief Kima⁶¹ holds the opinion that, the chiefs' claim needs no re-examination. According to him, though the decision of the chiefs to support Foncha in 1959 might have coincided with the direction of the political wind of change, the strategies used by chiefs in 1959 were different from that put in place by the Chiefs during the 1992 Parliamentary elections.

In 1992, there was the use of force, intimidation and manipulation. Therefore, there is no gainsaying that in 1959, chiefs were a political force to reckon with. The chiefs of former Southern Cameroons as a whole stood for the truth and for common interest. When E.M.L. Endeley deviated from the original aspiration of chiefs which was secession pure and simple from Nigeria and he started negotiating for integration with Nigeria, the chiefs of Southern Cameroons also turned their backs at him in the 1957 elections in which he slightly defeated Foncha. So in the 1959 elections, Foncha finally ousted him because the chiefs gave their full support to Foncha instead of him.

Following the defeat of the ruling Party CPDM in the parliamentary elections in Manyu Division, on 25th of August 1992 in the midst of opposition disorder, President Biya called for presidential elections on 11th of October 1992 and the chiefs became very conscious of future defeat. Therefore, SDO, DOs, chiefs and Stakeholders of Manyu division did all they could to see that the incumbent president Paul Biya wins the election in the division even through unorthodox methods. The SDO and DOs used the chiefs to intensify the instrument of intimidation and manipulation which chiefs earlier started during the Parliamentary election. Through the technique of intimidation, the law that had earlier been instituted in the most feared regulatory society of the land called *Ekpe* was reinforced and anyone caught voting for any other political leader other than Paul Biya was to pay a heavy fine to the *ekpe*. Like elsewhere in the country, chiefs' palaces were transformed into polling stations for them to personally supervise their subjects on the elections day.

The Election Day was marred by widespread irregularities, violence and human rights abuses. The chiefs were alleged to have rigged the elections in favour of the ruling CPDM by stuffing ballot boxes with ballot papers.⁶² In some villages like Ndekwai, Ntenako and most of Obang villages, ballot papers of the CPDM were put into the envelopes by polling station agents for voters of the CPDM to avoid any mistake of voting for another candidate.⁶³ The

⁶¹Interview with Nso Benncha, 54, Years, Teacher, Yaounde, 20th November 2020..

⁶²A. N. T. Mbu, *Civil Disobedience in Cameroon*, Douala, Imprimerie Georges Freres, 1993, pp. 42 -72.

⁶³ Interview with Peter Ayuk Agbor, 43Years, Teacher, 24 August 2019.

National Democratic Institute (NDI) for international affairs condemned the poll as fraudulent and noted that the government of Cameroon took unusual extreme and illegitimate actions to ensure the victory of the incumbent president. A few days later, the National Vote-Counting Commission had finished their work. The Supreme Court proclaimed the results that gave president Paul Biya winning results of 39.5 % of the votes, as against 35.5% for John Fru Ndi and 25% for Maigari Bello Bouba. The Supreme Court endorsed these as official results.

The proclamation of these results immediately sent the opposition supporters on rampage. As the people went about shouting their disapproval of a “stolen Victory “, they vented their anger on unemployment and economic hardship in the country that had remained a nightmare to many. So, anybody identified with the ruling CPDM party was considered as an enemy. Traditional rulers became the main targets. The situation became compounded when the people remembered the Kumba- Mamfe road constructed as earth road since 1947 and remained untarred since independence.⁶⁴ The backwardness of Mamfe town and the entire division was attributed to the poor state of the Kumba- Mamfe road and the general state of roads in the division. The inhabitants of Manyu Division were surprised to discover that the division that was booming in the 1960s was dead then. They also blamed the backwardness of the division on the lack of political will of the Biya’s regime. The people became sick and tired of empty promises of the New Deal government. In the face of all these, some Manyu inhabitants, especially those who voted for the opposition SDF party wanted a change at the helm of the state. Therefore, the subjects accused their chiefs and Divisional Officers of election rigging.

The election results sparked a series of protests in Manyu Division especially in the Mamfe, Ntenako, Nchang, Tinto, Eyumojock, Kembong and Okoyong where chiefs’ palaces were attacked and barricades mounted to disturb movements. There were clashes that are more serious in other Anglophone areas especially in North West Region, which was the SDF stronghold.⁶⁵ These demonstrations led to destruction of property and some attacks on CPDM barons. On the 27th October 1992, the government declared a State of Emergency in the then North West province. The SDF presidential candidate John Fru Ndi, who declared himself as winner of the election even before the official proclamation of results by the Supreme Court

⁶⁴. Eyongetah, Brain and Palmer (eds), *A History of the Cameroon, New Edition*, Hong Kong, Longman Group, 1988, p, 108.

⁶⁵ Mbu, *Civil Disobedience in Cameroon* , p.244.

was put under house rest. Biya again counted on the pledges of SDO, DOs and traditional authorities to regain his popularity.

In an attempt to protest against the alleged “stolen victory”.⁶⁶ and as part of measures to restore his lost glory in the division, the Head of State took the lone Ministerial position of the division from Eyumojock Sub- Division to Mamfe Central Sub-Division. In this light, Ogork Ebot Ntui who was the Minister in Charge of special duties at the Presidency of the Republic was replaced by Dr. Ayuk Takem Jacob who became the Minister for Scientific and Technical Research with a greater portfolio.⁶⁷ The regime had made it a duty that in any government, there must be at least somebody from Manyu Division.

In all, traditional rulers of Manyu Division had the misconception that they could exploit the authority and influence their royal office accorded them to compel their people to vote for their candidate as their predecessors had done in the 1950s and 1960s. Traditional rulers were mistaken because such a consideration made little or no impact in the new dispensation. In fact, faced with different situations and circumstances the people readily displayed different attitudes towards the institution of chieftaincy and custom. In addition, there was an increasing decline in the role the chieftaincy institution played especially in taking decisions for their people. The next election was the municipal and council elections that were slated for the 21st January 1996. Chief’s palaces were again transformed into polling stations. This exposed the chieftaincy to more danger and rigor than they had ever been in the past.

Chiefs’ involvement in national politics and in national elections placed them at the crossroads of tradition and partisan politics. They were believed to be the “axis of peace” during elections as they did in the past but it was discovered that they had ceased to be so. This reputation was supposed to be maintained, for the country could not suddenly turn into the “axis of crisis”. Nevertheless, when the aspirations of many people in particular and Anglophone Cameroonians in general could not be achieved through the ballot box, they concluded that some of their reasonable grievances could probably be resolved by presenting an Anglophone problem to the powers that be.

Socio-Cultural Developments in the Division

Following the reunification, social and cultural changes occurred in Manyu Division. Most of the development of the division was left in the hands of the people themselves. The government

⁶⁶ Interview with Egbe Ben Besong Egbe, age 54, Assistant Lecturer University of Buea, , Buea, 23rd June, 2020.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

created schools without providing infrastructure for its effective opening. Much of the construction of classrooms and health centres was done by the population. Faced with this challenge, the elites of division resorted in creating divisional, sub-divisional and village development and cultural associations to develop themselves through self-reliance initiative. The role played by the socio-cultural associations in the development of Manyu division.

Advancement in Education

Before and after reunification and independence education was solely in the hands of Presbyterian and Catholic missions. Apart from a few Government Primary Schools in Mamfe town, Mfuni, Fotabe (1943), Sumbe (1947) and Tali, all other villages in the division had mission schools such as Presbyterian Schools: Besongabang, Ntenako/Ndekwei, Ossing, Kembong just to name a few. Catholic schools included: St. Joseph Catholic School and St. Anthony Catholic School Mamfe, St. John Catholic School Nchang to name but this few. By 1990 almost all villages in the division were granted a government primary school. It was the New Deal policy of President Paul Biya to bring education closer to the people.⁶⁸

The government of the Federal Republic of Cameroon in 1969 in a bid to encourage education initiated the construction of Government High School (GHS) Mamfe called the first generation secondary school.⁶⁹ It was the lone secondary in the division until 1987 that the government created the second-generation secondary school in all subdivisions Government Secondary School Eyumojock in Subdivision, Government Secondary School Fontem in then Fontem Subdivision and Government Secondary School Akwaya in Akwaya Subdivision. By 1990, there was government programme to open primary and secondary schools in almost all the villages with large population country. Only general education was offered in government schools.

The mission and lay- private schools were also accompanied the state to provide education to the people of Manyu Division after reunification. In late 1950s and 1970s, mission schools included: Queen of Rosary College (QRC) Okoyong, founded in 1956, St. John Comprehensive College (SJCC) Nchang and Presbyterian Secondary School (PSS) Besongabang now Presbyterian High School founded in 1964. Lay private Secondary Schools included: Enonchong Memorial College (EMC) founded in 1977, Union Comprehensive College (UCC) Bachuo-Akagbe and Regent Comprehensive College (RCC) Okoyong. These

⁶⁸Interview with Simon Egbe, 57 years, Head Teacher, Government School Tiko Town, Buea, 20th February, 2022.

⁶⁹T.B Stephen, 'An illustrated History of Cameroon Since 1800' The Book House, Yaounde, p.267.

mission schools and lay private schools were involved in both general and commercial education.

Development of Health Facility

In health matters, there were also considerable improvements. By 1968, life expectancy in Cameroon was 40 years for men and 50 for women. District hospital was created in Mamfe intended to handle cases that were beyond the competence of the Preventive Medicine (PM) in Mamfe town, integrated health centres of Kembong, Bakebe, Eyang, Ossing and Akwaya. The Mamfe district hospital was later expanded. Vaccination campaigns were intensified and hygiene and sanitation were re-enforced. Attention was paid to the training of medical personnel. The opening of a medical faculty in the Yaounde University and a paramedical school in Bamenda helped to improve the country's health personnel. Complicated medical cases were referred to more specialized hospitals abroad on government cost.⁷⁰

Development and Cultural Associations in Manyu Division

Manyu was noted for its rich cultural heritage and associational life.⁷¹ This was related partly to its long history of economic out-migration. The anthropologist, Malcolm Ruel,⁷² who conducted fieldwork in Manyu in the 1950s and 1960s found considerable migration. In 1953-54, he estimated that the Banyang numbered some 18,000 in their homeland but between 4,000-5,000 men and women were working elsewhere, mainly in the plantation towns of the coastal area of Cameroon, with as many as 40% of men absent from some villages. Around this time, he observed early hometown-type associational life among the Manyu people in the form of 'clan unions' based on the village groups.

These appeared between 1949-50, starting with the Mamfe Town Union then spreading rapidly outwards into the division. From Ruel's description, they seemed to show similarities with contemporary village development associations, but they were too short-lived for there was no direct historical continuity and for various reasons they became defunct by the end of the 1950s. During that decade, the 'Clan Federation' formed from three neighbouring unions was the largest association created up to that time among the Manyu people,⁷³ although it covered only part of the Manyu area.

⁷⁰ Interview with. Agbor Collin, 70 Years. Retired Agricultural Agent, 12th March 2022.

⁷¹ U. Röschenhaler, "Transacting Obasinjom: the Dissemination of a Cult Agency in the Cross River Area," *Africa* 74 (2), 2004, pp. 241-76.

⁷² Ruel, *Leopards and Leaders: Constitutional Politics among a Cross River People*, London, Tavistock, 1969, p. 67.

⁷³ *Ibid.* p. 10.

In the 1960s and 1970s, ethnically based groups were banned in Cameroon, ostensibly in the interests of post-independence nation building. Although this did not seem to have prevented Manyu migrants from associating, it was low key. Some Associations that evaded the law were modified by changing their ethnic names and altering their constitution but actually continued much as before. Since the early 1990s, ethnicity and the politics of belonging grew in importance in Cameroon, interconnected with political liberalization and the growth of neo patrimony. Out of this new political landscape, hometown associations multiplied profusely. Generally known in Cameroon as cultural and development associations they were able to be legally registered since 1990.

Manyu showed a range of territorially based associations from village level up to divisional level. There were also explicitly ethnic bodies, for example the Ejagham Cultural Association and some territorial associations such as clan groups that reflected ethnic identities. The two ranks of association that were very active and visible were divisional and village.⁷⁴ Cultural and development associations have been formed both in Cameroon and overseas for Manyu division, representing a territorial level intermediate to the two discussed, but it was too early to measure their character and role.

Manyu Elements Cultural Association (MECA/MECDA) in 1970

The origins of Manyu Elements Cultural Association (MECA) varied in detail but were broadly consistent. Manyu people started associating in Yaounde in the 1960s, earlier forms evolving into MECA started in the 1970s.⁷⁵ The association started 1970 as MECA. In 2016, the association changed its name from MECA to Manyu Elements Cultural and Development Association (MECDA) to give it a development outlook. This change of name was influenced by Minister Mengot Victor Egbe Nkongho who wanted the association to be development oriented. However, this change of name emanated from, the demise of chief Peter Agbor Tabi in April 2016 and Mengot replaced him as the new patron of MECA in June 2016. During his augural speech he made it very clear that, before he assumes the position of the patron ship of Manyu, development must be added in the name of the association. It should be recalled that a key figure behind the creation of MECA was Emmanuel Tabi Egbe, the most important national-level government elite produced by Manyu. E.T. Egbe was MECDA-Yaoundé's first patron and meetings were held in his residence in the nation's capital, Yaounde for some years.

⁷⁴F.B.Nyamnjoh and M. Rowlands, "Elite Associations and the Politics of Belonging in Cameroon," *Africa* 68 (3), 1998, pp.320-37.

⁷⁵MECDA,, "Manyu Elements Cultural Association, Yaoundé: Constitution," *Mimeo*, 1996 ,p.3.

Manyu diasporas in other cities and countries emulated the Yaounde model. MECDA later spread to Douala and some urban centres in Cameroon including Bamenda, Buea, Kumba and Limbe, but not in Mamfe itself. Their purported existence elsewhere in Cameroon could not be verified. The Manyu cultural and non-governmental organization with a legal status was in Nigeria, the US and some European countries.

Each MECDA branch was autonomous; therefore, there was no single transnational association in Manyu with sub-branches in different locations. Rather, the branches were all separate associations, even though they had the same name and objectives. Attempts at federating MECDA either through the now-defunct ‘General MECDA’ umbrella body or the ‘Manyu World Conference’ have been unsuccessful. Each MECDA thus remains largely autonomous in its activities, usually supporting home development projects on a bilateral basis, although MECDA-Yaoundé maintained a degree of primacy among MECDAs in Cameroon and sometimes acted as a liaison point for overseas. Each MECDA was opened to all Manyu citizens resident in the town or city concerned. Membership was not direct but through family groups.⁷⁶ These were mostly village-level meeting groups and each constituted the branch of the respective village development association. Others represented higher territorial or sub-ethnic clan levels.

Other Manyu groups loosely affiliated to MECDA included the Manyu All Students Union (MASU) and in Yaoundé, the Manyu Solidarity Foundation which rewarded successful Manyu students in an annual ceremony. MECDA engages with *Efokhoyu*,⁷⁷ a network of women’s groups in Manyu and who were very active in the running of family groups. Despite being an association for the whole division, MECDA’s historical and development projects concentrated on the divisional headquarters, Mamfe town. In the face of this, other development associations were created at sub-divisional levels and in most villages in the division linked to MECDA. To some extent, this was a conscious policy to strengthen services centrally where anyone in the division could use them to sidestep the risk of MECDA leaders favouring their respective home villages.

Objectives of MECDA

The Association’s principal goal was to work in close partnerships at all levels with Manyu Chiefs and other stakeholders relentlessly, thus creating a safe, inclusive, progressive and

⁷⁶ Group Interview with Members of NCUDA Buea Branch, Executives Members, Average Ages 30- 76 Years, 26th August 2011.

⁷⁷ *Efokhoyu*, the name means ‘umbrella ‘association for Manyu in women’ in *Kenyang*.

sustainable Manyu community. The association was also committed to promoting community unity, micro-projects development, friendship and collaboration between members.⁷⁸ To affect this, the association cooperated with other organizations for the realization of community integration in Manyu educational and welfare development of members, as well as preserving the unique ancient and rich cultural heritage of Manyu people of Cameroon. MECDA was a registered non-profit making organization with the aim of bringing together all people of Manyu descent all over the national territory and abroad.

Furthermore, the mission of MECDA has also been to advance and nurture the cultural heritage, intellectual, personal, social and economic development of Manyu citizens. Their activities are mainly aimed at preserving cultural identity while promoting the socio-economic development, harmony and advancement of Manyu communities. The associations sought to provide a new purpose and support to its members and communities by making educational, social, economic, cultural and healthcare possibilities either by direct support or by developing partnerships with other development and community based organizations with similar goals. In all, the aim of MECDA was for the development of the division as a whole. That of Sub-Division was to work for the development of the sub-division while at the village level it was the development of the village.

The Composition of MECDA

The Association was made up of family groups of Manyu Division around the cities and towns where they are found. Registration into MECDA was done following the sub-divisional Associations of the division such as in Eyumojock where there was an Eyumojock Sub-divisional Association (ESDA). In Akwaya, there was Akwaya Sub-Divisional Association (ASDA), in Upper Banyang it was known as Upper Banyang Sub-Divisional Association (UBSDA) and in Mamfe Central, it was known as Mamfe Central Sub-Divisional Association (MCSDA).⁷⁹ To be considered as duly registered members, villages were to identify themselves as a family group as said above.

However, some villages that constituted part of the organization, created Village Development Associations (VDA). For instance: Ntenako Cultural and Development Association (NCUDA) for Ntenako and Ossing Development and Cultural Association

⁷⁸ Group Interview with Members of NCUDA Buea Branch, Ayuk Peter president, Eyong Regina Secretary General, Tabe James, Financial Secretary, and Achere Eyere Treasurer, Buea, 24th November 2021.

⁷⁹ Interview with Denis Ebot, 60 Years, Retired Soldier and Former President of MECDA Yaounde, Yaounde, 2nd May, 2019..

(ODCA) for Ossing both of Eyumojock Sub-Division. Nchang Cultural and Development Association (NCUDA) for Nchang and Egbekaw Cultural and Development (ECUDA) for Egbekaw both of Mamfe Central Sub-Division, Tinto Cultural and Development Association (TICUDA) for Tinto and Bakebe Cultural and Development Association (BCUDA) for Bakebe both of Upper Banyang Sub-Division and Bache Cultural and Development Association (BCUDA) for Bache village and Assam Cultural and Development Association (ACUDA) for Assam Villages both of Akwaya Sub-Division. No independent village was accepted into the Association, if the village failed to identify itself with its Sub-Divisional Association. It was the duty of the chief to encourage his subjects to be part of the Association outside the village.⁸⁰

Executive members of the MECDA consisted of representatives from all the sub-divisions. The Presidency rotated from one Sub-Division to another. The functions of the President were to call for Executive and General Assembly meetings usually the first Sunday of each Month. The Sunday was reserved for MECDA meetings only and no other family group was to fix a meeting on the same day. Chiefs were technical advisers.

Socio-Economic Developments

MECDA commanded popularity and growth in the division as it had encouraged chiefs to establish VDAs, so that villages could cultivate the spirit of self-reliance development to take care of their needs instead of waiting for the state alone. In reality, associations were usually initiated by village elite in the face of chronic state neglect.⁸¹ Villages also copied from each other and it became fashionable to own VDA. Associations that could be broken or formed along factional lines, but the underling aim was to promote development. In large villages where chieftaincies were disputed like Besongabang and Kembong, they had two associations belonging to each side of the dispute.

An early project claimed by MECDA was the construction of the Mamfe town hall, although MECDA's historical role in this was unclear and disputed. After some times, various MECDAs assisted financially in the renovation of the Mamfe general hospital. MECDA-USA continued to struggle with the construction and equipment of a mortuary of the hospital grounds, a long-running, expensive, unfinished and troubled project. The benefits of a few other

⁸⁰ "Manyu Elements Cultural Development Association MECDA-Yaounde: Constitution revised," Mimeo, 2016, p.4.

⁸¹ G. Mohan, "Embedded cosmopolitanism and the politics of obligation: the Ghanaian Diaspora and development, *Environment and Planning*," A 38 (5)2006 pp., 867-83. D. Van den Bersselaar, *Imagining Home: Migration and the Igbo Village in Colonial Nigeria*, *Journal of African History*, 46, pp. 51-73.

MECDA projects were spread around the division, notably medicines distributed to sub-divisional and village health centres.

VDAs differed in focus and strength but mutual support was usually paramount. Such activities were mobilized at monthly meetings, at branch levels or at other times as the needs arose, for example if a member died. In terms of home area development, common VDA projects included the construction of town halls (Multi-purpose Community Hall in Ntenako), classrooms, health centres, farm to-market roads and rehabilitation of pipe-borne water systems. The latter activity was ingrained in Manyu as some of its villages were among the first in Anglophone Cameroon to establish water systems using the community development approach like the (Talangaye, Ossing, Ntenako and Ndekwei) TONN water project.⁸²

The development activities of a typical VDA pivoted around the village's 'cultural week' or 'Village Day'.⁸³ It should be noted that the cultural week was an event that brought the chiefs and elite of the villages together. In some cases, the VDA only functioned as such at this time, indicating a developmental focus for the association. Cultural weeks usually fell during Easter period and held every two years, in alternate years or more irregularly. Internal and external elite used the long weekends to come home and discuss potential projects to the traditional councils and village communities.⁸⁴

During this occasion, sons and daughters of some villages in Manyu Division resident within and without the division were brought together under the umbrella of the cultural week, depending on the village concerned, for instance Ntenako Day, Bachuo-Ntai Day, Bakebe Day and Bache Day. The aim was usually to discuss development and showcase the cultural values of the division. The occasion was characterized by speeches, exhibition of traditional dances, display of traditional dishes and custom of the people of Manyu, sporting activities and above all, the high point of the event was usually fund raising which was done through cake cutting (egusi pudding).⁸⁵

In the village of Kembong in 2010, "Kembong Day" the fund raising was organized for a Water project. In Ntenako, it was meant for the construction of a health Centre and the completion of the village multi-purpose Community Hall. In Bachuo-Ntai, fund raised were

⁸² Interview with David Tambe, 58 Years, MECDA, USA President, 1st November 2019.

⁸³ "Village Day" is an occasion in most Manyu Villages that take place after every two years. This occasion brings together a Chief who in most villages reside out of the village and elite from far and near the Village for a cultural jamboree commonly called "cultural Week".

⁸⁴ Interview with Emmanuel Tataw, 56 Years, communicator, Yaounde, 2019.

⁸⁵ Interview with Daniel Etarock, 61 Years, Colonel of Air Forced and Former President of NCUDA Yaounde,, Yaounde, 10th August 2018.

meant to construct classrooms for Government High School Bachuo-Ntai and to assist the Bachuo-Ntai Education and Development Foundation (BEDEF) which was born out of the ashes of the defunct Bachuo-Ntai Cultural and Development Association (BCUDA) with Egbe Peter as the pioneer President. BEDEF made it a tradition to reward hard working students of the village.

Meanwhile, once the priority projects were determined, cash contributions were agreed with external elite levied either as a flat rate or on a sliding scale according to their incomes called development levy. The Chiefs and Elite also used their positions or connections to lobby for the support of the central government or sought donations (cash or in kind) from external sources, usually from Western embassies in Yaounde. Villagers paid considerably smaller cash levies and sometimes nothing, but provided labour for construction. The external elite donated most of the cash and sometimes materials (such as cement) or expertise for these projects, either directly or indirectly. The effectiveness of VDAs as development actors therefore depended partly on the size and dynamism of the village chief and elite. Also, the execution of the projects depended on the honesty and transparency of the traditional Council under the chiefs who was usually the contractor.

In another dimension, Chief Egbe Ojong of Mbakang Village complained that the development of his village was hindered by its lack of elite in good jobs.⁸⁶ The influence of elite was sometimes the key to success. For example, Chief Prof. Samson Negbo Abangma, the then Registrar of University of Buea, was lauded by his people for his efforts to the government to create a Secondary School in his Village Bache. Such individuals were important in mobilizing external action and/or acting as power brokers with the state.⁸⁷ The specific pattern of debating and launching development projects at a certain time of the year and financing them from elite donations and smaller general levies from villagers was recognizable and appreciated. Among the Yoruba of South West of Nigeria, such timing had practical logic in that it was rare for villagers and urban elite to find themselves together en masse, due to disagreements over priorities.⁸⁸

In Manyu, the name ‘cultural week’ itself encapsulated how tradition was invented and deployed to encourage urban elite to return with their ‘wealth’ money, skills and connections

⁸⁶ Interview with Mose Besong Ayuk, Teacher, 56 Years, Mbakang, 12th February 2020.

⁸⁷ S. Hagberg, *"Ethnic identification in voluntary associations: the politics of development and culture in Burkina Faso"* in H. Englund and F.B. Nyamnjoh (eds.), *Rights and the Politics of recognition in Africa*, London: Zed., 2004, pp. 195-218.

⁸⁸ Trager, *"Hometown Linkages and Local Development in South Western Nigeria,"* p. 45.

with the wider world to share with those at home in accordance with the socially rooted notions of obligation.⁸⁹ Many Elite and Elite Chiefs who failed to do this were warned for their selfishness.⁹⁰ Chief Tanyi in Yaounde seems to support Gugler's⁹¹ assertion that the broader vision and knowledge brought by elite are generally welcomed. Elite were acknowledged as people who knew their home place and should understand the village's best interests and act accordingly. The Cultural week in Manyu division can only be compared with 'homecoming' events in Cameroon.⁹²

Political Developments

Hometown Associations commonly presented their objectives as apolitical in order to overcome differences within the membership and obscure the motives of elites.⁹³ In reality, nurturing political support through associations has long been recognized. This was the case with Manyu Division which was a stronghold of the CPDM, visible at various levels. Party activists sometimes even ran VDAs or at least civil servants with evident loyalties. Village chiefs were themselves state-employed functionaries. But political dynamics were most evident at the national level. MECDA was ostensibly apolitical but in practice, there were significant violations of this, particularly when MECDA-Yaoundé stood behind government, reflecting both the high proportion of chiefs in its membership and CPDM supporters in Manyu. At election time, senior chiefs of MECDA sponsored campaigns for the CPDM even if they did not formally do so under the association's auspices.

Another important aspect of the political role of MECDA was its patron. The first chief E.T. Egbe, who set the precedence that the Manyu minister appointed in each government was nominated as patron of MECDA-Yaoundé and thus effectively of other MECDA in Cameroon. There has been one 'Manyu minister' in every government of independent Cameroon, although the patrons (up-to date had been men) have never held the strongest portfolios like Finance or Planning, which some blame for Manyu's poor developmental returns from its successive

⁸⁹ F. B. Nyamnjoh, "Cameroon: a Country United by Ethnic Ambition and Difference, *African Affairs* 98 (390), 1999, pp. 101-18. See also S. Hickey, 'Hometown Associations' as Social Movements for Citizenship: a case Study from Northwest Cameroon, Paper presented at the 47th Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, New Orleans, LA, November 11-14, 2004, pp. 4.

⁹⁰ F. De Jong, "The Production of Tran-locality: Initiation in the Sacred Grove in South Senegal," *Focal* no. 30/31, 1997, pp. 61-8.

⁹¹ J. Gugler, "The Son of the Hawk does not remain Abroad: the Urban-Rural Connection in Africa", *African Studies Review* 45 (1), 2002, pp. 21-41.

⁹² Idem.

⁹³ S. Hagberg, "Ethnic Identification in Voluntary Associations: the Politics of Development and Culture in Burkina Faso", p.28.

ministers. MECDA's patronage structure was also mirrored in the Manyu women's network, Efokhoyu, which often invited the minister's wife to be its matron.

A good number of chiefs were honoured in MECDA as Patrons when appointed minister. These ministers among others included Michael Tabong Kima, Professor Peter Agbor Tabi, and Clarkson Tanyi Mbianyor Oben. The political relationship between the Manyu community and Manyu ministers was publicly demonstrated by the inauguration of Minister Justice Hillman Egbe, Minister for Forests and Wildlife from Takwai in Upper Banyang as patron of MECDA-Yaoundé in March 2005. The event was held in the Yaounde suburb of Essos, over 400 Kilometers from Mamfe, in MECDA's 'Manyu hall', which though was incomplete, was a symbol of Manyu identity in the capital city. Some 400-500 Manyu people were present including absentee village chiefs. The former minister and outgoing patron handed over a carved wooden staff to the new patron who then used it in the form of *ekpe* ritual in which he named the four sub-divisions and main ethnic groups of Manyu, thus asserting his status over them.⁹⁴

However, having deployed *ekpe* as a uniting force, the new patron stressed a higher unity in his inaugural speech: 'Before you belong to *ekpe*... [or] any other group, you are first and foremost a Manyu person... There is no group above Manyu... All groups must work in unison'. This may have been a veiled reference to the troubled tenure of his predecessor, Chief Clarkson Tanyi Mbianyor Oben, former Minister of Environment and Forestry, whose chieftaincy title in Nchang village was conflictual. His position as patron of MECDA-Yaounde seemed to have been tainted by this dispute, which was divisive within the Manyu community. Following this speech, the chief of Ndekwai, John Agbor Tabi, performed a libation. The ceremony also included two dances by groups of Manyu women, one of which was *moningkim*.

The event exemplified how the leadership of home town associations typically sought legitimacy on the basis of both tradition and modernity in the form of success in national politics, state administration or business.⁹⁵ Here, neo traditional and national-political forces were combined to reinforce Manyu identity that was in turn deployed by the new minister to bolster his political support. Like other ministers, the Manyu minister staged a 'homecoming'

⁹⁴ Interview with Ajah Gilbert, 53 Years, MECDA President, 3rd February 2023.

⁹⁵ Hagberg, *Ethnic Identification in Voluntary Associations*: p.28.

after he was appointed. Such events were indicative of deepening territorialisation of national politics in which Chiefs and hometown associations were complicit.⁹⁶

The minister had a substantial budget for such events augmented by contributions from MECDA and other levels of hometown associations and this formed part of a larger network of neo-patrimonial and attendant reciprocities. Manyu Chiefs argued that it was necessary to work with and show support for the then Manyu minister to get him to bring development to the division. Home coming was a particularly important part of this charade. It was a public demonstration which proved that the minister was popular back home, encouraging him to lobby government more for development funding for Manyu and showing the government that he can help carry the division for CPDM in future elections. But some MECDA members in Yaoundé have criticized such partisanship. It was observed that MECDA was mainly a rallying forum to get Manyu's Chiefs and people behind the minister.⁹⁷

MECDA became almost like a political association. MECDA did not carry developmental activities. Ministers came and talked but nothing was seen. MECDA was always very active during election time and most of its members were of the CPDM that was why Manyu had good results for the party during past elections since 2005.⁹⁸ They did not wear the MECDA cap, but were the same CPDM people. Another similar critical activity of MECDA Yaounde was the use of ambulance voters. As Ayuk⁹⁹ puts it: "During elections, the government needs a channel and MECDA is very useful in this respect. Certain Manyu chiefs and elite were selected to finance the journey of ambulance voters to travel to Manyu to campaign and vote for the ruling party. MECDA gives the names of reliable people for this exercise."

By and large, in April 2005 MECDA Cameroon went national to make itself known by making financial contributions for the reception of the Prime Minister, Chief Ephraim Inoni, in Buea. This was initiated by some chiefs of the division who wanted to assist their colleague and to gain political favour in return from the Prime Minister. Having considered how hometown association activity was mobilized, the next section considers the extent to which such dynamics reinforced and encouraged multiple identity formation.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶C.C.Fonchingong "Exploring the Politics of Identity and Ethnicity in State Reconstruction Cameroon," *Social Identities* 11 (4), 2005, pp 363-380.

⁹⁷ Interview with Botela Enow.

⁹⁸ Idem

⁹⁹ Interview with Bernard Ayuk Tabot, 59 Years, Buea Teacher, 15th February, 2018.

¹⁰⁰ Cameroon Post International "Traditional, Rulers to be excluded from Politics as Government Plans to Create House of Chiefs," No.2, Vol IV, 5 April 2002. p.12.

Divisive and Progressive Politics

The colonial period promoted ethnic political projects by using perceived ethnic identities and boundaries for administrative purposes. Ethnically based associations largely emerged in such a context to engage with the colonial environment and improve the well-being of people both at home and abroad. In the case of Manyu Division, ethnic associations then often suppressed during the early nation-building decades of independence but, in the contemporary context of multi-party politics and structural adjustment, there was revival in terms of mobilizing force for social, economic and political purposes.¹⁰¹

Mohan¹⁰² argues that to be a truly transformative emancipator, citizenship participation within multiple and overlapping political communities from the local to the global level is necessary to be identified with an ethnically-based association. He refutes the view that citizenship at nation-state level should be paramount. He further challenges the idea that these associations are necessarily in conflict with other sub national or identity-based forms of political mobilization. He does not deny the fact that ethnic mobilization can be politically destructive and sometimes violent also. But he points out first, that state formation in Africa was originally founded on a collection of ethnic identities, so ethnicity is not necessarily detrimental to statehood. Secondly, that neither does it necessarily damage progressive ideals such as social justice and equality that is typically inscribed in notions of national citizenship.¹⁰³

In Manyu, the cultural and development associations sometimes provided significant developmental goals through their own efforts. In doing so, these associations served as instruments known to government structures, not only for the practical purposes of accessing funding or other support, but for political recognition.¹⁰⁴ In such cases, they can re-engage the populations with national or local government in situations where the social contract has been created, if it ever existed at all.¹⁰⁵ While there is some evidence for this happening through the activities of VDAs and sub-divisional associations, MECDA's experiment in national-level politics may be less useful, including its ambiguous relationships with successive Manyu ministers who, with their minor portfolios, were not in a position to deliver many benefits to the division.

¹⁰¹ Ruel, "The Modern Adaptation of Associations among the Banyang of the West Cameroon", pp 1-14.

¹⁰² Mohan, "Embedded Cosmopolitanism and the Politics of Obligation," p.39.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.40.

¹⁰⁴ H., Englund, "Introduction: Recognizing Identities, Imagining Alternatives," in H. Englund and F.B. Nyamnjoh (eds.), *Rights and the Politics of Recognition in Africa*, London, Zed, 2004, pp. 1-29.

¹⁰⁵ S. Hickey, "Hometown Associations as Social Movements for Citizenship," p. 5.

A number of Manyu chiefs interviewed generally did not see tribalism as a danger but rather as a force for social cohesion, particularly under the difficult circumstances of urban life. Indeed, their associations provided a basis for inter-ethnic relations including cooperation between sub ethnic entities such as clans. This was shown in the formation of the clan federation in late colonial times. The structure of MECDA in Cameroon, with membership through family groups provided an example of how supra-village and inter-ethnic ties could be encouraged by the federation of smaller units. An example of cooperation between more diverse groups was seen during the construction of the new Catholic cathedral in Mamfe that saw labour contribution from at least one branch of a hometown association from a Fondom in the North West region of Cameroon.¹⁰⁶

Clearly, there were also problems and dangers in hometown association activities. The evidence from across West Africa is a mix. While some supported the assertion that the politics of belonging can close down rather than open up spaces for true participation, other are against.¹⁰⁷ This is sometimes evident in Cameroon where cultural and development associations are vulnerable to manipulation by chiefs, elite and political parties, and can variously and accurately be labelled as elitist, exclusive, male-controlled and undemocratic. Such inequalities were inscribed in space with the true decision-making and financial power of the associations not lying primarily within the communities they claimed to represent but in distant cities.

Events such as cultural weeks provided more participatory spaces for engagement between chiefs, elite and villagers, but again the nature of that participation was heavily loaded in favour of elites. The enforced voluntarism of VDAs was doubly imposed on the rural membership in that, first, villagers were automatically members or at least levied for money and/or labour for projects; and second, because they were recalcitrant, they could more readily be targeted by neo-traditional or state structures. It may be easier for individuals living in cities to evade membership, but even elite abroad risked the power of home being turned on them. Financial sanctions or social embarrassment and isolation awaited them if they returned to the village without having fulfilled their VDA obligations.¹⁰⁸

That was precisely the point because most of the business of Manyu associations both in Cameroon and outside Cameroon was about the predictable dynamics of social obligation rather than politics of belonging. Most of what was discussed at meetings in both the domestic

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Oswald Ayuketa Tambe, 59 Years, Physical Education Teacher and Former General Manager of National Civil Service for Participation in Development, 14th December 2019.

¹⁰⁷ Hickey, *"Home town Associations as Social Movements for Citizenship,"* p.6.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Ayuk Simon, 54 Years, former MECDA President, Yaounde , 21st January 2023.

and overseas Diasporas was neither about politics nor development, but mutual support, particularly during key life stages or crises: birth, marriage, sickness and most importantly, death. A death in one village, for example, drew contributions from all the family groups registered with the MECDA in question. Above all, death seemed to be the core historical concern of most hometown associations in Manyu seen as the greatest capacity to generate solidarity and support in many communities across Cameroon and overseas.

Criticisms and Difficulties of VDA

The VDA in Manyu Division encountered difficulties and criticisms from dissenting voices in political, economic and social faultiness. Chiefs did not always use their considerable influence for village development appropriately. Some chiefs and elite went as far as extorting money from donor organizations in the name of village development meanwhile it was for their personal interests.¹⁰⁹ Some Western donors representatives complained that some Chiefs and Elite imposed projects with little engagement and such projects were usually unrealistic.¹¹⁰ This was true with uncompleted town halls and water projects in the division where every chief wanted to show that he was well to do through egocentric projects.

Typical example was the sizeable hall at Ogomoko village under construction which projected capacity was considerably greater than the village population. Other problems also occurred between domestic and overseas elite over the type of structure to be constructed. This was so because within them were dreamers with complicated building plans that had several wings like the Unity Palace at Etoudi “the President of Cameroon’s official residence”. Again, some projects were undertaking as part of solution to chieftaincy dispute in the chieftdom. The VDA for Besongabang stood tall to this; when it’s embarked on the construction of the new Presbyterian Church edify to unite the two warring chieftaincy factions in the village.¹¹¹ Overambitious projects highlighted testified the erratic funding nature of VDAs. Such projects were frequently implemented piecemeal over several years due to the lack of fund. Leading to half-built and abandoned projects which sometimes resources are diverted to other projects, for example, in Eyanchang, from the construction of the school roof to village water system.¹¹²

Moreover, some projects had been carried out which were not priority to the need of the people. This explained why some UK-based Besongabang elite criticized the size and cost of

¹⁰⁹ Interview with John Enow Besong, 58 Years, Banker, Yaounde, 4th September 2019.

¹¹⁰ Interview with James Agbor Enow, 60 Years, Teacher, Bachuo Ntai, 2nd September 2017.

¹¹¹ Interview with Oswald Ayuketa Tambe.

¹¹² Idem.

the newly constructed Presbyterian Church in their village when water supply was a more pressing need in the village. Financial constraints also meant that efforts of VDAs to create productive enterprises rather than public goods were rare, as observed in hometown association activity elsewhere.¹¹³ Youths interviewed were therefore understandably critical of VDA projects, which they saw as no substitute for the creation of the much-needed jobs. Such frictions are long standing among hometown associations in West Africa and show the structural problems in power relations.¹¹⁴

Complex and disturbing problems also confronted some VDAs, for instance, in Ossing village, Chief Arrey Solomon Ashu ordered for the arrest of people who refused to pay 2,000 francs levy for the building of the village hall.¹¹⁵ These arrests were intended to set an example to those people who shy away from VDA and from communal labour. Sanctions were also applied to elite who failed to identify themselves with their fellow people. VDA membership booklet was compared to a 'passport' to the village.¹¹⁶ Non-payment of development levy, exposed the defaulter to serious sanctions, usually a fine of 200,000frs, payable to the village authority called *etok* if the person wanted to take a corpse home or receive one there. Persons could be rebuked for benefiting from a project that they had not contributed to, for example by fetching water from a VDA-funded supply system.

Some traditional rulers did not resident permanently in their villages, they seemed not to care about VDAs and a blue prints for their village developments. In many Manyu villages, since chiefs and some other elders were not regular for the day-to-day running of the affairs of the village, regent chiefs (vice chairperson of village Traditional Council) handled the village affairs. Their absence from the village were usually due to their high-ranking positions in politics, civil service and private businesses that occupied them in Yaoundé, Douala or other urban centres where they were only attached to the VDA branch. The absent of chiefs in some chiefdoms had encouraged anarchy in these chiefdoms because the regent chiefs never commanded enough respect.

Another difficulty was the luke-warmness of some people to be dully register as members and existence VDA factions. Membership of VDA branch was confirmed when someone paid his/her registration and development dues. This problem was common in

¹¹³ G. Mohan, „*Embedded Cosmopolitanism and the Politics of obligation*,” p.11.

¹¹⁴ D Van den Bersselaar, „Imagining Home: Migration and the Igbo Village in Colonial, Nigeria,” *Journal of African History* 2005, pp.51-73.

¹¹⁵ Interview with John Enow Besong, 56, Years, physician, Bakebe, 12th October 2022.

¹¹⁶ Group Interview with Members of NCUDA Buea Branch, Executives Members.

chiefdoms with chieftaincy crises. If the incumbent chief patronized with one section of the VDA, but not the other, the subjects who stood against him would not identify themselves with VDA. For instance, Nchang had one VDA but its branch meetings provided a forum for arguments over the village's chieftaincy crisis, detracting from other activities.¹¹⁷ Such dynamics were again familiar among competing groups, each claiming to represent the hometown and areas of long-standing feature of hometown associations.¹¹⁸ This had discouraged some people from joining VDA.

VDAs commonly had branches in Yaoundé and Douala, and sometimes in larger towns in South West region such as Buea, Limbe and Kumba. It was difficult to establish VDAs outside of urban centres larger or closer to Manyu because many villages were relatively small, with correspondingly small migrant populations. Still, a few VDAs had active members or analogues overseas: there was a US branch of the Ewelle Social and Development Association based in Atlanta,¹¹⁹ while sub-ethnic meeting groups were identified in the UK. VDAs within Cameroon constituted along similar lines and legally registered in the same way. They were commonly run by the village chief, National President and Traditional council in conjunction with senior elite at home or in the Diaspora. Indeed, there was some blurring between these two groups. However, the involvement of chiefs in Development Associations had not prevented them from involving in contending issues.

Conclusion

After reunification, Southern Cameroons became West Cameroon and the Republic of Cameroon became East Cameroon in a new federal arrangement. The challenges of reconciling both states with one another became a difficult task to handle. The period between 1961 and 1972 saw uneasy co-existence between the West and East Cameroon and the federal governments. It has been argued that President Ahidjo in a bid to consolidate power took advantage of the uneasy co-existence to end political competition by introducing a one-party system in 1966. The country was later transformed from the federal to a unitary system and later to simply the Republic of Cameroon. These developments almost reduced to nothing the role of Manyu people in politics. The people of Manyu now wanted more than the State of Cameroon could readily offer. They were pushed to become involved in local government organs of development and in cultural associations that permitted them to contribute to the progress of their division

¹¹⁷ Interview with Jonas Oben Eyong, 60 Years, Trader, Kembong, 26th October 2019.

¹¹⁸ L. Trager, "Home-town Linkages and Local Development in South-Western Nigeria: Whose Agenda? What Impact?" *Africa* 68 (3), 1998, pp-360-82.

¹¹⁹ Interview with David Tambe..

and the state at large. However, time and space were not conducive enough for them to produce the expected results in nation building because of the limited place in national politics. This leads us to discuss the impact and challenges of the new and changing order.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE IMPACT AND CHALLENGES OF REUNIFICATION ON MAMFE DIVISION (1972 – 2017)

Introduction

The reunification of Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon was followed by several changes in the political, economic and social life of the people. The ruling party in the Southern Cameroons, the KNDP did not secure the wide degree of decentralization or loose federation, which it promised the electorates if reunification was achieved. The work evaluates the impact and challenges of reunification in Mamfe Division in particular and Southern Cameroons in general. The reunification turned out to have a far-reaching negative impact rather than anything positive. This chapter discusses the political, cultural, economic and social impact of reunification on Mamfe/Manyu Division. We shall also discuss the challenges that led to what is called the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon.

Political impact

The February 11, 1961 plebiscite resulted in the overwhelming victory of the advocates of the reunification option. The absence of the third option namely independence of the Southern Cameroons as a separate political entity left the voters in the Southern Cameroons with the choice of choosing reunification. In the reunification arrangements the political landscape of Mamfe Division and the entire Southern Cameroons was affected. There was a change in the form of government and the parliamentary democracy in the territory was dismantled; multi-party politics was abolished until 1990 and chieftaincy institutions were distorted. These and more will be seen in subsequent paragraphs.

After reunification, Mamfe Division was confronted with the problem of unity and insecurity. Anti- reunificationists accused the pro-reunificationists of rigging the results of the plebiscite in the division. According to them, the integration with Nigeria option was more popular than the reunification option and so they were taken aback when the results showed that the reunification option had won. A long lasting conflict was created between the supporters of reunification and non-supporters of reunification. This adversely affected the political development in the division.¹

¹Ngoh, Cameroon 1884-1985 A Hundred Years of History, Limbe, p.28.

Reunification, when it came created the Federal Republic with Ahmadou Ahidjo as President. The creation of this centralized federation tremendously reduced the importance of Mamfe town the administrative headquarter of the division.² The town that used to boom, was seat of administration and a road junction between Southern Cameroons and Nigeria reduced in importance to the status of a village.

The destruction of the equal status between Southern Cameroons as a State of West Cameroon and the Republic of Cameroon as the state of East Cameroun defined at the Foumban Constitutional Conference of 1961 was a source of grievances for Anglophones.³ With the creation of seven provinces, East Cameroon state was transformed into five provinces, the Central South with Capital in Yaounde, Littoral with headquarters in Douala, West with headquarters in Bafoussam, East with headquarters in Bertoua and the North with headquarters in Garoua. The West Cameroon state was divided into two Provinces. Namely; North West with headquarter in Bamenda and South West with headquarter in Buea. Mamfe division was reduced to the status of a subdivision under Manyu division. The underlined point here was that, the political map of Cameroon was transformed from a country of two federated states to ten provinces.

Before and after reunification, Manyu division had been recognized through a number of ministerial appointments as follow: Emmanuel Tabi Egbe, Minister of Post and Telecommunication, Michael Kima Tabong, Minister of Mines and Power, Ogork Ebot Ntui, Minister in Charge of Special duties at the Presidency of the Republic, Dr. Ayuk Takem Jacob, Minister of Scientific and Technical Research, Prof. Peter Agbor Tabi, Minister of Higher Education, Jerome Obi Eta, Minister of Public Works, Tanyi Mbianyor Clarkson Oben, Minister of Forestry and Environment, Egbe Achuo Hillman, Minister of Forestry and Environment and Mengot Victor Arrey Nkongho, Minister in-Charge of Special Duties at the Presidency of the Republic.⁴

It may not sound diplomatic enough to advance such statistics above. But the disclosure of certain facts just becomes unavoidable at this point in time because with all these ministers, the division was still backward in terms of economic, social and political developments. Therefore, the statistics are given to reveal the fact that ministerial appointments have nothing to do with the development of a community. If the government would have wished to develop

²Interview with, Elokobi Njock, 59 Years, General in Gendarmerie, Yaounde, 12th November 2018.

³ Interview with Ebot Akoachere Catherine, 61 Years, Retired Nurse, Yaounde, 20 March 2018.

⁴Interview with Peter Nyenti Ayuk, 61 Years, retired soldier, Yaounde, 6th May 2019.

a community, they should rather provide road infrastructures, regular electricity, good education and potable water and not appointments. Appointments only went a long way to enrich a few individuals and their families. The government should mobilise resources to adopt a federal or a community oriented policies that gives much power and authority to the community to handle its own development projects.

Reunification set the stage for the creation of a one party system in Cameroon in 1966. The Cameroon National Union (CNU) was created as a single party in what became known as West and East Cameroon. Multiparty politics in the two states was abolished. As a consequence, the first ever-indigenous political party in the then Mamfe division called the Cameroon Commons' Congress (CCC) founded by Chief Nyenti Stephen Eyong on September 27th 1959 was dissolved.⁵ The division was left without a political chessboard for local politicians to exercise themselves.

Impact of Unification on Chieftaincy Institution

Chief Nyenti's middle position during the plebiscite, push the ruling KNDP to reject him as the chief of Bachuo-Ntai village when reunification was finally achieved leading to the intensification of chieftaincy crisis in that village in 1964. Chief Nyenti paid very dearly for holding and expressing his own view on a political matter he was no stranger to.⁶ To confirm this, S. M. Ebai Agbaw, chief of Okoyong in a private correspondence to Emmanuel Egbe Tabi, a former Minister boastfully affirmed that he had been very instrumental in replacing chief Nyenti, an anti-reunificationist with S. Ncho Mbu, a staunch supporter of KNDP and a reunificationist in the village of Bachuo-Ntai. Upon discovering this after a number of years in 1989, Chief Nyenti openly accused Hon. E.T. Egbe for being the sole cause of chieftaincy crisis in Manyu division as he addressed E.T. Egbe in the following words:

Hon. Egbe , stop fooling around with Cameroon social justice. You've come to grips with it. Surrender or triumph: the way out is your honourable retirement .Enough is enough. Stagnant Manyu is tired of your –stagnant because Manyu hasn't a trusted middlemen, as in Mezam, in delivering the goods .Withdraw your letter No ETE/185/BNCS/99 of 15 January,1989 to the Hon Minister, and repent from the lies written and unwritten therein. For now, you and any of your collaborators have swallowed a piece of burning coal because you work against the laws of nature.⁷

⁵NAB, File No: 1303, Vc/a (1961) 4.5, "Southern Cameroons Plebiscite," 1961, p.8.

⁶Tabi, "Chief Nyenti Stephen Eyong of Bachuo-Ntai, Mamfe: A Traditional Ruler and Politician, 1925-1999," Masters of Arts Dissertation,, University of Yaounde 1 2005.p. 46.

⁷Ibid. p, 47.

Other examples of chiefs who were dethroned for not supporting the ruling KNDP's position during the plebiscite of 1961, could be cited in the villages of Kembong and Nchang. In the village of Kembong, there was intensification of chieftaincy crisis that started in 1960 between Chief G.E.B Oben who did not support the ideologies of the KNDP and Denis Tabot who stood strongly behind the KNDP. In the face of this, the government manipulated the people to replace Chief G.E.B Obenson with Denis Tabot. His dethronement was spearheaded by Hon. W. N. O Effiom who was the speaker of the West Cameroon House of Assembly (WCHA) at the time. This action was highly condemned by recognized quarter heads in a letter addressed to the Prime Minister of West Cameroon, Dr. J. N. Foncha that reads:

We, the undersigned, on behalf of many others, hereby oppose to the deposition of chief G. E. B. Obenson of Kembong Town in Mamfe Division. It is a well Known fact that the KNDP Controlled Council at Kembong and has no other duty to perform than to depose all chiefs who did not advocate of the KNDP ideologies as they have always done. The chairman of this Council and even Hon. WNO Effiom have been the people who have always come to incite the people of Kembong Town to pass a vote of no confidence on this chief and to arrange that people who are not even quarter heads sign false declaration deposing this chief and installing one Denis Tabot . We wonder what part Effiom and others have to play with Kembong Chieftaincy on the 23rd July, 1960, Effiom came to Kembong and held talk with his KNDP Supporters and assured them he will over-rule the matter with the Premier when it gets to Buea . after the has been over-ruled in the council meeting of 21st July 1960 that chief Obenson must continue to rule . May we know whether he is a Minister of Chieftaincy or Works and Transport?.⁸

The letter was signed by twenty Councilors namely: Joseph Ebot, William Njock , Napoleon Ebot, Ayuk Nchang, Peter Ako, Johnson N. Tambe, P.T. Agbor, Dorah Enow, Sarah Mbeng, Susanah Takang, Elias Ashu, I.A. Ojong, S.A.Tabe, B.T.Tambe, Thomas T. Etchu, Linus Ako, Mary Atem, Elizabeth Ofundem, Fredah Etaka and Polinah Tabot.

In the same light, Peter Ashu Nsoesie of Nchang village replaced Chief Moses Ndip Apie as the Chief of Nchang. The latter was a militant of the Cameroon Peoples' National Convention (CPNC), the opposition Party in the then Southern Cameroons. The former was a staunch supporter of the ruling KNDP. Chief Moses Ndip Apie was dethroned because he did not support reunification. Since he never toed the KNDP line, he was simply removed from the throne when reunification was achieved.⁹ This situation was particularly acute in the forest areas because chieftaincy in this area was not a formidable institution.

⁸ Tabe, "The Chieftaincy Institution Among the Banyang and Ejagham of Manyu Division (1922-2011), P.273
⁹Ibid.275.

Economic and Social impact

The economic and social neglect of the Mamfe Division as well as the entire Anglophone Cameroon since independence need not to over emphasis. The Mamfe Division had remained in the doldrums due to the lukewarm developmental attitude of the Yaounde regime. The poor state of roads in the division could be connected to this. At the same time forest (timber) and non-forest (Eru and njasaga) products were exploited from Takamanda forest and other forests in the division to develop road projects in other part of the country such as the construction of Maroua-Ngaoundere, Douala-Yaounde and Yaounde-Bafoussam roads. Meanwhile national and Tran-African roads in the division like Kumba- Mamfe and Mamfe-Bamenda were only constructed about fifty years of reunification in 2014.¹⁰

The transport system of Mamfe Division since independence posed a real challenge to the government. The only road transport achievements included the recently tarring of the Bamenda-Mamfe, Mamfe-Ekok-Abakelike and part -Mamfe roads. All the other roads round the division, subdivision, district and village remained either enclave or partially accessible. These roads included Mamfe-Akwaya, Mamfe-Obang, Tinto-Menji, and Nchang-Kembong to name these few.¹¹ Akwaya town and it environ remained enclave even after fifty years of the union and only partially accessible through the Federal Republic of Nigeria. These earth roads at least needed constant maintenance to facilitate the movement of people and their property.

Still on the transport sector, the division as well as other divisions of West Cameroon had Public Works Department (PWD). The PWD carried out road maintenance. Public transport was well-organized and West Cameroon had right hand drive.¹² Vehicle inspection officers made sure only good vehicles in good mechanical condition could guarantee lives and property ply the West Cameroon roads. Reunification saw all these good measures neglected and even both primary and secondary roads in the division were not regularly graded again. The only thing that could be done was to change from right to left hand drive. This resulted to numerous accidents because the people were not used too.

Lastly, on transport sector, during the Thirty two years stayed of the Germans in Cameroon they constructed a hanging bridge in Mamfe in 1904 commonly known as “German

¹⁰Interview with Tambe Ayuk, 67 years, Teacher and Chief of Anslem Village, Buea, 10th February 2019.

¹¹ Interview with Enow Botela Enow.

¹² Interview with Michael Tabot Martin, 58 Years , Administrator, Yaounde, 10th March 2017.

bridge” across the Badi River.¹³ The economic benefits of the bridge at the time needed not to overemphasise. As that was the only easiest mean of transport to cross to the other side of both Rivers Badi and Manyu. Plate 6 below shows the hanging bridge across the Badi River.

Plate 6: The Germans hanging bridge across the Badi River



Source: Atlantic Photo Mamfe on September 16, 2020.

This bridge helped farmers to do farming on the other side of the river, the people of Eshobi village, Akwaya town and entire Akwaya subdivision to carry out their daily activities and to evacuate their produce to markets in Mamfe and its environ. After reunification since economic activities were concentrated in Douala and with the construction of a modern bridge across Manyu River around Egbekaw village, the hanging bridge became a shadow of itself.¹⁴ Even though the bridge might have outlived its usefulness, the authority concern would have renovated it for touristic purpose.

On the road to reunification between Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon, Mamfe Plebiscite Conference was convened to take place on the 10th and 11th August, 1959 at a building in Mamfe called the “Reading Room”. After reunification this building and even the reunification monument were both abandoned by the government in place.¹⁵ The abandonment of the relics of the reunification is a cause for concern to the people

¹³Interview with Bridget Ndip Assam Mbiwan, 54 Yyears, Journalist of Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) Buea, 12th June, 2020.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵ Interview with Ben Egbe Besong, age 55, Senior Lecturer university of Buea, 23th July 2020.

of Manyu Division. This is to say that the reunification agenda was just a mean for La Republique du Cameroun to assimilate Southern Cameroonians. Plates 7 and 8 below indicate the Mamfe Reading Room and Reunification Monument found in Mamfe.

Plate 7: Shows the snapped shut of the “Reading Room” Around Mamfe Motor Park and the Reunification Monument at Round-about Mamfe



Source: Photos taken by the Researcher during Fieldwork, September 15th, 2018.

Plate 8: Shows the snapped shot of the Reunification Monument in Mamfe, constructed in October 1961



Source: Photos taken by the researcher during Fieldwork, September 15th, 2018.

The abandonment of even the visible legacies of reunification without any convincing justification was considered by many as a way of hiding the history of Cameroon from the future generation. In order to propagate the slogan that Cameroon is one and indivisible, even before 1961.

Elsewhere, after reunification the people of Mamfe were not allowed to manage their institutions such as the Mamfe Farmers' Cooperative Society (MACECOOP) instead National Produce Marketing Board (NPMB) was created to cater for farmer's need. Some financial and other institutions were defunct like Cameroon Bank S.A, the West Cameroon Produce Marketing Board, and the West Cameroon Electricity Co-operation (POWERCAM), which supplied cheap and regular electricity to the people of Mamfe and entire Southern Cameroons.¹⁶ The Yoke Power Station was abandoned simply because Ahidjo wanted to absorb the people of West Cameroon in the new unitary system to create the impression that Cameroon was one and indivisible.

The new dispensation contributed to the decline of Manyu River port, the abandonment of Mamfe (Besongabang) and Bali airports notwithstanding Tiko international Airport to the advantage of Douala. There was growing suspicion that the intention was to make Anglophones more economically dependent on the Francophones. There was also the closure of the Tiko, Bota and Victoria seaports in favour of the Douala River port, which was an artificial seaport. Companies like the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) had to spend much money to transport their raw materials to Douala port to be exported aboard.¹⁷

As a matter of fact, before reunification the town of Mamfe was a very busy commercial town in Southern Cameroons. It was thanks to the John Holt Company that constructed a warehouse at the bank of Manyu River to receive imports such as clothes, rice, liquors, spare parts of bicycle and motor-cycle that came from Calabar, Britain through the Mamfe river port and exports like palm kernels, garri, egusi etc were kept there before either exported or distributed across the territory of Southern Cameroons. By the end of the 1960s this company was closed down resulting to the slowdown of economic activities in Mamfe division. Against this backdrop, Mamfe that used to be an important crossroads town in Southern Cameroons became a shadow of itself.¹⁸ Following the replacement of Pounds Sterling currency in West Cameroon with CFA Franc in 1962, prices of basic foodstuffs climbed greatly. Between

¹⁶Interview with Tabe Maurice, 76 Years, Retired Storekeeper of MACECOOP, Mamfe, 12th October 2016.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸Interview with Botela Enow.

February 1961 and April 1962, the prices of basic foodstuff rose by almost 22%.¹⁹ This was also caused by increase in demand from the Economic and Customs Union of Central Africa (UDEAC) Zone. It led to decline of Mamfe as a commercial town, because of trade restrictions between Mamfe and Nigeria unlike before reunification when Mamfe was a transit town between Southern Cameroons and the Eastern region of Nigeria.

Reunification provoked some specific movements of people either as government workers or traders and farmers. In the first place, some Mamfe people employed in the Nigerian administration as teachers and nurses also preferred to return to Nigeria after reunification.²⁰ Furthermore, when Nigerian administration left many people were forced to move out of the division in search of jobs in the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) plantations as labourer workers and to the fertile areas of Fako division as farmers. In the second place, some sons and daughters of Mamfe employed by the Nigerian Military decided to return home to defence their Fatherland. A good example was General James Tabe Tataw who took service with Federal Republic of Cameroon Military.²¹

Social Impact

At all levels strides were made in the field of education. Unlike before reunification a few primary schools existed in the division in Mamfe town, Tali and Mfuni villages and no secondary school existed until 1939. But after reunification, at the primary level, the new government took over from the Council and some Missionary schools to ensure proper management. More teachers were trained and recruited. At the Secondary level, government policy was to bring schools nearer to the population. In the scheme there were efforts made to provide a high school in the chief town of every division and a general education college in each sub-division. In 1968, Government High School Mamfe was created.²²

One important decision at Fouban was the adoption of two official languages of English and French. After reunification the French language became important in Mamfe division as well as the whole of West Cameroons and English in East Cameroon. The creation of government bilingual colleges in all subdivisions and in some villages in the division, for instance, Government Bilingual High School Mamfe, Government Bilingual College Ntenako,

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ngoh, History of Cameroon since 1800, Buea, p .232.

²¹ Interview with Lucy Asuagbor, 65 Years, Appeal Court Chief Justice, Buea, 20th November 2019.

²² Idem.

Government Bilingual College Eyumojock.²³ These bilingual colleges helped to reinforce bilingualism in division.

Unfortunately, bilingualism was supposed to be an asset in Cameroon, but turned out to be a liability because it was rather designed to assimilate English-speaking Cameroonians into French-speaking. As explained by President Biya in Paris which is paraphrase below:

We had the possibility of integrating the English Speakers (Anglophones) directly into the Francophone system, which was predominantly used by 80% of our people but, I believe that countries are now concerned about affirming their identity and that is why we are setting up a special status that recognizes the specificity of the English-speaking area, but it remains an integral part of Cameroon.²⁴

In the health sector, government medical services were insufficient. In Mamfe for instance, there was no resident doctor until 1927. There were only six medical doctors in Southern Cameroons by 1938, one nursing sister, thirty-one nurses, six dispensaries, one sanitary inspector and twenty-six other medical personnel.²⁵ Since 1961, some modest efforts have been made to provide health services in the division. Health centres, hospitals and clinics were built in the main towns and in some rural areas. Attention was also paid in the fight against diseases like malaria, typhoid, small pox and fight against Female Genital mutilation common in the division.²⁶ Government hospitals were established in the main administrative units like Mamfe, Eyumojock, Kembong, Tinto, Akwaya and Fontem. Dispensaries and clinics were established in the main villages like Kembong and Mbakang.²⁷

By and large, we can conclude without any fear or favour that even though reunification had some positive impact on the division, the negative impact out weighted the positive impact. Due to this, political elite and chiefs of the division have resulted in writing conflicting motions of support to the power that be. This takes us to another subheading which is reunification and contending issue of motions of support.

²³Idem.

²⁴ Paul Biya, President of Cameroon's declaration, after attended the opening ceremony of the Paris Peace Forum 2019, (November 11-13) organized by His peer, Emmanuel Macron. He participated at the panel discussion on the theme: "Recognizing the South for more equitable global governance" moderated by Billionaire Mohamed "Mo" Ibrahim, President of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, Tuesday, November 12, 2019.

²⁵Ndi, National Integration and Building in Cameroon, p.56.

²⁶ Interview with Enow Oroch George, 60 Years, Dermatologist, 23rd October 2020.

²⁷Idem.

Contending Issue of Motions of Support

Following the reunification of Southern Cameroons with La Republique du Cameroun things have never been the same again in term of parliamentary democracy that existed in the territory before and few years of the union. The political atmosphere has been characterized by dictatorship, manipulation and deceives of citizens. It was difficult to know who was speaking the truth and who was not. This situation was even compounded with the re- launched of multiparty politics in Cameroon in 1990. Both traditional rulers and political elite who belong to the ruling party resorted at writing and sending fake messages to government in the name of motions of support that never reflected the opinion of a common man.

Motion of support was supposed to be concerted social, economic and political opinion of all the people of a particular community. But in the context of Cameroon, a motion of support is a written or verbal statement sent to somebody in authority, usually the President of the Republic as a sign of solidarity and agreement. The message comes to thanking the President for appointing a family member or tribesman as a minister or senior member of the administration, or manager of a corporation. Such a motion comes in anticipation of the gains to accrue from the position.²⁸ ‘Mon frère est en haut’,²⁹ they say. Other motions of support condemn detractors of the regime for writing or saying what the madding crowd is politically engineered to see as subversive or defamatory

For instance, when the ‘Wind of Change’ released its violence from the East blowing fiercely towards the West and heating Cameroon in 1990, some political lame dogs mobilized dozens of people to march against multi-party politics in Manyu and other part of the country. The Biya regime they thought they were supporting declared to a cheering jammed full Congress Hall of CPDM that ‘Je vous ai bien compris’.³⁰ A few days later, he did the exact opposite and opened the political floodgates for a plethora of opposition parties to mushroom through a barren democratic wilderness. Once more, thousands of motions of support poured into the bafflement of Biya himself and many.³¹ In addition, some elites of Manyu Division led a constellation of Politicians from the division to Yaounde to present a motion of support from the people to the Head State.

²⁸Interview with George Kelong, 51 years, Journalist, Yaoundé, 16th February 2020..

²⁹“Mon frère est en haut,” My friend is up.

³⁰“Je vous ai bien compris,” Meaning I understood you so well.

³¹Idem

The issues of motions of support dominated the political landscape of Cameroon since the re-introduction of multiparty politics in 1990. Political elite as well as chiefs of the division used the motions of support for personal gains. They wrote a series of motions of support to President Paul Biya without seeking the humble opinion of their militants and subjects, thereby, misrepresenting the wishes of their people in many areas of political decisions. Plate 9: is an excerpt of motion of support from Manyu Politicians to Chief Ephraim Inoni on his appointment as the Prime Minister of Cameroon.

Plate 9: A Delegation of Manyu Traditional Rulers at the Prime Minister's Office on the 27th December, 2004



Source: Cameroon Post, a weekly Newspapers, 123 Edition, 2003,p.2.

On December 27th 2004, a delegation of Manyu chiefs led by Chief Arrey Ashu Solomon of Ossing made up of 25 people including some members of the political elite of the division came to present a motion of support to president Biya. Speaking during the occasion, Chief Tabe Tando and George Nso Ndip of Bachou Ntai, expressed his gratitude and joy over the fact that the PM was a son of their Region and the second in a row.³² They also seized the

³² Tabe, "The Chieftaincy Institution Among the Banyang and Ejagham of Manyu Division (1922-2011), P.234..

opportunity to say thank you to the President of the Republic for this mark of confidence to the people of South West through this act, and the further appointment of three sons of the region: Justice Egbe Hillman as Minister of Forestry and Fauna, Prof. Elvis Ngole Ngole as Minister in charge of Special Duties at the Presidency and Dion Ngute Joseph as Minister Delegate at the Ministry of External Relations in charge of the Commonwealth into the December 8, 2004's government.³³ Also included in the delegation was the Second Vice-President of the National Assembly, Honourable Abunaw Rose Makia.

In another motion of support, the supporters of the CPDM of Manyu IV Section and Chiefs of Upper Banyang Subdivision reaffirmed their loyalty and support to their party chairman, president Paul Biya and urged him to stand as their candidate in the 2011 presidential election promising him a hundred per cent votes. The militants of the party and chiefs of the subdivision had a joint section conference on the 12th of February 2010 at the Tinto grandstand on the theme, "turning future challenges into opportunities with Paul Biya".³⁴

In an unflinching support to one of the Ministers of the division, Chiefs and elite of Manyu Division jointly declared war against those blackmailing someone they considered their illustrious son who doubled as deputy Secretary General at the Presidency of the Republic, Professor Peter Agbor Tabi. In a three–paged strongly worded communiqué, the chiefs and elite reacted to a series of publications contained in some Newspapers against Agbor Tabi. They lashed out at any person or group of persons using “Concerned Manyu Sons”, “Manyu People”, “Manyu Elite” to publish libellous and vicious attacks on their son as stated below:

It has become imperative for us, the chiefs and elite of Manyu Division resident at home to react to the unauthorized use of our umbrella name associated with either ‘Manyu Elite’, Manyu People’, ‘Concerned Manyu Sons’ by anybody or group of persons with an intention to satisfy his or their selfish ambition by attacking a son or daughter of this Division.³⁵

They also disclaimed and disassociated themselves from the libellous articles against Agbor Tabi associating the “Manyu Elite” or “Manyu People” with the unfounded, baseless, and frivolous allegations “against their illustrious son, H.E. Chief (Prof) Peter Agbor Tabi, an icon of the Nation endowed with exceptional charisma and constantly guided by remarkable intellect.”³⁶

³³ Ibid.,p.5

³⁴Cameroon Tribune, Emmanuel Kendemeh, 15th February 2010. P.5.

³⁵Interview with Robertson Tanyi, age 63, Banker and Chief of Tinto, Yaounde, 23rd November 2018.

³⁶Cameroon Post International No.3 Vol.IV, 5 April 2002.p, 12.

The chiefs and political elite stressed that contrary to allegations against Agbor Tabi in newspapers sponsored by some Manyu elite or group of persons, he remained the one who flushed out the opposition (NUDP) from Manyu in 1997 and brought Manyu to the fold of the ruling CPDM. “The jubilation that characterized the political landscape of Manyu when Chief Prof. Peter Agbor Tabi was re-appointed Minister was a demonstration of the fact that the people saw him as a remarkable force who in collaboration with others, could water down the growing presence of the opposition in the division.”³⁷ They noted that the fictitiously painted picture of a charged political atmosphere created by a mind infected with hideous intentions did not exist in Manyu.

They called on the government to use the forces of law and order to investigate and bring whoever responsible for these write-ups to book. The communiqué was signed by the Manyu chiefs Conference President and Secretary General, Nfor Godson Orock Oben and H.M Osang Cyprain Ntui respectively, including scores of other chiefs and elite of Manyu Division.

It was rather unfortunate for political elites and chiefs to have celebrated the ousting of an opposition political party out of Manyu and putting to an end political competition within the division. Losing sight of the fact, that political competition is very instrumental in the new democratic dispensation. It was contradictory to understand whether Manyu chiefs and elite sent out motions of support thanking President Paul Biya for their bad roads, no running stand taps and very frequent power outage. Or for the decaying infrastructure (Besong Abang Airport, Gendarmerie barracks, army camp, Government Residential Area (GRA), etc.

Were they happy that the two giant standby electric generators by Baku Bridge have been moved to somewhere else so as to enjoy perpetual darkness? Were they also happy that since reunification they have to pass through Nigeria to go to Akwaya? Or were they celebrating the fact that their natural forests were being destroyed by logging companies without any compensation offered to their people. The chiefs and elite should stop pretending by singing Haleluja to President Paul Biya for the very high unemployment rate in the division, especially among youths.³⁸

Manyu never was a land of dishonest intellectuals; greedy politicians were to be stopped from destroying the division if their consciences did not tell them to rethink their old political strategies.³⁹ They could go ahead and enrich themselves with ill-gotten wealth from the

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Interview with James Takor Tabe, 48 years, Part time Lecturer, University of Buea, , October 10, 2019 .

³⁹ Idem.

administration. They must, however, remember that Manyu belonged to all and as a people deserved better. They cannot be beggars in their own country.

Against this background, a good number of people reacted to these motions of support, among them, the Chairman of the Manyu Elements Cultural Association (MECDA) United States of America branch, Dr. Peter Ako who said that: “Manyu Division is not for sale”. Dr. Ako made the declaration in an opinion paper that was circulating to all Manyu people at home and abroad. He again drew the people’s attention to the beggar status that Chiefs and political elite of Manyu were selfishly dragging the division into and noted that every legitimate government has a duty and responsibility to provide her citizens with basic needs without eroding their dignity and reducing them to praise singers. As he put it:

The past few years have witnessed so much political posturing, manoeuvring, and sometimes even dogfights in Cameroon. Manyu Division, aka Land of the Intelligent, has not been spared. In fact our beloved Division has been promoted to the revered position of the shrine and/or mint of the most sophisticated “Motions of Support” for a president who for almost twenty-ninety years has very actively treated Manyu Division and her people with contempt, disdain, abandonment and relegated them to the unenviable position of second (sorry third) class citizens in their own country. Manyu people were politically very complex. Many took advantage of their liberal political thinking and plunged into exploiting it to their own selfish motives. Incidentally the latest motion of support by some Manyu elite triggered so much political debate and left many tongues wagging, both inside and outside of the division.⁴⁰

As a loyal citizen of Manyu, born and bred in the ghost town that was Mamfe; former Bolo Boy (aka Bacha Boy) at Manyu River; Community Leader and an Ekpe Chief, Dr Ako felt compelled by the dictates of his conscience and the guidance of the spirits of his ancestors to speak out and draw the attention of Manyu people (both at home and abroad) to the beggar status that Manyu chiefs and political elites were selfishly dragging Manyu into.

Contrary to the above motions of support to the Head of State, President Paul Biya and members of his government, MECDA USA appreciated and sent their own motion of support to one of Manyu’s political opinion leaders, Hon. Justice Paul Ayah who created a political party (Popular Action Party) and for deciding to go in for presidential election. In their opinion the people of Manyu were not supposed to publicly condemn and rebuke one of them and intimidate him for expressing his political opinion. They also condemned shabby treatment meted out to him by his own fellow Manyu chiefs and political elites simply because he expressed an intention to run for the highest office of the land. MECDA USA wondered if

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Manyu people could not go beyond Assistant Secretary Generals and Technical Advisers and whether Manyu people were not good enough to be Presidents and Prime Ministers too.

Many recalled that Manyu Political giants like S.A. George, Dr. A.D Mengot, W.N.O Effiom, E.T Egbe, Gov. Enow Tanjong, Kima Tabong, Ogork Ebot Ntui, Etta Jerome, etc. stood tall among their contemporaries from other regions of the country at their own time. They did not have to reduce themselves and their people to mere hand clappers in the political enclave of Cameroon.⁴¹ They had the president's ear and enjoyed the love of their people at the same time. Manyu was united then. As a people, had Manyu people gained from the Biya's administration, even when they have become the second Mvomeka of Cameroon and are fighting and tearing down themselves for his sake?.⁴²

Traditional Rulers and Political elite were therefore called upon to stop the craziness of disputable motions of support. The chiefs and political elite had danced naked in public and were told the truth that Manyu people were tired of being neglected by Biya's government. Chiefs and elite were told to take the division's "motion of dissatisfaction since reunification to the Biya's government for neglecting it for too long".⁴³ Manyu could not be an exception to the wind of change blowing across the entire world. All hands should be on deck to bring that much needed development to Manyu.

The chiefs and political elite were supposed to call the attention of the government on issues that were perceived to have negative effects on them and their people. But that was not the case because the chiefs and political elite of the division never saw their duties as natural to voice out what they considered vexatious issues affecting their people and by extension the society as a whole. Their forefront and negative collaboration with the government openly exposed their ugly side.⁴⁴

The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon

The Anglophone problem in Cameroon should be more appropriately understood as the Southern Cameroons Question, it is one, which requires meticulous articulation in a manner that there will be no ambiguities. From independence, the English-speaking people of the Republic of Cameroon were a distinct people who came into a union with the Francophone

⁴¹Interview with Paul Ayah, 69 Years, Jurist and former Chairman of People's Action Party, Buea, 13th November 2021.

⁴²Idem.

⁴³Interview with Paul Ayah.

⁴⁴ Interview with Egbe Ben Besong

who were also a separate people in 1961. During the union, the English Speaking people came along with some core value systems and institutions; a legal/judiciary system (the common law system), a political system (a house of assembly, a house of chiefs, political parties and an electoral system), an administrative system (local government areas), a trade-cultural system (naturally chosen chiefs), a security system (the Mobile Police), an educational system (an Anglo-Saxon system) and an economic/infrastructure system (airports, water supply system and infrastructure maintenance system).⁴⁵

All these systems were distinct and different from what the Francophone counterparts had. Conflicts arose because the Anglophones found that all these systems were being gradually and systematically deformed, adulterated, polluted, dismantled and erased, through marginalization, discrimination, subjugation and assimilation by the Francophone majority.⁴⁶ If we understand and present the problem as it is from the onset then we can now understand that some Anglophones took arms against the state recently because they wanted that these systems be restored, protected and defended. To achieve this, many thought that it can only be achieved, either through the restoration of old federal system or outright separation.

Reunification of 1961 and its Challenges

The reunification between La Republique du Cameroun and Southern Cameroons has over the years been increasingly challenged not only by Manyu people but also by other Southern Cameroonians. Major challenge has been on the strong desire for secession by some Southern Cameroonians. The root cause of this problem could be traced back from 1961 when the political elites of two territories with different colonial legacies; The French and the British agreed on the formation of a Federal system of government. Contrary to the expectations of former Southern Cameroonians, reunification did not provide an equal partnership for both parties, let alone the preservation of their cultural heritage and identity, but turned out to be merely a transitory phase to the total integration of the Anglophone region into a strongly centralized and unitary state in Francophone region resulting to an Anglophone problem.

Why the Unification has been challenged over the years

The incompatibility in the union between former Southern Cameroonians and their French Cameroonians counterparts could be traced back to the defeat of the Germans during the First

⁴⁵F. Lena, Report on the Anglophone Crisis from September 2017 to June 2020, Reaction of State, and Non-State Actors, 2020, p.2.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

World War in Cameroon. German Kamerun was divided into the British and French spheres. The League of Nations which was formed after the war allowed Britain to administer her portion of the territory as a mandated territory. Britain introduced its culture and language to replace that of the Germans and France on her own portion did same. The establishment of different languages and cultural legacies resulted in the emergence of Francophone and Anglophone identities that made them not to be once more compatible.⁴⁷

Another bone of contention was the attachment of Southern Cameroons with the Eastern region of Nigeria during the Mandate and Trusteeship periods. The fact that Britain did not administer Southern Cameroons as a single political entity made the problem of incompatibility visible. Failures in responsibility on the part of Britain created confusion in the political future of Southern Cameroons. Therefore, in a bid to search for the political future of the territory pushed her into a marriage of convenience with La Republique du Cameroun.

A number of years after reunification, English-speaking Cameroonians discovered that the terms of the reunification were not respected. Their French-speaking counterparts deviated from the terms of the reunification with impunity. They realized that there was plan to wipe the English identity and relics off. There was therefore need to fight for the re-establishment of these lost relics and identity that became known as the Anglophones problem. Those Francophone Cameroonians who qualified Anglophones as an ethnic group saw the problem as a Cameroonian problem which all other ethnic groups in Cameroon faced. Even more vexing was when some Anglophones who were benefiting from the regime such as Professor Ngole Ngole, the then Minister of Forestry and Wild Life and Professor Peter Agbor Tabi, deputy Secretary General at the Presidency of the Republic in a separate Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) programmes declared that there was no Anglophone problem in Cameroon, but a Cameroonian Problem.⁴⁸

On another front, the fundamental administrative, linguistic, economic, social and Cultural differences that worked for the two Cameroons to come together in 1961 were also neglected. After being separated for more than Forty years, it was therefore difficult if not impossible to establish a unitary state. It became imperative to establish a federal system of government to take care of the differences.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, after eleven years of this federation

⁴⁷ Ngoh, History of Cameroon Since 1800, p.316.

⁴⁸ Cameroon Radio and Television Corporation (CRTV), Elvis Ngolle Ngolle, on "Cameroon Calling" Programme, National Radio Station, Yaoundé, 22nd June, 2008.

⁴⁹ J. V. Ngoh, Cameroon 1884-1985 A Hundred Years of History, p.267.

when the differences were still very evident, Ahidjo decided to abolish the structure through a referendum in 1972. With this change, it was obvious that there was going to be some fictions with the issue of reunification due to bad fate. This problem took its roots from Ahidjo's era, but it received greater public challenge from Anglophones in general and Manyu population in particular under Paul Biya's regime.

President Ahidjo manipulated the constitution and organized a Referendum whereby Cameroonians on May 20, 1972, 99.9% voted in favour of the establishment of a unitary state. The two stars on the green colour which signified the two Federated States were changed to a single star on the red colour to signify a united, one and indivisible Cameroon. The two states were transformed into seven provinces with equal status. There was no longer evidence to show that there were two states that came together in 1961.⁵⁰

Furthermore, enormous powers were vested on the President by the unitary Constitution that further enabled his successor, Paul Biya, who took over in 1982 to transform Cameroon from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon by simply signing a Presidential Decree on February 4, 1984.⁵¹ This rash decision was an intensification of the Anglophone problem by which the English-speaking Cameroonians who were marginalized since 1961 started requesting for the independence of their former Southern Cameroons.

The fear of a minority problem in Cameroon that prompted the adoption of a Federation in Cameroon in 1961 was evaded. It should be recalled that during the reunification of Cameroon, there was no major and no minor State.⁵² Both States went to the negotiating table as two equal states. Southern Cameroons leaders negotiated for a loose federation that they never had but rather a centralized one was achieved. They demanded for a loose federation for fears that without a federal system at all, La Republique du Cameroun would dominate the Southern Cameroons (minority), due to population disparity between the two States.⁵³

The population of Southern Cameroons was by far smaller in size than that of the Republic of Cameroon. Therefore, population disparity between the two states influenced the establishment of a federal structure in a bid to mitigate the domination of Southern Cameroons by La Republique du Camerounian counterparts. But a few years later, this protection was

⁵⁰Interview with Michael TabongKima.

⁵¹Interview Botela Enow Enow.

⁵²Fanso on CRTV, "Cameroon Calling Programme, National Radio Station, Yaounde, 6th February.2011.

⁵³Interview with Robert Atu, 56 Years, Teacher, Bamenda, 11th August 2019.

neglected which made Anglophone Cameroonians to be totally forgotten in the arrangement. There was bound to be problems in the union.

Other grievances surfaced over the issue of education. Early in 1993, the attempts by the government to dismantle the examination of Anglophones called General Certificate of Education (GCE) were met by strong resistance from Anglophone parents and teachers.⁵⁴ The complaints of the Anglophone minority were in many respects justified. In this issue for example, the government demonstrated disregard for the Anglophone educational traditions in which the Anglophones were constantly on the disadvantage by being pushed into the Francophone system as they moved towards the university.

In another perspective, the grievances of Anglophone Cameroonians had to do with the issues of bilingualism. The federal constitution talked of a bilingual Cameroon. But English language was dominant in English part of Cameroon while French language was dominant in French part of the country. Furthermore, most official information was published in French and the English was neglected. Therefore, bilingualism was not reinforced because one language was minimized. This created a language barrier and there was need for urgent attention.

The change of name from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon in 1984 stigmatized the Anglophones. This was so because the same appellation (Republic of Cameroon) applied to East Cameroon before reunification in 1961 came to be applied in the whole of Cameroon. In addition, the conversion of the plebiscite day into a “Youth Day” was a further manipulation condemned by the Anglophones.⁵⁵ The establishment of a strong Central government in Yaounde made it easier for the assimilation of Anglophones. The national structures which were created discriminated against Anglophones as they were given very few representatives in the National Assembly and National government.

In 1961, the president and his successor had to come from the two different states but in 1979, the constitution was amended and this enabled the Prime Minister, a Francophone to succeed the president. The president was Ahmadou Ahidjo and the Prime Minister was Paul Biya. Both of them came from the former East Cameroon state. This made it difficult for an Anglophone to become president. Even more important was the destruction of the parliamentary democracy in the former West Cameroon. The West Cameroon House of Chiefs

⁵⁴ Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, p.321.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

was dissolved and the spirit of debates that characterized discussions in the parliament was killed.⁵⁶

Anglophones also complained about the lack of trust in English-speaking Cameroonians by the Francophone-dominated regime that denied Cameroonians of English expression key ministries like Defence, Economy and Finance, Public Service and Administrative Reforms, External Relations and Sports. Until they raised their voices in 2016 before they were given Ministry of Territorial Administration, headed by Paul Atanga Nji and Ministry of Secondary Education headed by Pauline Nalova Lyonga. Even appointments into some important state owned Companies like National Oil Refinery Corporation (SONARA) located in Limbe, National Investment Corporation (SNI) and Cameroon Shipping Line (CAMSHIP) were never given to Anglophones. The exclusion of Anglophones from key positions and from important decision-making institutions was regarded as cheating.⁵⁷

Above were some of the reasons that caused some Anglophone Cameroonians to resist the reunification arrangement. This Anglophone problem took different stages and ways in its manifestation in recent time in Cameroon. The next paragraphs discuss the manifestation of the Anglophone problem in Cameroon.

Manifestations of Anglophone Problem

The real catalyst to the Anglophone awareness was President Paul Biya's introduction of a large measure of political liberation in December 1990. The Head of State, after observing the wind of change that was blowing across Africa decided to authorized political competition in the event of multiparty politics, a catalyst that ushered in some degree of freedom of press, association, holding of public meetings and demonstrations. The English-Speaking Cameroonians took advantage of it to expose their problems.

The first radical reaction of the Anglophones to their inequality with the Francophones came in 1985 from Fon Gorji Dinka a prominent lawyer.⁵⁸ Taking advantage of Biya's emergence and policies of democratization, rigour and moralization, Dinka called for the independence of Anglophone Cameroon, which he called the Republic of Ambazonia.⁵⁹

⁵⁶Besong, "An Illustrated History of Cameroon Since 1800, Revised Edition", p.116.

⁵⁷Interview with Robert Atu

⁵⁸Ngoh, History of Cameroon Since 1800, p.320.

⁵⁹G, Dinka's 'The New Social Order', 20th March 1985, Addressed to H.E.Comrade Paul Biya at the Bamenda CNU Congress, and his accompanying letter: Your Excellency, and enclosed an address which I had thought could be delivered at the Congress, and which could transform the Congress into a forum for the reconstruction of our institutions, those of Ahidjo having been peacefully swept away by God in his mysterious way'.

Similarly, in 1985 during the Bamenda Congress of the Cameroon National Union (CNU), two memoranda were submitted to the participants by members of the North West and South West elite association resident in Douala. The Memoranda drew the attention of participants at the Congress to the Anglophone frustration and their exclusion from political influence in Cameroon.

The political liberalization in 1990 provoked the birth of the Cameroon Anglophone Movement (CAM) in 1990. During its first conference in July 1992 in Buea, the conference emphasized its objective for a return to a federal state. Many other associations sprang up with general or specific Anglophone objectives or interests. These included the Teachers Association of Cameroon (TAC), Confederation of Anglophone Parent-Teachers Association of Cameroon (CAPTAC), Cameroon Anglophone Students Association (CAMSA), Cameroon Anglophone Public Servants Association (CAPSA) and Association of Anglophone Journalists (AAJ). TAC and CAPTAC forced the government to create a General Certificate of Education (GCE) Board in 1993.⁶⁰

The Anglophone pressure groups especially CAM was engaged in different forms of protest actions against Francophone domination, including demonstrations, strikes and boycotts. CAM called for a boycott of 20th May celebrations terming it “a day of mourning” and attempted to hoist the federation flag.⁶¹ During the Tripartite Conference convened in 1991 to solve the severe political impasse by the “ghost town” operations, Anglophone participants insisted on a return to the federal state.

On April 30, 1993, the Cameroon Minister of Communication and government Spokesman Augustine Konchu Komeni announced the holding of the “Grand Debat” which was on constitutional reforms. In response to this government announcement of a pending national forum on constitutional reform in the middle of 1993, an All Anglophone Conference (AAC), was held in Buea in April 1993.⁶² The aim was to adopt a common Anglophone stand on constitutional reforms and examine other issues concerning the welfare and prosperity of Anglophones. Bringing together over 5,000 Anglophone elite associations and pressure groups including traditional rulers, the conference issued the Buea Declaration. It enumerated the Anglophone grievances concerning Francophone domination and called for a return to the

⁶⁰.Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, p.322.

⁶¹ Interview with Ben Egbe

⁶² Interview with Samson Abangma 72 Years, University Professor and former Registrar of University of Buea, Buea, 10th October, 2020.

federal state. Gradually, the AAC became the umbrella of all Anglophone interest groups with Elad Ekontang (Chair), Dr. Carlson Anyangwe (Secretary General), and Dr. Simon Munzu (Spokesman) as front line leaders. Following the seriousness of the Anglophones concerning the announced “Grand Debat”, the president of the Republic, Paul Biya in a televised Radio and Television broadcast on the state media, Cameroon Radio and Television Corporation (CRTV) said, as paraphrase below:

“Cameroonians don’t understand me, when I spoke of “Larger Debat” They interpreted it to mean “Grand Debat” where can we have a hall that will contain twelve million Cameroonians? I talked about a situation whereby a “Hot line” would be created for you to call and give your contributions for the constitutional reforms. That is what I meant but if you want to take it the way you want okay.”⁶³

Due to government’s change of attitude concerning the announced constitutional reforms and reluctance to discuss the new federal state proposal made by the AAC, CAM they were forced to declare a “Zero option”, total independence of the former Southern Cameroons.

At this juncture, the Anglophones were split between the radicals who stood for this option and those who advocated continued negotiation with the government. In 1994, a second AAC was held in the North West Regional headquarters of Bamenda. Surprisingly, the traditional rulers of the North West and South West Region were not present. This was most probably linked to the fact that they were persuaded to do so by the government, notably Simon Achidi Achu and other Anglophone ministers.⁶⁴

At the conference, the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) was created. Government failure to recognize the SCNC in the constitutional talks provoked the withdrawal of Anglophone elderly spokesmen like J.N. Foncha and S. T. Muna from the said talks. Running out of patience with the government, a nine-man SCNC delegation was dispatched to the United Nations Organisation in May 1994 led by Elad Ekontang, J.N Foncha and S.T. Muna.⁶⁵ The objective of the trip was to inform the UN on the Anglophone problem and sensitize the international community on the matter. Therefore, the “London Communique” was issued emphasizing the “zero option” of unconditional independence for Southern Cameroons.⁶⁶

⁶³CRTV, Paul Biya, During a Televised Radio and Television Broadcast, Yaounde, 18th May 1993.

⁶⁴ Interview with Samson Abangma

⁶⁵W. Samah, *Chiefs (Traditional Rulers) in Anglophone Cameroon and Modern Governance, 1961-2000*,” Ph.D. Thesis, University of Yaoundé I, 2006.p.170.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

In October 1995, the SCNC published an independence programme for Southern Cameroons. It constituted a signature referendum on independence, the creation of a constituent Assembly, a UN application for independence and the declaration of independence on October 1, 1996. But this date came and past without any declaration of independence. This caused the resignation of the founding fathers such as Elad, Anyangwe and Munzu from the SCNC leadership. Thereafter, a more moderate Henry Fossung who was incapable of facing government's divisive and repressive action chaired the SCNC.

By 1997, the SCNC began to lose its steam. Even with birth of some prominent groups such as the Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL), which was very active among Anglophone students in the 1990s, the Southern Cameroons Restoration Movement (SCARM) the SCNC was still often considered the umbrella organization.⁶⁷ No negotiations took place between the SCNC and the government despite some willingness on their part of SCNC. In the late 1990s, these movements under pressure from the government and operating in a semi-clandestine manner started to splinter. Some of the most dynamic leaders such as Carlson Anyangwe went into self-imposed exile. Internet sites operated from abroad became an important vehicle for propagating the secessionist message, but on the ground, momentum was lost.⁶⁸ While government repression undoubtedly occurred, some groups even came under suspicion of selling membership cards for use in asylum applications in the West.

By and large, on December 29th 1999, SCNC agitators captured the government radio station in Buea and broadcast a message proclaiming the independence of Southern Cameroons.⁶⁹ The United Nations and federation flags were also hoisted in Limbe in January 2000. Government intimidation and suppression of the new SCNC leadership under retired Justice Ebong shattered the dreams of Anglophones. At the end of the day, secession could not be achieved.

The Manyu Elites at the Front line of Anglophone Problem

The attachment of Southern Cameroons with Eastern region of Nigeria created an unfavorable condition of living together, due to the closeness of the Mamfe division to Nigeria; there was mass influx of Nigerians into the division. They were mostly the Igbo, Ibibios, and the Ijaws. They came in various capacities; traders, teachers, clerks, mechanics and plantation workers. The Igbos, in particular, owned most of the market stalls in Mamfe town. They made it

⁶⁷E.T. Tabot, "Unveilling the Intrigues to Disrupt AAC" *Cameroon Life*, May 1993, pp.17-18.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

mandatory that a buyer upon pricing an article must buy it whether he/she likes it or not. The people of Mamfe saw their freedom completely eroded. In order to take back their freedom and also free themselves from Nigerian's discrimination, domination and tyranny in the division, the people therefore exploited the opportunities in February 11, 1961 plebiscite by voting for reunification with the Republic of Cameroon as against integration with Nigeria.⁷⁰ Unfortunately, they later discovered that reunification was not better than their attachment with Nigeria, so they started challenging the reunification arrangement leading to the Anglophone Problem.

Since the advent of Anglophone problem in Cameroon, the elite of Manyu division did not remain indifferent. They have tried in many ways to make their voices heard either at the forefront of the struggle or simply participating in the activities of pressure groups for the struggle. It should be noted that the people of former Mamfe division strongly voted for the reunification of former Southern Cameroons with the Republic of Cameroon in the 1961 plebiscite. But they became disgruntled and started protesting against the union when the terms were flouted. Manyu warlords in Anglophone problem included:

Dr. Henry Ndifor Abinjong Enonchong

Chief Dr. Henry Ndifor Abinjong Enonchong, born in Besongabang on March 22, 1934. He attended Basel Mission School, Besongabang after which he proceeded to Bali College in 1949. He dropped out of Bali College for financial reasons in form Three but still passed the Senior Cambridge School Certificate Examination in 1954. He then became a clerk with the CDC and also taught elementary school in Bota, then Victoria, now Limbe. Ever dreaming things that never were and asking why not, the young H.N.A. Enonchong left the CDC to attend the College of Hygiene and Sanitation Aba in Nigeria. He graduated with a diploma in Public Health and became a Sanitary Officer. He worked in Port Harcourt, Victoria (Limbe), Buea and Tiko. While working as a sanitary officer, he began to study law by correspondence at the University of London. In 1960, he sailed to England in search of the Golden con of residence. He finished his LLB degree at the University of London in 1962. Upon graduation, he was called to the English Bar in Gray's Inn. He returned to Cameroon in 1963 and worked for the Legal Department in Buea and later as Director of Cabinet of the then Deputy Minister of Justice.

⁷⁰Ndi, National Integration and Building in Cameroon, p.78.

Chief Dr. Enonchong was the first person from Manyu division to have challenged reunification agenda. Given that he was a legal mind, he became an eye-opener to Anglophone Problem in Cameroon. He was one of the founding fathers and one time chair of the Cameroon Anglophone Movement, (CAM), a pro-democracy group that sought for constitutional reform for Cameroon's minority English-speaking population, Dr. Enonchong became one of the arrowheads for the organization of the first All Anglophone Conference (AAC 1)⁷¹ in Buea in 1993.

Neither intimidated nor fearful for the consequences of his actions, Dr. Enonchong stood up in bold relief as a beacon of Anglophone courage in the face of the blackmail, blacklisting and potential vengeance by Yaoundé authority. His faith in a Federal Republic of Cameroon and the capacity of both Anglophones and Francophones of goodwill to serve as catalysts for change and progress remained unshakeable.⁷²

Chief Ayamba Ette Otun

The second Manyu person to openly oppose the reunification agenda in Cameroon was chief Ayamba Ette Otun of Ebinsi, He became a leader of the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) founded in Buea in July 1995, fighting for freedom, justice and right of self-determination. After the death of Dr. Ngeka Luma Martin, Chief Ayamba was elected SCNC National Chair.⁷³ Chief Ayamba devoted his life to the people of Southern Cameroons and their cause. He was a strict Baha'I believer and often worked tirelessly for the cause, sacrificing personal leisure, as well as refusing to take bribes from the Biya regime to give up the cause of freedom. At the age of 91 he was still advocating for the cause by trying to unite and galvanise all factions together in order to hasten, the restoration of the statehood of Southern Cameroons. From brave soldier to leader of his people, Chief Ayamba loss will no doubt resonate with the people of Southern Cameroons and their fight for freedom, fairness and justice.

On December 31, 1999, the long grey beard chief Ayamba, together with Justice Ebong and Sabum seized Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) Regional Station in Buea and proclaimed the independence and restoration of the statehood of the Southern Cameroons. They were arrested and released 18 months later, without a trial by the Biya's regime in Yaounde.

⁷¹ According to Dr. Henry Ndifor Abi Enonchong , one of the founders of Cam , An Anglophone is a person whose origin is from West Cameroon as defined by Article 1 of the Federal Constitution of September 1 1961 or person who have their origin from the present North West and South West provinces. See, Times and Life, Vol.1 No.7, January 1992, pp.6-9.

⁷² Tabot, "Unveilling the Intrigues to Disrupt AAC" Cameroon Life, p.19.

⁷³ Interview with Egbe Ben.

He suffered several arrests, detention and torture by Yaounde authority. He vowed never to shave his beard until the Southern Cameroons was completely freed. HRH chief Ayamba died on June 18, 2014 in Mamfe at the age 91 without realizing his dream of self-determination of Southern Cameroons. Plate 10 shows portrait of Chief Ayamba Ette Otun one time Chair of SCNC.

Plate 10: Chief Ayamba Ette Otun of Ebam



Source: Atlantic Photo Mamfe, September 12, 2017.

Sesekou Julius Ayuk Tabe

The third person on the roll from Manyu division to have challenged the reunification agenda of the Republic of Cameroon is Julius Ayuk Tabe. He was born on May 2, 1965 in Ewelle village, Eyumojock subdivision, Manyu division, South West region.⁷⁴ The pioneer chief information Officer (CIO) and Successively Assistant Vice President in-charge of Digital services and marketing and recruitment in the American University of Nigeria, (AUN), Yola, Nigeria.

⁷⁴ British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), News, "Focus on Africa", November 1, 2018.

He worked extensively with (National Electricity Corporation) SONEL in Cameroon where he improved energy efficiency in the Adamawa region and he also developed a Customer Management application for the company. He worked with CISCO as Academy Manager for 23 countries in West and Central Africa until he joined American University of Nigeria. As IT expert he voluntarily designed and developed an application for the Cameroon General Certificate Examination (GCE) Board for the automation of operations of the examination, from the registration to the production of results. He worked tirelessly with Azong Wara and Matthew Akoko, the pioneer registrar and deputy registrar of the GCE Board respectively; he accomplished this astounding task of delivering the revolutionary software on time at no business cost to the newly created organization.⁷⁵

In 2015, following his distinguished academic and professional achievements as well as his philanthropic work, his family, village and the custodians of Manyu culture invited him and conferred upon him the utmost title and responsibility awarded to a son of that land who had washed his hands clean, the title of “Sesekou⁷⁶”. This enormous responsibility and veneration is only bestowed upon the honourable and visionaries. It was not long after that he was made the chair of the Governing Council of the Southern Cameroons/Ambazonia Consortium United Front (SCUF) and later was elected the Chair of the Ambazonia Governing Council during the third conclave which ended in Nigeria on July 10, 2017, due to his leadership skills and commitment to the Southern Cameroons cause. Sesekou Ayuk Tabe was subsequently elected as the President of the Interim Government of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia. Following his “Takumbeng call”, on September 22, 2017, there were worldwide and widespread demonstrations in the English-speaking regions led by women, with peace plants chanting patriotic songs for the release of their people detained due to the crisis and demanding for freedom and the restoration of the former Southern Cameroons State.

These peaceful demonstrations were met with fiercely brutality by the National Security and Defense Forces of the country. On that day, Sesekou and many leaders of the struggle accompanied the “Takumbengs” in a mammoth demonstration in front of the United Nations headquarters in New York City, United States of America.

On the 22nd September 2017 and October 1, 2017, Sesekou Tabe led the people of former Southern Cameroons to reclaim their freedom by declaring independence and naming

⁷⁵ Interview with Akem Etienne, 59 Years High School Teacher, Government High School, Malende-Muyuka, Kumba, September 12, 2020.

⁷⁶ “Sesekou” also the highest rank in Ekpe or Nyankpe social society in the land of Manyu division.

the country Federal Republic of Ambazonia. Ayuk Tabe got the encourage to pursue the struggle for restoration of the statehood of the former Southern Cameroons when on these days millions of Anglophones took to the streets with peace plants in a symbolic celebration of the independence of a putative Southern Cameroons state christened Ambazonia.⁷⁷ His position as chair of the Governing Council and eventually as president of the Interim Government of Ambazonia took him to many parts of the world. He tours drew the attention of what he called: “the plight of the suffering masses of Southern Cameroons”.⁷⁸ His charisma triggered a sense of identity among Southern Cameroonians, who saw a dedicated and selfless leader.

Plate 11: Sesekou Julius Ayuk Tabe the leader of the Interim Government of the self-proclaimed state of Federal Republic of Ambazonia [2017-2018]



Source: [www.https://images.app.goo.gl](https://images.app.goo.gl)

In the face of all these illegal political excesses, Seseku Ayuk Tabe Julius was abducted from Abuja, Nigeria with eleven members of his leadership team on Friday, February 5, 2018 from a hostel (Nera) recreational park. Ten of them were eventually extradited to Yaounde in total

⁷⁷The name was first coined by a lawyer and political activist Fon Gorji Dinka in 1990, who called on the people North West and South West regions of Cameroon to secede and form a new state known as Ambozonía. Ambozonía was originally derived from the Fako Mountain by the Portuguese merchant Fernando Gomez who arrived in the Bay of Biafra around 1472, during the reign of King Alphonso V of Portugal. He called Fako Mountain today, Mount Amboze; after the indigenes of the region around Buea. It was from here that the name Ambozonía was derived.

⁷⁸ Julius Ayuk Tabe, Self-proclaimed President of Illegal Federal Republic of Ambazonia, An Exclusive Interview with BBC” Focus on Africa”), October 1st 2017

disregard of international law.⁷⁹ They were kept incommunicado for eleven months. They were tried by the Military Court in Yaounde and sentenced on August 20, 2019. They are now serving life sentences at the Kondengui maximum prison Yaounde, Cameroon for treason

At the national scene the reunification equally underwent a serious transformation in 1966 when all political parties in both former British southern Cameroon and former French Cameroons were abolished in 1966 by President Ahmadou Ahidjo to give way to a single party system which created the Cameroon National Union (CNU). The abolition of the multiparty politics in Southern Cameroons was a clear sign that the parliamentary democratic debate that used to characterize Southern Cameroons House of Assembly was brought to an end. The debates handled check and balance which Southern Cameroonians witnessed for close to 50years ended as corruption and embezzlement was the order of the day.

20th May 1972 also witnessed the end of the Federal system of government which was adopted in 1961 during the Foumban constitutional conference of July 1961 in which two states of equal status were created and the union was called the Federal Republic of Cameroon. The Federal system was abolished because it was considered too expensive and full of duplications of functions. It was transformed to a unitary state in 1972 after Referendum. From 1972 therefore, 20th May became the National Day of Cameroon. The government did not consider 1st January 1960 or 1st October 1961 as the National day for the union of Cameroon because they were two independent dates for the two territories of the union. Article 11 of the new constitution stated that, the state of west Cameroon and that of East Cameroon shall become a unitary state to be now called the United Republic of Cameroon (URC).

This was considered as a peaceful revolution because the change of name would have raised agitations from the English speaking Cameroonians but this never happened. Another peaceful revolution took place in February 1984 when President Paul Biya revised the constitution and by the law No.84/1 of February 4th 1984 changed the name of the country from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon. 30years after this modification, this change had been receiving challenges since many people believed that the identity of the English speaking Cameroonians have been completely erased from the union, thus the need to return to the 1961 constitution. The political name changing has been a major born of contention amongst Cameroonians especially between the two partners at the reunification.

⁷⁹ Interview with John Ashu Agbor, in Equinox Television on the programme "Inside", Sunday, February 3rd 2019.

Many Anglophones of Southern Cameroons created Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) which the most vocal leader chief Ayamba came from the former Mamfe Division. The SCNC demanded for an outright separation from Cameroon. Other Anglophone groups argued that, the 1984 law is an attempt to completely assimilate Anglophones into La Republic du Cameroun. The arguments put forward by these groups such as; the All Anglophone conferences I and II stated that French Cameroon at independent 1st of January 1960 was known as La Republic du Cameroon. So, by removing the word 'United' signified that the former British southern Cameroon identity is no longer recognised in the union or Anglophones have been assimilated. Some other Cameroonians also put forward the arguments that, the change of name was just a political evolution to respect the fact that Cameroon had been one under the German administration thus the change of name is just to confirm the oneness of the country.⁸⁰

The unifications of two unequal political entities with diverse and inherited legacies from Great Britain and France coupled with the various diversities needed a carefully formulated internal policy to promote co-existence between Anglophones and Francophones. In this vision, national unity and national integration were formulated and they became options to establish a stable internal state structure for one and indivisible Cameroon.

Another greatest challenge to reunification was National unity and National integration which were introduced by President Ahmadou Ahidjo and Paul Biya respectively to promote internal coercion. For Ahidjo, National unity meant that, all the ethnic groups should live in unity and in peace in such a way that different tribes of ethnic groups would not discriminate amongst themselves. There would be no Ewondo or Bassa, Banyang or Baya, Fulbe nor Ewondo, Bali nor Bangwa, Etong nor Lamso and Bamelike nor Bamum. He was determined to bring together all the tribes or all the ethnic groups to live as one. A nation in which all citizens have the same rights and the same duties, a nation which every citizen wherever he or she is found should feel at home and is considered as brothers, sisters, and fellow compatriots by other citizens of Cameroon and above all have feeling of belonging.

To President Paul Biya, effective national unity could be only being achieved through National integration. To him, National integration is the ultimate start towards National unity and the cardinal, historic task of the highest priority of all Cameroonians. He tried to promote National integration through a promotion of internal migration of Cameroonians by the

⁸⁰ Dze-Ngwa., "A Historical Analysis: 1960-2011 ", pp 11, 12.

construction of road to link one Regional headquarter to the other, one Division to the other, one Sub-Division to other and one village to the other. His vision was to bring administration closer to the people. This has encouraged peaceful co-existence amongst the diverse people of Cameroon over 40years. This policy however has been marred by political hate speech, favouritism, corruption and embezzlement with impunity, which have characterized the government for over 35 years now.

The CNU political party was the unique party in Cameroon from 1966 -1985 when president Biya transformed it to the Cameroon Peoples Democratic Party (CPDM) in Bamenda. This single party politics continued under Biya but it was challenged by external and internal pressure from 1989. The 1990 liberty law was adopted opening the way to several political parties to be formed with the most prominent being the CPDM of President Paul Biya, the Social Democratic Front (SDF) of John Fru Ndi, the National Union for Democracy and Progress (NUDP) of Maigari Bello Bouba, Progressive Movement (MP) of Jean Jacque Ekindi, Cameroon Democratic Union (CDU) of Dr Adamou Dam Njoya, Unions des Populations du Cameroun (UPC) and many others. These parties have contested in most of the major elections in Cameroon since 1990 such as; the March 1992 Parliamentary and Legislative election, the October 1992 Presidential Elections, the 1996 twin elections and 1997 presidential election just to name only these. The results of all these elections have always been opposed by the opposition political party who claim that there is no and independent electoral body to ensure the free and fair election in Cameroon. They accused the government of being a player and the referee at the same time. Again, the political atmosphere in Cameroon has been compounded by regional or ethnically based political party.⁸¹

The CPDM is considered by many as Fang-Beti political party because most of its leaders and sympathizers are coming from that part of Cameroon. SDF the main opposition political party is christened the Anglo-Bami political party. The CDU is considered as the Bamum and the NUDP as the party of the grand North or Hausa/Fulani party. Such realities of Cameroon's political evolution can only increase the fear for the future of the country. It has also helped to discourage economic development because of the fear of the unknown. Apart from secessionist tendencies which unification has witnessed from the North West and South West Region, following the formation of Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC)

⁸¹ Ibid.

which created to restore the statehood of Southern Cameroons and the union is facing other challenges.

There has been equally the growth of what can be termed the micro nationalisms and inter-ethnic rivalries which has also threatened internal cohesion in Cameroon since the beginning of unification. The examples are many e.g. the Bamileke, the Kotoko, the Arab-shua and the Bororo amongst many other ethnic conflicts which has manifested a strong resentment against discrimination, exploitation and marginalisation in Cameroons. Besides, the reunification of the country has also experienced the Sawa, the Beti-Fang and the pygmy problems. The North West- South West divide has also been a major problem that had affected the reunification. The farmer-grazer conflicts and the conflicts over land tenure and limited land in the region had equally been a major problem in the Northern part of Cameroon. This often resulted to intense rivalry among the diverse people of Cameroon. This has also threatened internal cohesion in the country.⁸²

Reunification also witnessed more serious political challenge in April 6, 1984 by the abortive coup d'état against president Biya's regime. This coup d'Etat was organized by the former president Ahmadou Ahidjo who handed power to his presidential successor and later came back to seize it through the coup of April 1984. The reunification has also had electoral tension, civil disobedience and ghost towns in the 1990s which characterized the golden jubilee celebration of the reunification. These crises affected the foundation upon which national unity and national integration was built. In the socio-economic domain, reunification faced a serious economic crisis in the late 1990s leading to increased unemployment, undergraduates and university students left schools without employment, corruption, retrenchment of many civil servants, civil service stopped recruitments into public service, high crime waves etc. if that was not enough that early 1994 the country currency the CFA was devaluated. Civil servants were cut by more than half, prices of primary products such as cocoa, coffee, banana dropped drastically in the world market pushing farmers to cut down their cash crop trees in order to plant short cycle food crops such as cassava, maize pepper and tomatoes. General poverty in the early 1990s was also major social challenges, which push many university graduates to organize strikes in the university campus in which so many students lost their lives.⁸³

February 2008, was equally a more challenging year for the reunification era. There was serious hunger strike for three days. This was due to the persistent increase in the prices

⁸² Dze-Ngwa., "A Historical Analysis : 1960-2011 " , p. 12.

⁸³Ibid

of basic commodities such as bread, soap, rice and kerosene, in short basic human commodities. The economy of Cameroon witnessed a serious setback in 2008. This incident by itself caused President Paul Biya to address the Nation in order to calm the situation.

However, reunification equally witnessed a positive path, Cameroon has remained relatively stable and peaceful compared to all her neighbours like Chad, Central Africa, Gabon and Nigeria. Equally relative peace can also be seen largely due to the wisdom and the political Leadership of the President of the Republic who is a master politician and diplomat who know how to handle issues and to give proper solutions e.g. the Nigerian-Cameroon crisis over Bakassi which ended up with signing of the Green Tree treaty in 2006. The relative peace that existed in Cameroon was also thanks to the non-violent nature of the country main opposition political party SDF leader Ni John Fru Ndi who exhibited the high sense of patriotism and the culture of peace after the 1992 presidential election which he claimed to have won and the victory was stolen by the ruling party. The peace that characterized the 50 years of reunification could also be attributed to the peace loving nature Cameroonians who despite the odds were able to hold their peace and to respect the state institutions and their leaders. In the domains of social, during the 50 years of reunification eight (8) state universities were created; in Bamenda, Buea, Dschang, Douala, Garoua, Ngaoundere, Bertoua, the Yaounde 1 & 2 and of recent time Ebolowa was added later. Thousands of primary, secondary and professional schools were opened all over the country. President Biya instituted scholarship for students in state and private universities and professional schools in order to promote excellence. These scholarships were known as “President Biya Excellent Award”. Private universities were also given the opportunity to operate all over the national territory.⁸⁴

It was thanks to reunification that major roads linking the major towns in French Cameroon with those in the English speaking regions were constructed. Some of major roads were tarred. Reunification had led to the construction of the Trans-African high ways linking Cameroon to Nigeria over 203Km-long Cameroon section, two projects—the 5Km Numba-Bachuo-Akaghe road improvement project and 151Km multinational Transport Facilitation Project on the Bamenda-Mamfe-Ekok/Mfum-Abakaliki-Enugu Corridor. Kumba-Mamfe. Road improvement 150Km to link the port of Douala with the South West Region and Nigeria.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Independent Development Evaluation, African Development Bank Cameroon: Country Strategy and Program Evaluation 2004-2013, June 2015, p.14.

The Impact of Anglophone Crisis on Manyu Division

The Anglophone crisis had enormous socio-political and economic effects on the people of Manyu division. In November 2017, armed separatists in the town of Kembong located in the Manyu Division of the Southwest region killed at least six state forces, changing the narrative of the Anglophone crisis. What began in the last quarter of 2016 as peaceful protests by Anglophone activists against perceived marginalization by Cameroon's Francophone-dominated elite turned out to be a protracted armed conflict. The secessionists declared an independent state called Ambazonia on October 1, 2017. Since then, at least 50,000 people have fled to Nigeria, including 2,300 who fled in a single day on December 4, 2017, fearing government reprisals after raids by separatist militants killed at least six soldiers and police officers.⁸⁶

There was destruction of property, arrest, detention of masses and killing of civilians. For instance, the gruesome assassination of the Mayor of Mamfe Council, Ashu Priestley Ojong, as he travelled to his home village of Eshobi on Sunday May 10, 2020. The Thirty-four years old Mayor was killed by armed groups suspected to be Separatists of the armed conflict in Cameroon. It was reported that he was accompanied by some members of the Defence Force who survived the attack after receiving treatment in a hospital in Mamfe. He was just about four months in office; he was elected a Mayor on February 9, 2020.⁸⁷

In a radio announcement, the Senior Divisional Officer for Manyu Division revealed that separatists are threatening to disturb public order on October 1, 2021. In a bid to foil the plans of separatist militia active in the area, Oum II Joseph the SDO for Mamfe informed the population of restrictions to nightlife among other measures until October 4, 2021. The circulation of motorbikes, private and inter-urban transport vehicles is proscribed from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am daily that started from Wednesday, September 29 and ended on October 4, 2021, the SDO. Oum II Joseph said drinking spots and off-licenses were to remain close between 6 pm and 6 am each day from Thursday, September 30, 2021, to Saturday, October 2, 2021.

According to the senior civil administrator, all unauthorized gatherings as well as processions on the highway on October 1, 2021, were banned. "These measures aimed at ensuring public order might be lifted on Monday, October 4, 2021, by 6 am. The measures

⁸⁶K. Nkonmenyui, *Cameroon Tribune*, National Daily, No. 2345, 24th February, 2017, pp. 34-35.

⁸⁷Interview with Edward Besong Tabe, 54 Years, History Teacher, Government High School Mamfe, Mamfe, 12th November 2021.

shall be strictly respected by all. ‘The SDO’s measures went along way to paralyse socio-political and economic activities, and the movement of people and their property. The armed conflict in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon, goes without saying that, it brought untold sufferings not only to the people of Manyu division but to the rest of the people in these two regions.

Partial Solutions to Anglophone Problem

However, the government made some moves towards reaching a lasting solution to the Anglophone problem. The first step was the 1996 constitutional amendment that prescribed some measure of decentralization intended to counter the return to federalism sought by the Anglophones.⁸⁸ It called for the transformation of the provinces into regions that went operational in 2008 with little or no autonomy. Further decentralization was recommended for Municipal Councils. Although it still needed better practical implementation, it was seen as a decisive step towards some Anglophone demands. This too had not yielded any fruit to the Anglophone Problem, but rather it had satisfied a few people who benefited much from it.

The government made some educational concessions intended to pacify the Anglophones. In 1993, an Anglo-Saxon University was created in Buea. The creation of this University reduced the number of strikes, demonstrations and boycott of classes by Students at the Mother University of Yaounde. Still in 1993, the Government promulgated an order creating the Anglophone General Certificate of Education (GCE) examination Board. In 2010, the University of Bamenda was created and the second Cycle of Higher Teachers’ Training College Bambili went operational.

In November 1995, Cameroon was admitted into the Commonwealth of Nations. This partially indicated the bi-cultural nature of the country after the earlier entry into the Francophonie. Commonwealth members warded off Anglophone criticisms of Cameroon’s presence in the Francophonie. The admission of Cameroon into the Commonwealth came after opposition from traditional rulers of the Bamenda grassland during the visit of the Secretary General of the “Gentlemen Club” Chief Emeka Anyaoku in 1993.⁸⁹ The Fons stressed that no federation no admission of Cameroon into the Commonwealth of Nations. This was one of the grievances of English-speaking Cameroon; therefore, the visit of Chief Emeka as their peer was an opportunity for them to make their voices heard. They also demanded the

⁸⁸ Cameroon Post, No.170, June 1997,p.5.

⁸⁹ Ngoh, History of Cameroon Since 1800, pp..320.-323.

implementation of the 1991 Harare Declaration before admission into the Gentlemen's Club. All these measures were intended to partially satisfy some of the Anglophone grievances.

The overall problems of the Anglophones are the Anglophones themselves. The unidentified and unsolved Anglophone problem can be blamed on the division among the Anglophones. The failure of chiefs and members of the elite to create a unified front has made the problem to persist. Therefore, Anglophone chiefs and political elites must bury their differences and work for a common interest of the regions. They must put national interest ahead of personal interest. To solve the problem, we suggest an inclusive dialogue to preserve our traditional values in our two systems. Only dialogue would be the way out of the crisis.

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated how the political, cultural, economic and social impact of the reunification influenced the activities of the political elite, chiefs and the ordinary people of Manyu Division. The chapter also examined the challenges faced within the context of the union between the former Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon. We equally discussed some of the reasons that prompted the people of Mamfe and other divisions of the former Southern Cameroons to start challenging the union they voted for the plebiscite in 1961. The manifestations of this challenge were demonstrated and presented in what is now known as the Anglophone problem. By and large, we argued that reunification has been challenged due to the fact either that the terms were never or were only partially respected as was as to bad governance.

GENERAL CONCLUSION AND PERSPECTIVES

This is a recapitulation of the work that highlights the main findings of the study and the viewpoints of the researcher. The study revealed that reunification was highly acclaimed by the people of Mamfe/Manyu Division in 1961. But in later years it was disclaimed by some people in the division. This is obvious because each generation set up its own agenda and follows it. The people of Manyu accepted reunification because of the maltreatment they received from the Igbos of Nigeria. They thought that by joining their so-called brothers in the Republic of Cameroon, they would be liberated from the bondage they suffered in the hands of the people of Eastern Region of Nigeria. But to their greatest dismay, they realized that the Republic of Cameroon was not different from Nigeria they had avoided. In the face of this, they started agitating and demanding for a separate political entity for their former Southern Cameroons.

The Highlights

The study brings to light that reunification for the inhabitants of Mamfe/Manyu Division was a mixed blessing. This was so because the people to a lesser extent benefited from the fallouts of the process. But to a greater extent they suffered from its consequences. We shall first look at the positive aspects on the people of Manyu Division.

Reunification contributed to the eventual abandonment of the two state federation and led to the creation of seven new provinces. The provincial headquarters helped the rapid growth of towns. The creation of more divisions and of Sub Divisions also led to the emergence of new towns in the division including among others Eyumojock as headquarters of the Eyumojock Sub Division, Akwaya in the Akwaya Sub Division, Besongabang in the Mamfe Central sub division; as well as Tinto that became a town because it became the headquarters of the Upper Banyang Sub Division in 1992. Thus, the creation of new divisions and sub-divisions helped to bring administration close to the people.

The unitary state made it easier for farmers and traders to move easily across the former states and sell their products. West Cameroon companies such as Nangah Company established branches in Douala and Yaounde and made gains through public contracts. Churches in West Cameroon like the Baptist and Presbyterian and those in former East Cameroon were implanted in all parts of the country. Musicians, football players, and others easily moved across the former states and promoted their know how.

There was improvement in the salaries of Civil Servants of Manyu and others in the English-speaking areas of former West Cameroon. A single national salary was established for all civil

servants in Cameroon and that led to an increase in the income of the former West Cameroon civil Servants, which also became very regular. West Cameroonians gained job opportunities in the former East Cameroon state since they excelled a lot in fields like medicine, engineering, accountancy and law.

Reunification accelerated the development of transport and communication infrastructures. Ahidjo reinforced the links between the North West Province and the West Province as well as between the South West and the Littoral by constructing good roads and providing good telephone services that brought Anglophones and Francophones closer together and thus consolidating national unity. All these promoted the development of transport and communication.

The creation of National Investment Corporation (SNI) and activities promoted development. The West Cameroon Electricity Corporation (POWERCAM), which provided electricity in the former state was replaced by SONEL that provided electricity all over the territory. National Water Corporation (SNEC) was also established to supply water all over Cameroon. Instead of having agricultural shows at the level of the states, it became a national event that was launched in Buea in 1973. These national activities were operated at very low costs and also gave people opportunities to serve at the national level.

One important decision at the Founban Conference was the adoption of English and French as two official national languages. After reunification the French language became important in West Cameroon and English in East Cameroon. The creation of government bilingual primary and secondary schools in some divisions and subdivisions transformed some Manyu people and Anglophones generally to become bilingual. With their bilingualism they could work effectively anywhere in Cameroon, the world, especially in the United States of America, Britain and France.

Reunification and subsequently the Unitary State in 1972 provided an opportunity for the West Cameroon state to be partitioned into two provinces called the North West and the South West. This partition helped to reduce the domination of the minority coastal and forest people of the South West by the grassland migrants who were in the majority. Tension of victimization was reduced since each province, (later region in 2008) following the putting in place of the 1996 Constitution gave rise to some sort of quasi autonomous to regions. The ten regions were operating independently.

Despite the positive aspects of reunification on the people of Manyu Division and of former Southern Cameroons, generally many aspects affected the people negatively. The reunification arrangement that instituted federalism was a clear manifestation of foresight and good intentions by the architects. It was initiated to avoid political struggles, which might result in bitterness between Southern Cameroonians and inhabitants of La Republique du Cameroun. But the arrangement was unfortunately disregarded by President Ahmadou Ahidjo in 1972, occasioning a legal and political dispute which spilled over from the 1990s and was continuing. This violation of the federal system provided grounds for the restoration of the Southern Cameroons nationhood according to the people of Manyu and some former Southern Cameroonians.

Reunification began to be rejected by some people in Manyu and other parts of former Southern Cameroonians because its terms were not respected by the government in power. The country was changed from the Federal Republic to United Republic after the 20th May 1972 referendum. As if that was not enough, in February 1984 the name again changed to the Republic of Cameroon, the name French Cameroon got at independence. This last change technically excluded former Southern Cameroons that by implication become an annexation in the Republic.

The three governments of East, West and Federation were replaced by a single national government in Yaounde. The posts of Prime Minister and Secretaries of State in the former states were abolished. The President was given wider powers in Yaoundé. In 1975 the post of Vice President was brought back but as a new national prime minister. Initially designed to be held by an English speaking person, it was now given to a French speaking Cameroonians. Anglophones were relegated and marginalised in this new dispensation.

The country also witnessed a drastic change in the administrative structure with the appointment of governors at the head of the provinces. The East Cameroon state was transformed into five Provinces the Central South with capital in Yaounde, Littoral with headquarters in Douala, West with headquarters in Bafoussam, East with headquarters in Bertoua and the North with headquarters in Garoua. The West Cameroon state was also divided into two Provinces. The North West with headquarters in Bamenda and the South West with capital in Buea. Each Province was headed by a governor appointed by the President. In October 1983 the number of provinces increased from seven to ten. New divisions, subdivisions and districts were created. All these greatly transformed the political and administrative map of Cameroon.

The country's legislative systems was restructured following the abolition of the former four assemblies, and a single National Assembly was established in Yaounde. The only reason advanced by the authority for the abolition of federalism was that the system was too expensive and cumbersome. Unfortunately, the number of seats in the National Assembly rose dramatically from fifty to one hundred then one hundred and twenty and later to one hundred and eighty since the abolition of the federal system of government. This does not include the Senate of one hundred seats as the upper legislative assembly.

The unitary system led to the decline of some towns in West Cameroon. A good example were Mamfe and Buea towns. Mamfe declined in its function as a junction and commercial town of West Cameroon and Buea declined from the second most important town in Cameroon (because the town was the headquarters of German Kamerun, Southern Cameroons and West Cameroon) to a provincial capital. Kumba also declined as the economic capital of West Cameroon due to reunification that resulted to over concentration of economic activities in Douala.

The reunification led to the closure of POWERCAM and the Yoke power station which provided cheap and regular electricity, more than SONEL which was created to replace it. The Yoke power was abandoned and resources wasted simply because Ahidjo wanted to absorb the people of West Cameroon in the new unitary system. The establishment of unitary state made all civil servants in Cameroon to be directly controlled from Yaounde. That led to absenteeism, dishonesty and lack of dynamism of workers in the civil service because they could only be sanctioned from Yaounde.

The reunification caused the destruction of the equal status between East and West Cameroon states which was defined in the Founban Constitution of 1961. Seven provinces were created and out of the seven, only two were carved out in West Cameroon and all the provinces had equal status. In this light, a strong central government was established in Yaounde which made it easier for the assimilation of Anglophones. The national structures which were created discriminated against Anglophones and they were given very few responsibilities.

Doubtless to say that proponents of reunification had a hidden agenda to assimilate the whole area of former Southern Cameroons to La Republique du Cameroun. The Founban constitution that put in place the reunification was changed in 1972 not because there were good reasons to do that but because Ahidjo was power thirsty. The birth of the single political party CNU in 1966 made him ever more than before anxious to concentrate all powers into his hands

There is no gain-saying that the disrespect of the Federal Constitution altered the rules in the Presidency at the expense of former West Cameroon. In 1961, the president and his successor had to come from the two different states but in 1979, the constitution was amended and this enabled the Prime Minister, a Francophone to succeed the president. The President was Ahidjo and the Prime Minister was Paul Biya. Both of them came from the former East Cameroon state. This made it difficult for an Anglophone, especially from Manyu Division to become president. This contributed to the destruction of parliamentary democracy in former West Cameroon. The West Cameroon House of Chiefs was dissolved; the spirit of debates that characterized discussions in the parliament was killed.

The French legal system penetrated the former West Cameroon state. This did not guarantee liberty and justice and there was a lot of abuse of human rights in the former West Cameroon state after the establishment of a unitary state system. In Manyu Division, many elites took advantage of weak justice system to create confusion in the chieftaincy institution and land tenure issues. This was because of police and gendarmes who have no respect for human rights were transferred to work in former West Cameroon.

The closure of Mamfe Central Farmers' Co-operative Society (MACEFCOOP) that provided employment opportunity to a good number of people was highly condemned by many in the division. Moreover, the transferred of companies from former West Cameroon to Douala such as Produce Marketing Organisation (PMO) was seen by the people of Manyu as a sign of bad faith on the part of the government. These companies were mismanaged because the people put to run them had little or no idea on co-operative management. Besides, Anglophones were not given opportunity to manage the National Produce Marketing Board created for the whole nation. This caused some people in Manyu Division to feel cheated in the reunification arrangement and became disgruntled with the government.

Natural resources like timber were exploited from forests in the division and the impact was not being felt by the people as the roads in the division remained un tarred. Petroleum product was exploited from Victoria in former West Cameroon in order to develop projects in former East Cameroon such as the building of the presidential palace at Etoudi in Yaounde; the construction of a synthetic stadium and an international airport in Garoua; the construction of television station in Yaounde; the building of university centres in Ngaoundere, Douala and Dschang; the construction of roads like Maroua-Ngaoundere, Douala-Yaounde and Bafoussam-Bamenda roads. Meanwhile, projects which had been in the development plan of former West Cameroon such as Kumba-Mamfe road, Mamfe-Bamenda road and the building of a university

centre in Buea were neglected for a long time. Although companies had been operating in former West Cameroon, they had been paying their taxes rather in former East Cameroon e.g. SONARA pays taxes in Douala.

The French educational system penetrated in Manyu division and in the former West Cameroon and destroyed the quality of training in technical and secondary schools. French language became the main language of instruction in the Universities at the expense of former West Cameroon. Since the people of Manyu and others of Anglophone extraction were not given opportunity to train as teachers in the lone Advanced Technical Teachers' Training College (ENSET) Douala. Few technical colleges and Rural Artisan Training Centres (SAR/ S M) created were managed and taught by teachers of Francophones extraction. Sometime the teaching/ learning process was done in Pidgin language. It should be recalled that this was the principal cause of November 21, 2016 uprising in the English-Speaking regions in Cameroon

Still in the social front, reunification resulted in the suppression of some of the good health habits of the people. Before reunification the people were aware that cleanliness is next to godliness. This arrangement brought people of different cultures together resulting to conflict of hygiene. Public hygiene in most of the towns declined because the sanitary inspectors became powerless. Instead of towns being kept clean daily, campaigns were launched for monthly cleaning of towns. Towns became poorly planned, poor streets and houses ceased to be numbered in Manyu division.

The collapsed of federal system which was one of the instruments that encouraged the reunification between Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon, made the purpose of the arrangement almost meaningless. The putting in place of the unitary system of government rather made Civil Service to become very corrupt and inefficient as workers had to abandon their job to go and chase documents in Yaounde. The forces of law and order became much undisciplined and corrupt leading to increase in crime waves. Manyu people and the rest of Anglophones copied the laissez-faire lifestyle of Francophone and they became very in disciplined too.

A Changed was made on the National flag in which two stars on the green colour which signified the two federal states was moved to a single star on the red colour to signify unity, one and indivisible. The people of Manyu Division saw this action as way for the power that be to wipe out the identity of former Southern Cameroonians. Further, with only one star there was nothing to show prove that it was two countries that came together as one in 1961. They argued

that if the government was out to promote harmonization, they would have selected relics from both Cameroons and not only from one part of Cameroon and that of another neglected.

The federal constitution was considered a handicap to the rapid development in Cameroons. According to the detractor to this system of government, this form of government, gave room for threats of secession. This is a wrong representation of federalism, rather, the actual reasons was that, the government in place is not interested to have the federal system of government apply in Cameroon. This explains why a bad name was given to kill it, that it was too expensive to be run and that it never ensured a greater degree of national integration. However, proponents of federalism hold that it offers rapid development due to high level competition it embraces, encourages personal initiatives, kills the spirit of embezzlement and contains no elements of secession if the minority right is guaranteed because even under a republic secession is still feasible if things are not done rightly.

After serious investigation the following revelations were revealed:

Mamfe Division was very rich geographically and human back grounds of the Mandate and Trusteeship periods encouraged the Igbos and others in Nigeria to migrate in the division.

Mamfe actors contributed enormous to the reunification process accepted, the holding of plebiscite conferences, formation of associations, political parties and the participation in the plebiscite election to push on the idea of reunification.

Mamfe/Manyu Division hosted very important conferences in prelude to the UN conducted plebiscite such as the Opinion conference of May 1953 and the plebiscite conference of August 1959.

Mamfe Division became known as Manyu Division was subjected to central control and not any more state power control. During these periods part of the Mamfe Division was detached and named Lebialem Division. The study reveals that the people were pushed into local government organs of development and in cultural associations that permitted them to contribute to the progress of their division.

Our findings reveal reunification brought far-reaching effects on Mamfe /Manyu Division. It created a long lasting conflict between the supporters of reunification and non-supporters of reunification. This adversely affected the chieftaincy institution of the division.

In the nutshell, our investigation proves that, the negative impact of reunification in Mamfe/ Manyu outweighs the positive.

Perspectives

From our findings, the present regime in Cameroon did forget the important role the people of Manyu played prior to the reunification of Cameroon. In 1961 this people helped enormously to facilitate the coming of a new federal state of a reunified Cameroon. But after reunification, the people were gradually relegated to the background. In order for it to bounce back into the limelight and take back its place in politics, the people of Manyu decided to be aggressive towards the authorities and institutions in place.

The notion of legitimacy in politics is based on the extent to which citizens accept and follow the decisions made by the authorities. People accept authority when they accept their decisions as legitimate. Legitimacy is therefore an important mechanism that links people with authority. Force can be used to ensure compliance with laws if necessary, but the use of force has to be based on the rule of law for it to be legitimate. In democratic states, the legitimacy of the state and its leaders is derived from electoral processes and the legal systems that structured decision-making processes. Citizens elect leaders on a regular basis and they can be voted out if they do not adequately satisfy the citizenry. Constitutions and laws build the environment of decision-making. Democracy is accepted because of the equal participation of the citizens.

Though citizens might not accept all the decisions from the authorities, they accept the authorities as legitimate decision-makers. This is an important distinction because it does not matter what citizens think about each issue as much as whether or not they view the institutions and authorities as legitimate. If people do not accept the decision-making process as legitimate, they will not accept a decision that does not correspond with their own preferences. The consequence of this will be that they will act on their own behalf, irrespective of the decision of the authorities.

If a large number of citizens disobey the authority, then such an authority lacks legitimacy. The result will be uprisings, revolts, or at the individual level, unlawful behaviour and disobedience. It is important that people view the decision-makers as legitimate because they have limited authority to enforce compliance. If citizens accept the manner in which decisions are made, they will likely accept the decisions even if they do not agree with them. The element of belief is therefore important in politics.

Legitimacy could be linked to the challenges that the reunification arrangement was faced in Cameroon. The leaders that sealed this arrangement in 1961 were legitimate. In the face of this, both citizens of Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon were bound to

accept the reunification arrangement whether they wanted it or not. In 1972 the arrangement was modified through a referendum. Since the authority was legitimate the decision was not openly condemned. If the arrangement is being contested today, it could be because citizens no longer consider reunification and the arrangement as legitimate.

The people of Manyu Division in 1961 were a political force to reckon within the matters of reunification. They stood firmly and defended the issue of reunification without fear or favour. This was evident when some elites and chiefs of Manyu reduced their political support for Dr. E.M.L. Endeley who was the Leader of Government Business in the Southern Cameroons. The reason for their attitude is that, he went against the original objective of the (KNC) of separation of Southern Cameroons from Nigeria and to move towards reunification to integration with Nigeria. This action pushed the people of Mamfe Division away from his Leadership and party.

This change of political support started during the 1957 elections when KNC defeated the KNDP with just a slight majority during 1959 elections, the elites and chiefs finally turned their backs against Endeley who lost the elections with a slight margin to Foncha who stood for reunification. This is evident that the Mamfe/Manyu electorates was for reunification. They never pretended to the authorities, but sincerely voted for reunification.

On the other hand, a few elites and chiefs who never favoured the reunification arrangement did not hide their feelings. They officially demanded a separate political entity for Southern Cameroons from UN through the CCC political party when their option was not accepted; they neither gave up nor became aggressive in the face of all the threats. This is an important virtue that politicians should learn from the elites and chiefs of Manyu Division. Politician should also be resilient, truthful, determine and courageous in politics.

It should be recalled that during their political campaign in Wum, the leader of the CCC party, Chief Nyenti Eyong and some of his militants escaped assassination an attempt from the supporters of KNDP. But since they had political ambitions in which they wanted to accomplish, they never gave up. Politicians should not create political parties or join the ruling party for selfish interest, but they should do so in order to fight for the interest of their people.

Manyu and Cameroonians should adopt a peaceful way of making political, economic and socio-cultural demands. The people must put aside lies and intimidation and embrace dialogue as the acceptable way to achieve objectives. This is a good panacea for the country's democracy. American President Bill Clinton once said that "There is nothing wrong with

America that cannot be cured by what is right with Americans,” So also does this apply to Cameroon. Cameroonians learn to provide solutions to our internal problems plaguing us ourselves.

From another perspective, politicians like other citizens are supposed to have dreams and visions for their Fatherland, It is said, “what an elder sees when sitting cannot be seen by the young while standing”. It should be recalled that some elites of old Southern Cameroons foresaw a number of administrative inconveniences that awaited either the reunification Cameroons with the Republic of Cameroon or integration with the Federal Republic of Nigeria. If thought was given to the Third Option, issue like marginalization, domination and Anglophone problem would have been naturally avoided. Thus, ‘Ambazonians’ activists would not be crying over spilt milk. They should like what they have.

It is difficult to reverse history in order to correct the wrongs of the past. People should rather learn from errors of the past in order to have a better future. The mistakes of the Southern Cameroons politicians who failed to support the option of a separate state for the territory is not easy to be corrected now. Leaders of the ‘Ambazonia’ pressure group should rather strongly press for an inclusive and unconditional dialogue with the government to look into their grievances and provided acceptable solutions. For conflict is part and parcel of man but the way we perceive it is what matters.

When we talk about conflict, we mean a state of disharmony, a state of conflict can also be a state of open and profound fighting. It can also be a serious disagreement or difference of opinion difference between ideas, between interests, between beliefs. Those differences therefore make togetherness difficult. When unity is made difficult conflicts can be individual; when you cannot decide on what you want to do. i.e. suffering from indecision, conflict of priority. Conflict is a contradiction arising from difference in interest, ideas, ideologies, orientations and precipitous tendencies. Conflict is real, part of life and cannot be sanctioned from society. As groups, ethnic communities, there is bound to be conflict.

The potential for conflict exist in aspect of human life. Most broadly, conflict occurs when two or more parties, whether as groups, countries have or when they perceive that they can have incompatible goals or interest. This of incompatibility shapes the behaviour of countries towards each other. Conflict gives rise to the historical equation: FF = F, FE = E, EF = E and EE = F . Where; F = Friend and E = Enemy (birds of same feathers flock together and vice versa). These were the wise words of Professor Fanson in his Master 2 Course Work on “Conflict Resolution” 2011, which we borrowed to give out for leaders to use in settling

conflicts all over the world. Especially in Africa and in Cameroon where socio-political differences is the order of the day. Many people think of conflict as intrinsically negative. Conflict typically emerged from real issues and seemingly contradictory interest. This reveals the underlying problems that should be looked into so that harmony can be re-established

The way people respond to conflicts makes the difference between it being catalyst for war or base for harmony. It can make source for destruction or construction. Some people respond to conflict by trying to avoid it. People respond to it by saying that there is no conflict. Other people respond to conflict by using violence or aggression against those they feel are blocking their goals. Some may want to negotiate. This negotiation may lead to strong relationships. The way people respond to it can become a curse or a blessing. When people respond positively it removes fear, anger and hatred. Conflict can help to transform a situation into a helpful or unhelpful depending on the way we respond to it.

Conflict is entwined with the process of change. What causes conflict is stable, fix but it is unknown until need of it arises. E.g. Bakassi had been there ever since 1884. Conflict can be embraced as a way of helping to change a social situation, as a way of bringing about justice. Conflict usually brings out to public problems that are being ignored or suppressed. When there is conflict it sometimes achieved through the use of arms which is not the best. In many systems, there also a long tradition of peaceful protest. There are tradition of non-violent protest and historically, we have instances of civil society activism as a powerful source of peace process. We can have instances of non-violence demonstration. This was the case with Mahatma Gandhi who paved the way for a peaceful decolonization of Asia. Martin Luther King Junior also fought against racism and black civil rights movement in the US we also have Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandala ending apartheid in South Africa. Many civil society organization did not aim at preventing conflict, instead they seek to prevent war. They know that the consequences of war are more devastating than those of a mere conflict. This is particular so, because whether it is ethnic, national, civil or international, the consequences are always on the civil society. They fight where the stakes are high. i.e. in town and cities. In most wars 75% of casualties are the civil society-conflicts so not displace people but wars do displace

War is organized fighting with weapons and between two or more groups of countries. It is used of armed forces between rival groups within and without the country. The question of origin of conflict can be found in the context of the origin of war. The origin of war came after conflict. Conflict leads to war. War may also be an inescapable part of human genetic heritage. Because war has been traced back even in pre-human past, pre civilization society. Animals

also fight conflict of interest. What we call real warfare is organized fighting. It did not exist before the rise of civilization. This is because the way of fighting of pre-civilized people did not resemble what we call war today. In pre-civilized societies very few people were killed; they fought to capture people and increase their growth. War was fun, war brings five things: killing, missing, displacement, lose property and injured.

However, the way forward for the current socio-political conflict in the two English Speaking regions of Cameroon hangs on a proper judgment. The dispute between some former West Cameroonians who call themselves “separatists” and the government of the Republic of Cameroon has paradoxically reasserted and reaffirmed the original *raison d’être* of the federal system of government. We urge both parties to go back to the negotiation table and look at the 1961 federal constitution. It would serve a useful purpose if the belligerents understand that for as long as different divides about the present form of state in Cameroon, continue to exist conflict will continue to exist. The constitution needs to be amended in a manner that would ensure a flexible interpretation, taking due consideration of political exigencies.

The people of Manyu Division voted 33,267 in favour of reunification during the 1961 plebiscite as against 10,050 votes for integration. If of late, they are the first to stand against reunification, then there is something wrong somewhere that must be corrected. That is why we think that (for the sake of peace) the government of Cameroon should organize another referendum like the one in 1972 to seek the opinion of the entire people of present day North West and South West Regions about decentralized unitary state or about the form government. We are proposing that the government with immediate effect should organize a sincere and inclusive dialogue. This should have been a good basis for negotiation rather than going to “war” over a political matter. We are not ignorant of the forces that probably did not give dialogue a chance. This speculation have been on for quite some time and until this is sincerely accepted, the “Decentralized Unitary State” will remain meaningless to many people in the former Southern Cameroons.

The abolition of the federal system of government in 1972 divided Cameroonians into two undesirable and incompatible groups that would continue to flex political muscles. We have already lived the nightmare of functioning without the federal structure because of lack of foresight and personal interest. If something is not done and done fast, the country runs the risk of facing unintended consequences. Democracy in Cameroon not be an end in itself, but a means of solving the country’s problems through dialogue, debates and consensus-building.

The present global situation is that of devolution of political and management powers to the people.

A revision of the constitution and reinstatement of the federal system of government in Cameroon would ensure the protection of minority English Speaking Cameroonians. The protection of the minority is an important element in a democratic society. Today, the holders of a democratic mandate need to enjoy support from the people. They must justify this mandate by meeting the development aspirations of the electorate. There is need to modify the term of office for the president of the republic from seven years renewable as many times as possible to five years renewable once. Like in United States of America, no matter how good an individual might be, he/she should be given only two opportunities to be at the helm of the state. This would give greater opportunity for a wide spectrum of the population to exercise presidential power. The post of president should rotate between the two former states of West Cameroon and East Cameroon neither of which should be regarded as major or minor state. In this way, the complaint of an outright political and economic domination by Francophones and the marginalization of Anglophones would be a thing of the past.

The buildings that hosted the plebiscite conferences prior to reunification in Mamfe/Manyu Division and elsewhere in the country should to be renovated and protected as heritage centres. For example, the “Reading Room” near the Motor Park in Mamfe. The Reunification Monument at the round-about in Mamfe town, like the one in Yaounde and the monument of the fiftieth anniversary of reunification in Buea need to be renovated and protected. This would go a long way to show proof that reunification was reality and still alive.

We recommend the institution and celebration of the “National Day of Reunification” on the 1st October each year. This is because it was on that day that the reunification arrangement was sealed in Buea. This should replace the celebration of the Unitary State on May 20th each year as the national day. October 1st, is more significant in the history of Cameroon than May 20th. If this proposal is granted, the people of former Southern Cameroons in general, and Manyu Division in particular would once again identify themselves with their Francophones counterparts and believe that they have a place in the reunified Cameroon.

There is quest for the reinstatement of the abandoned Mamfe (Besongabang) and Bali airports that facilitated the movement of people and their property from the peripheries to the nation’s administrative and economic capitals. Outside Manyu division, even more serious was the closing down of Tiko International Airport to the advantage of Douala. There was growing suspicion that the intention was to make Anglophones more economically dependent on the

Francophones. The putting in place of these structures will help to reaffirm the confidence of English speaking Cameroonians in the regime in place. See appendix 4 on the Petition from Ayuk Etaiyak Union, Besongabang, Mamfe Division to UN Visiting Mission 1952.

The strong desire of some Manyu and other Southern Cameroonians to press for restoration of federal state (and some even demanding a separate state from the Republic of Cameroon) should soften the hearts of the leaders to call for a ceasefire and an end to the on-going conflict in the North West and South West Regions. This should not be seen as a sign of weakness on the part of the government, but as a sign of greatness and political maturity. One more death is too much. “Let history judge and condemn a man for taking decision and making mistakes than posterity not forgiving him for failing to take decisions.” Let the leaders also be guided by the philosophy of the legendary Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria who spoke of the “penalties of leadership”. That is the performance of any leader is never been good enough; when you expect applause from the people that is when you receive insults and stones.

Many Southern Cameroonians before 1961 plebiscite cherished unification with the French Cameroon. The path in which unification later on took, caused even those who were consider the father of unification to express their regret almost fifty years after. This regret was expressed by Foncha in December 1994 when he said, “I can state here and now that the people of Southern Cameroons would never have voted in for unification if it had not been for the assurances given that the resulting union would take the form of federation.” The foregoing analyses have established that the perception of the people of Manyu as concerned reunification was positive, but became negative due to the fact that the terms agreed to before reunification were never respected to the latter. The people of Manyu constituted the “axis of peace” and have always played politics without fratricidal quarrels. This is verifiable from their political history. For this reputation to be maintained, much diplomacy is needed to understand and get along with the people of Manyu. The peace loving inhabitants of this division could not suddenly turn into the “arc of crisis” for nothing.

SOURCES CONSULTED

A) Primary Sources

Oral Sources

Name	Age	Status	Place	Date
Abunaw Rose Makia Agbor	60 Years	Educationist and Former Parliamentarian	Mamfe	15 th Jul. 2016
Achere Lucy Tabe	56 years	Farmer	Ntenako	20 th Oct. 2017
Agbor Ebot Emmanuel	60 Years	Farmer	Fotabe	19 th Nov. 2016
Agbor Ekuri Emelia	76 Years	Farmer	Agborkem Waterfall	2 nd May 2017
Agbor Enow James	58 Years	Teacher	Bachuo-Ntai	31 st Aug. 2017
Agbor Simon	65 Years	Retired Educationist	Ntenako	13 th Aug. 2017
Agboraya Joseph	66 Years	Farmer	Ntenako	13 th Aug. 2018
Anu Gladys	52 years	Business woman	Yaounde	7 th Sep. 2019
Arrey Egbe Nelson	60 Years	Educationist	Yaounde	2 nd Aug. 2016
Arrey Mboh Eyong	48 years	Military woman	Yaounde	21 st Oct.2018
Arrey Otang Raymond	55 Years	Businessman and the Chief of Ntenako Village	Limbe	18 th Aug. 2016
Ashu Eyong Peter	64 Years	Military Officer	Nchang	16 th Oct. 2018
Ashu Newu Andrew	74 Years	Farmer	Bachuo-Ntai	25 th Mar. 2018
Ashu Lilian	51 Years	Engineer	Buea	19 th Feb.2018
Assonganyi Ida	58 years	Jury	Buea	8 th Jan. 2018
Asuagbor Lucy	61 Years	Chief Justice of Buea Court of Appeal	Yaounde	20 th Nov. 2019
Atu Robert	56 Years	History Teacher	Bamenda	13 th Apr. 2018
Ayuk Abily	48 Years	Philosophy Teacher	Bafia	21 st Nov.2018
Ayuk Arrey Peter	60 Years	Lecturer University of Buea	Buea	12 th Mar. 2018
Ayuk Bernard Patrick	62 Years	Communicator	Yaounde	24 th Aug. 2018.
Ayuk Besong Mary	63 Years	Farmer	Mamfe	5 th Sep. 2018
Ayuk Eta Elizabeth	73 Years	Farmer	BesongAbang	18 th Oct. 2017
Ayuk Lucy Tabe	60 Years	Farmer	Nchang	20 th Oct. 2016
Ayuk Martha	65 Years	Senior Lecturer ENS Yaounde	Yaounde	21 st Aug. 2016
Ayuk Ndip James	65 Years	Retired Teacher	Ossing	28 th Jun. 2019
Ayuk Peter Agbor	56Years	History Teacher	Ossing	24 th Oct. 2019
Ayuk Tabe Lucy	60 Years	Farmer	Mamfe,	20 th Oct.2016
Ayuk Tabot Scholar	59 Years	Teacher	Mamfe	15 th Feb. 2018
Ayuk Tabot Samuel	53 Years	Teacher	Besongabang	15 th Aug. 2018

Name	Age	Status	Place	Date
Ayuk Taku Nchong	56 Years	Trader	Mamfe	22th Feb. 2017
Ayuk Tambe	67 Years	Chief of Anslem	Buea	10 th Feb. 2020
Bate Apayi Robert	57 Years	Chief of Eyang and The Mayor of Tinto	Tinto	14 th Mar.2018
Besong Ayuk Mose	56 Years	Teacher	Mbakang	12 th Feb. 2020
Besong Besong Cecilia	59 Years	Teacher	Ossing	27 th Oct. 2016
Besong Besong Martin	50 Years	Cocoa Farmer	Ndekawai	29 th Feb. 2018
Besong Bessem Dora.	58 Years	Teacher	Ntenako	25 th Feb. 2017
Besong Diana	58 years	Business woman	Kumba	20 th Oct. 2020
Besong Solange Ewube	50 Years	Farmer	Ndekawai	20 th Feb.2017
Besong Merhak	65 years	Retired Head Teacher	Ntenako	21 st Feb.2019
Besong Merhak Enow	65 Years	Retired Head teacher	Ntenako	21 st Sep. 2019
Besong Oruh John	65 Years	Farmer and Member of Obasinjoh	Egbekaw	17 th Feb. 2017
Ebot Denis	60 Years	Lawyer	Yaounde	2 nd May 2017
Ebot Rose	56 Years	Writer	Bamenda	24 th Jun. 2018
Ebot Francis	60 Years	Retired Policeman	Yaounde	2 nd May 2019
Egbe Ebai John	58 Years	National Assembly Worker	Yaounde	15 th Nov. 2016
Egbe Egbe Ben Besong	55 Years	Senior Lecturer University of Buea	Buea	2 nd Jun. 2018
Egbe Tabi Nelson	60 Years	Municipal Councillor	Kembong	5 th Jun. 2019
Ekinneh Agbor Ebai	56 Years	Journalist	Yaounde	14 th Aug. 2020
Enow Enow Botela	56 Years	Historian	Buea	15 th Feb. 2016
Etadow Mildred	45 years	Civil administrator	Yaounde	5 th Mar. 2020
Etengene Philomina	48 years	Fashion designer	Mamfe	15 th Sep. 2017
Kenlong George	50 Years	Journalist	Yaounde	16 th Feb. 2021
Kima Atem Florence	55 Years	Journalist	Yaounde	17 th Aug. 2022
Mbi Tabot Delphine	51 Years	Farmer	Ndekawai	25 th Oct. 2022
Members of NCUDA Buea	Age Range of 30-78 Years	Executive Members	Buea	29 th Aug. 2020
Menge Josephine	37 years	Teacher	Douala	10 th Oct. 2021
Molingé Ikome David	65 Years	Businessman and the Second-Class Chief of Upper Muea	Muea	8 th Aug. 2020
Momanyi Atem Francis	55 Years	Journalist	Yaounde	15 th Sep. 2020
Mukefor Tambe Dennis	58 Years	Journalist	Yaounde	28 th Nov. 2021
Mulinge Edward	48 Years	Chief of Upper Muea	Muea	18 th Sep.2022
Ngu Prisca	48 years	Economic operator	Yaounde	8 th Jan.2022

Name	Age	Status	Place	Date
Nobles of Eyanchang Village	Age Range of 62-84 Years	Representatives	Eyanchang	18 th Dec. 2019
Nyenti Marie	56 Years	Ministry of Transport Agent	Buea	12 th Nov. 2017
Nyenti Enow Rupa	62 Years	Trader	Bachuo-Ntai	26 th Jan. 2017
Nyenti Peter Ayuk	60 Years	Major in the Gendarmerie	Yaounde	12 th Jan. 2019
Nyenti Victor	61 Years	Retired Accountant with of GCE Board	Buea	12 th Mar. 2020
Nyenty Ashu Pricelia	60 Years	Teacher (Wife of Late Chief Nyenti)	Mamfe	21 st Oct. 2017
Obareh Tabe Clara	82 Years	Chief Maker of Afab	Afab	16 th Oct. 2018
Oben Bate Shadrack	56 Years	Farmer	Mamfe	29 th Feb. 2017
Oben Godson Orock	64 Years	Retired Chief Medical Officer of Mamfe District Hospital and the paramount chief of Mamfe	Mamfe	23 rd Mar. 2022
Quarter heads of Bachuo-Ntai	Age Range of 37-76 Years	Representatives	Bachuo-Ntai	22 nd Mar. 2019
Tabot Nyenti Robert	65 Years	Farmer	Tinto	19 th Oct. 2018
Tabot Robert Nkwai	74 Years	Farmer	Bachuo-Ntai	27 th Jan. 2019.
Takang Eyong Jochim	65 Years	Retired Engineer	Yaounde	29 th Nov. 2019
Takor Ayuk Elizabeth	70 Years	Business woman	Mamfe	21 st Oct. 2017
Taku Mbi Daniel	67 Years	Chief of Eyanchang	Eyanchang	3 rd Mar. 2019
Tambe David	58 Years	Physician and MECA USA President	Tiko	28 th Nov. 2018
Tambe Etchi Eveline	68 Years	Regent Chief of Bachuo-Ntai	Bachuo-Ntai	27 th and 28 th Jan. 2019
Tambe Michael Enow	65 Years	Chief of Anslam	Anslam	10 th Feb. 2018
Tambe Tataw Joseph	69 Years	Retired Civil Administrator and one of the Disputed Chiefs of Besongababg	Besongabang	11 th Oct. 2019
Tanyi Felix Nkongho	54 Years	Pharmacist	Muea	8 th Apr. 2018
Tanyi Nso Agbor Agbor	55 Years	Farmer	Ndekwai	2 nd Jun. 2020
Tanyi Robertson	63 Years	Banker and Chief of Tinto	Yaounde	23 rd Nov. 2018
Tataw Emmanuel	58 Years	Journalist with Cameroon Tribune	Yaounde	4 th Aug. 2019

Interviews: 84

Group: 3

Men: 54

Women: 30

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Questions Guide

1. What geographical features existed in Mamfe Division during the Mandate and Trusteeship Periods?
2. What role did the Mamfe/Manyu actors play in the reunification process?
3. How did Mamfe/ Manyu people prepare for reunification?
4. What was the position of Mamfe /Manyu Division in Federal and Unitary set-up in Cameroon?
5. What were the impact and challenges of reunification on Mamfe/Manyu Division?
6. What do you understand by Reunification and Unification?
7. Do you participate in the vote of 11th February Plebiscite?
8. If yes, where did you vote?
9. Why did majority of people prefer reunification?
10. Why were many people against the Nigerians especially the Igbos?
11. Why was Mamfe chosen to host many conferences?
12. Can you remember two people who attended on conference in Mamfe?
13. What is your understanding of British policy of indirect rule?
14. How did the British initiate chiefs of Manyu division into national politics through this policy?
15. Was the policy relevant?
16. How was the policy carried out?
17. Did the policy help Mamfe/Manyu Division in the struggle for independence?
18. What role did chiefs of Manyu play during the Mamfe Conference of 1953 and Mamfe Plebiscite Conference of 1959?
19. What impact had the conferences created on Mamfe/ Manyu?
20. Can you remember any political party created by one chief in Mamfe/Manyu division?
21. What role did the political parties play in the 1961 plebiscite
22. What grievances did the people of Mamfe have against the Nigerians?

23. Did you remember Pa Man No Rest?
24. What circumstances led to the formation of MECDA out of Manyu?
25. Why are many Manyu elite fighting to become Chief or acquire chieftaincy title?
26. Do have any regret being together with Republic of Cameroon?
27. Should the population always vote in elections without considering the opinion of the chiefs?
28. If you are given the opportunity now to vote, which option will you go in for?
Integration, secession, or reunification?

APPENDIX 2: The Frambo Affair

The 'Frambo Affair'.

By

Bongfen Chem-Langhëë

Viewed simply as a short-lived incident on the Southern Cameroons political scene with no lasting effects, [the 'Frambo Affair', as the event was superficially perceived and named at the time, deserves little more than passing mention. But the event, the attempt made by some Members of Parliament (MPs) to reduce the number of the elected members of the government party in the House of Assembly (HA), deserves more attention than that. It occurred at the time when the Southern Cameroonians were faced with a choice between Nigerian and Cameroun citizenship. Then, there were essentially only two political parties represented in the HA, the Kamerun National Congress-Kamerun People's Party Alliance, the KNC-KPP Alliance, and the Kamerun National Democratic Party, the KNDP. The former, the Opposition Party, opted for Nigerian citizenship while the latter, the Government Party, went in for Cameroun citizenship with some reservations. At the same time, the HA contained a maximum of twenty-six elected members equally divided between the Opposition and the Government Parties. Thus, if the so-called Frambo Affair had succeeded, the KNDP Government would have collapsed and, with it, the movement toward Reunification-- the idea that all the sections of the former German Kamerun Protectorate reunite to form a single political entity. And, with that situation, the history of Southern Cameroons, indeed of the United Republic of Cameroon, from that time would not

Source : NAB, File No. Oc/1984/1, The Frambo Affaire by Chem-Langëë.

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have been what it is today. Herein lies the significance of the 'Frambo Affair'.

The 'Frambo Affair' itself came to the open with the story⁺ which Dickson Mbi Frambo, MP for Mamfe North riding, related on May 9, 1960, at the Mamfe Police Station. According to him, Dr. Emmanuel Mbela Lifafe Endeley, Leader of the Opposition, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Nerius Namaso Mbile, visited Tali in Mamfe Division on May 8, 1960, and invited to confer with him at midnight in the house of his friend, Sylvernus Banyo, KNDP Organizing Secretary for Tali. As soon as he entered the house, Endeley produced eight copies of a prepared document and forced him to sign all of them at gun-point. A swift glance at the title of the document informed him that he was declaring his resignation from the KNDP in order to join the KNC-KPP Alliance. He had no intention of doing such a thing but he decided to be very friendly with Mbile and Endeley in order not to betray his real feelings. After that, Endeley left for Buea and he stayed behind with Mbile whom he successfully outmaneuvered and escaped to the Mamfe Police Station where he reported the incident.¹ In an effort to support this story, Banyo's story repeated all the oddities which it contained.²

Nevertheless, there was the other side of the coin. According to Mbile and Endeley, on several occasions, through

+ Only the summary of this and the next story is given here.

1. "Statement by D.M. Frambo to the Criminal Investigation Department," Certified True Copy, The Frambo Inquiry File, Endeley's Archives, Buea.

2. "Statement of Witness, Made by Sylvernus Banyo before William Yenshi, Investigating Officer, on 9 May 1960 at Mamfe Police Station," C.T.C., F.I.F., Endeley's Archives, Buea.

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different emissaries, Frambo informed Endeley that he wished to cross the carpet but needed money to liquidate his debt with the KNDP before doing so. The reason he gave for his desire to turn his political coat, which was what the other KNDP leaders who had approached Endeley with the same idea had told him, was that he was under pressure from his electorate to do so. The frequency of that message convinced Endeley to send Mbile to Tali to strike a deal with Frambo who insisted on £2,000, which Mbile failed to reduce. Mbile then returned to Buea where the KNC-KPP Alliance leadership raised the money through loans. On May 8, 1960, Mbile and Endeley went to Tali and paid Frambo his £2,000 reward at midnight. After that, Frambo read the resignation statement, expressed his satisfaction with it, and then signed all the copies. That done, Endeley left for Buea leaving Mbile and Frambo behind to follow him at dawn. But, at dawn, Frambo instead went to the Mamfe Police to report what they did not yet know. Meanwhile, Endeley was waiting for Mbile and Frambo at Buea where Frambo was to declare his resignation from the KNDP to join the KNC-KPP Alliance before the Commissioner for the Cameroons on May 9, 1960.³

This Endeley-Mbile version of the story received support from several quarters. It was supported at various points by: S.T. Tataw--Headmaster of Tali N.A. School, whom Frambo described as his friend without political leanings; Simon D.S. Fokum-- Organizing Secretary for the KNC, Buea Branch, who accompanied Endeley and Mbile to Tali on May 8, 1960, to pay Frambo his reward; P.I. Eno-- a Chemist and pharmacist, who, he reported,

3. "Statement Made by Dr. E.M.L. Endeley as Recorded by D.M. Browne, A.S.P., Investigating Officer," C.T.C., F.I.F., Endeley's Archives, Buea; "Namaso Nerius Mbile Investigated and Interrogated by D.M. Browne, A.S.P., on 11 May 1960," C.T.C., F.I.F., Endeley's Archives, Buea.

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previously listened to Frambo discuss the issue of his changing political parties; P.N. Motomby Woleta-- MP and member of the KPP, who played a leading role in acquiring the loan which was used to pay Frambo his reward; Leman-- an expatriate businessman, who provided the money, in form of loan, which Endeley and Mbile took to Frambo on May 8, 1960; and, William Enyang Fotu Atta-- Frambo's nephew, who, apparently, discovered where Frambo had hidden the £2,000 he received from Endeley and Mbile.⁴ Even Frambo's only supporter, Banyo, gave credence to it at one point when he said that he "had the impression that Frambo intended to cross" over to the Opposition Parties.⁵

Whichever the more convincing version of the story, the 'Frambo Affair' cannot be understood without an understanding of the political situation in Southern Cameroons at the time. A very small proportion of the Southern Cameroonians desired Immediate Reunification-- the idea that Reunification be effected without delay. A significant, though not substantial, number of them aspired to Evolutionary Reunification-- the idea that Reunification should evolve naturally and in stages and eventually be effected after each of the sections of Kamerun had attained independence in its own right. A substantial number of them supported Integration-- the idea that Southern Cameroons should remain an autonomous, integral part of Nigeria forever. And, the overwhelming majority of them demanded Secession-- the idea that

4. Southern Cameroons Information Service, Press Release, Nos. 901, 908, and 921; Administrative Department, Victoria Division, "Commission of Inquiry: Dr.E.M.L. Endeley (MHA), Mr. N.N. Mbile (MHA), and Mr. D.M. Frambo (MHA), By Commissioner for the Southern Cameroons on 29th June 1960," File DVA3318, Buea Archives; "Statement of Mr. P.N. Motomby-Woleta Recorded at 0930 hours on 21.5.60 at Police Headquarters Victoria by S.S.P., C.T.C., F.I.F., Endeley's Archives, Buea.
5. SCIS, Press Release, No. 901, Buea Archives.

Southern Cameroons sever links with Nigeria and develop into a separate independent state. The same majority also indicated that, if it were forced to choose between Nigerian and Cameroun citizenship, it would choose the former.⁺

As indicated by their statements and behaviour at the United Nations in late 1959, the political leaders were aware of this situation. There, the leaders of the political parties which advocated Immediate Reunification, the One Kamerun Party (OK) and the Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC), tried to have the United Nations reunite Kamerun unilaterally because they were aware that any consultation would result in the rejection of the idea. When that attempt failed, they requested a referendum open to all the Kamerunians with only one issue, namely, Reunification, because they expected the overwhelming majority of the 'French' Camerounians to vote in favour of the idea and thus negate the position of the 'British' Cameroonians. When this request was not granted, they acquiesced in a plebiscite in which Integration would be pitted against Reunification. They saw the plebiscite as the last chance for Reunification to be heard in Southern Cameroons and thought it had a better chance of success if pitted against Integration than against Secession. They struggled to exclude Secession from the contest because its popularity among the electors was beyond question.

⁺ The information in this paragraph is based on a careful analysis of the proceedings of the Mamfe Plebiscite Conference of August 1959 and the contents of the petitions addressed to the United Nations and well-placed persons all over the world by Southern Cameroonians between 1959 and 1960. See, Bongfen Chem-Langhëë, "The Kamerun Plebiscites 1959-1961: Perceptions and Strategies," Ph.D. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1976, pp. 102, 120, 135-179.

6. Chem-Langhëë, "The Kamerun Plebiscites," pp. 137, 185-198.

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The behaviour of the leaders of the political party which advocated Evolutionary Reunification, the KNDP, was similar. John Ngu Foncha tried very hard to exclude Reunification from the plebiscite because he was aware that if the electors were asked to choose between Integration and Reunification, they would choose the former, which is what he feared most. Thus he requested that the issues at the plebiscite be Integration and Secession because he reasoned that the electorate would choose the latter in such a situation and make Evolutionary Reunification a future possibility. Pointedly, however, he argued that the results of the January 24, 1959, general elections and the discussions at the Mamfe Plebiscite Conference had indicated that the majority of the Southern Cameroonians desired either Integration or Secession.⁷

As could be expected, the leaders of the KNC-KPP Alliance, which supported Integration, behaved in the same way. They argued vigorously in favour of making Integration and Reunification the issues of the plebiscite, hoping, thereby, to use the latter to procure the former. Aware that Secession would defeat any or both of its rivals at the polls, they sought to exclude it from the contest.⁸ With particular reference to Reunification, they asserted that the Cameroun proposition "had been discussed in the General Assembly repeatedly and could not be brushed aside now in deference to the claims of a Government that might well have fallen before the plebiscite took place."⁹ And, when a member of the Fourth Committee inquired to know whether Endeley

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. U.N., G.A., Hearings, A/C.4/SR.885, November 1959, p. 16.

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expected a change of Government in the territory, Endeley replied that "it was possible that there could be a change of Government in the Southern Cameroons before the date set for the plebiscite."¹⁰ This was too strong a statement for the Leader of Opposition to make if either circumstances did not warrant it or his party was not up to something political, particularly at the time the Opposition had twelve and the Government fourteen of the twenty-six parliamentarians.

Whatever the case, the United Nations' decision to pit Integration against Reunification at the plebiscite and to leave out Secession from the contest contributed greatly to the circumstances which led to the 'Frambo Affair'. No doubt, some supporters of Integration and of Immediate Reunification welcomed the decision, the former hoping to use Reunification to obtain Integration and the latter seeing the plebiscite, which excluded Secession from the contest, as the last opportunity for Reunification to compete for support in Southern Cameroons on fairer terms. But the overwhelming majority of the electors vehemently opposed the decision. They demanded that Secession be made the third question of the plebiscite. Failing that, then Southern Cameroons should unilaterally be given its own separate independence without any reference to Nigeria or Cameroun. They threatened to sabotage the plebiscite if their demand was not met.¹¹

This strong opposition to the plebiscite questions also came from some leaders of the KNDP. With the support of many of his colleagues, Augustin Ngom Jua, Deputy Leader of the KNDP,

10. Ibid.

11. Chem-Langhëë, "The Kamerun Plebiscites", pp. 199-215.

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wired Foncha, who, as Leader of the KNDP, had been pressured at the United Nations to accept the plebiscite questions, to inform him that the United Nations' decision was unacceptable to the KNDP leadership.¹² Indeed, according to a well-placed source, Jua and his group threatened to strip Foncha of his leadership of the party for having accepted the decision without first seeking their opinion, and to request the United Nations to alter the situation. The threat was not put into effect because, when Jua revealed the plan, a powerful phalanx of some KNDP supporters and leaders surrounded him at Buea for days and convinced him that Foncha would be able to procure Reunification on a confederal basis.

In spite of that, the British local authorities were very concerned with the most unwelcomed manner in which the majority of the Southern Cameroonians received the plebiscite questions. The Commissioner for the Cameroons, J.O. Field, who was an eye-witness of the situation, wired the United Kingdom's representative at the United Nations, Andrew Cohen, and informed him that the second plebiscite question, Reunification, was most unacceptable to the elected Ministers and the majority of the electorate. He suggested that the political leaders return home from the United Nations for brief consultations regarding an alternative to that question and, after that, he would accompany them back to the United Nations to convey the strength of local feeling to that organization. He requested further that the United Nations' debate on the issue be

12. Willard R. Johnson, The Cameroon Federation: Political Integration in a Fragmentary Society, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1970, p. 147.

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adjourned until further notice and added that the United Kingdom would not be responsible for the political and security consequences that would attend the imposition of the second plebiscite question on the territory.¹³ As it turned out, the United Nations had had more than enough problems with Southern Cameroons to want more and, therefore, did nothing to modify the situation.

With that United Nations' inaction, some of the voters, particularly those whose leaders were members of the KNDP, began to put pressure on their representatives to change their party allegiance. A few examples will suffice. According to a well-placed eye-witness of those events, Mbua Monono, MP from Victoria Division and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, was under pressure from his electors to turn his political coat. They organized several meetings with him to that effect and, in one of those meetings, he was offered girls to marry should he cross over to the Opposition. Monono turned down the idea and the offer because of a personal quarrel with Endeley, a quarrel that had previously forced him out of the KNC into the KNDP. The petitions which the indigenous inhabitants of Victoria Division sent to the United Nations between 1959 and 1960 more than substantiate this eye-witness information.¹⁴ Under such circumstances, it was natural for the Opposition leaders to want to induce Monono to cross over to their side. Indeed, during the official inquiry into the 'Frambo Affair', Monono himself testified that the Opposition made

13. Federated State of West Cameroon, House of Assembly, Debates, 10th to 17th March 1960, Government Printer, Buea, 1960, p. .

14. Chem-Langhëë, "The Kamerun Plebiscites," p. 160.

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several attempts to induce him to cross the carpet.¹⁵ During the same inquiry, J.M. Boja, MP from Wum Division, who crossed over from the KNDP to the KNC on March 11, 1960, and gave the Opposition the same number of elected seats in the House of Assembly as the Government, 13-13, said that he had changed his political allegiance because of his conscience and pressure from his electorate which no longer believed in Reunification.¹⁶ And the majority of the petitions which his electorate addressed to the United Nations at that time support his statement.¹⁷

X That is not all. During the same inquiry, Sam Mofor, MP for Upper Ngemba constituency, testified that the Opposition leaders made several attempts to induce him to cross over to their side.¹⁸ But there is no indication as to whether or not Sam Mofor was under pressure from his electorate to turn his political coat or whether or not there was any hard content to his assertion. His well known penchant for the deceptive and uncertain activities make it difficult for a student to consider any oral evidence provided by him seriously. However, according to a contemporary, reliable source, Sam Mofor, who made the leaders of both the Government and the Opposition believe that he was about to switch political support, was approached by the Opposition leaders to induce him to cross the carpet. Indeed, it was during that attempt that Sam Mofor slipped away with the famous Opposition document which indicated the amount of money the Opposition had obtained from Nigerian political leaders for the purpose of inducing or rewarding KNDP elected members who

15. SCIS, Press Release, No. 908, July 18, 1960, Buea Archives.
16. SCIS, Press Release, No. 921, July 28, 1960, Buea Archives.
17. Chem-Langhëë, "The Kamerun Plebiscites", p. 164.
18. SCIS. Press Release, No. 908, July 18, 1960, Buea Archives.

APPENDIX 3: Southern Cameroons Plebiscite

Administrative Department

SOUTHERN CAMEROONS

FILE NO. **1499/51**

DATE REGISTERED

SOUTHERN CAMEROONS

PLEBISCITE

ITINERARIES

(This to be continued on third page of book if necessary)

SUBSEQUENT FILES

- 1499/5.6 - Appt. Accommodation
- 1499/5.5 - sc. Pleb. Landowners
- 1499/5.4 - Financial Arrangements
- 1499/5.3 - Appt. for Employment
- 1499/5.2 - Stationery
- 1499 - sc. Pleb. Instructions

MINUTES OR INSTRUCTIONS

GCK/JTK

1499/51

Source : NAB, File No. 1499/51, Southern Cameroon Plebiscite, 1959.

TOURING ITINERARY.

REGISTRATION OFFICER :

CONSTITUENCY : MAMFE WEST NO.

REGISTRATION AREA : N'BESONGABANG LETTER.

Date	Journey of Ward to be registered	No. of Ward to be Registered.
------	-------------------------------------	----------------------------------

At Besongabang	1
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"	1
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"	1
---	---

"	1
---	---

"	1
---	---

Besongabang to Nchang	-
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At Nchang	5
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"	5
---	---

"	5
---	---

"	5
---	---

"	5
---	---

Nchang to Eyanchang	-
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At Eyanchang	6
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"	6
---	---

Eyanchang to Etemetek	-
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At Etemetek	7
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Etemetek to Mamfe	-
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TOURING ITINERARY.

REGISTRATION OFFICER :

CONSTITUENCY : MAMFE WEST

NO.

REGISTRATION AREA : OBANG

LETTER.

Date	Journery of Ward to be registered	No.of Ward to be Registered.
	At Bakoko	1
	At Bakoko	1
	Bakoko to Akak	-
	At Akak	2
	At Akak	2
	Akak to Asibong	-
	At Asibong	3
	Asibong to Etinkem	-
	At Etinkem	4
	At Etinkem	4
	Etinkem to Bakoko	-
	Bakoko to Mbinda Tabo	-
	At Mbinda Tabo	5
	Mbinda Tabo to Okoroba	-
	At Okoroba	6

Source : NAB, File No. 1499/51, Southern Cameroon Plebiscite, 1959.

TOURING ITINERARY.

REGISTRATION OFFICER :

CONSTITUENCY : MAMFE WEST NO.

REGISTRATION AREA : EKWE LETTER.

Date	Journery of Ward to be registered	No.of Ward to be Registered.
	At Mbeyan	2
	Mbeyan to Ndebaya	-
	At Ndebaya	27
	Ndebaya to Eyumojok	-
	At Eyumojok	3
	Eyumojok to Nsanankang	-
	At Nsanankang	4
	Nsanankang to Nsanaragati	-
	At Nsanaragati	5
	Nsanaragati to Ekok	-
	At Ekok	6
	Ekok to Otu	-
	At Otu	7
	At Otu	7
	Otu to Itu Ofor	-
	At Itu Ofor	8
	Itu Ofor to Ekoneman Awa	-
	At Ekoneman Awa	9
	Ekoneman Awa to Mbeban	-
	At Mbeban	10
	Mbeban to Mfunum	-
	At Mfunum	11
	Mfunum to Ayaoke	-
	At Ayaoke	12
	Leave Ayaoke for Ekwe Court	-

Source : NAB, File No. 1499/51, Southern Cameroon Plebiscite, 1959

TOURING ITINERARY.

REGISTRATION OFFICER :

CONSTITUENCY : MAMFE EAST NO.

REGISTRATION AREA : FONTEM LETTER.

Date	Journery of Ward to be registered	No.of Ward to be Registered.
	Foto to Forekebedua	--
	Forekebedue to Fontem	--
	Fontem to Forekeup	--
	Forekeup to Foreke Chacha	--
	At Foreke Chacha	24
	" "	24
	" "	24
	" "	24
	" "	24
	" "	24
	" "	24
	" "	24
	" "	24
	" "	24
	Foreke Chacha to Foreke Middle	--
	Foreke Middle to Foreke Down	--
	Foreke Down to Fotabong III	--
	At Fotabong III.	25
	" "	25
	" "	25
	" "	25
	Leave Fotabong III for Bangwa Court, Fontem	

Source : NAB, File No. 1499/51, Southern Cameroon Plebiscite, 1959.

SOUTHERN CAMEROONS PLEBISCITE, 1961

RESULT OF VOTING BY REGISTRATION AREAS

Southern Cameroons Plebiscite (Polling) Regulations, 1960, Regulation 41

PLEBISCITE DISTRICT.....MAMFE WEST (continued).....

(a) Name of Registration Area	(b) Votes Cast for FIRST ALTERNATIVE	(c) Rejected votes	(d) Votes Cast for SECOND ALTERNATIVE	(e) Rejected votes
BAKOGO	8		NIL	253
ASSIBONG	2		NIL	397
INAKUN	4		NIL	183
EYUMJOK	14		NIL	241
OTU	12		NIL	177
BABONG	13		NIL	162
MBEOFONG	14		NIL	164

Source : NAB, File No. 1499/51, Southern Cameroon Plebiscite, 1959

(a) Name of Registration Area	(b) Votes Cast for FIRST ALTERNATIVE	(c) Rejected votes	(d) Votes Cast for SECOND ALTERNATIVE	Rejected votes	TOTAL VOTES CAST	Ballot papers Mutilated
					226	nil
	155	6	64	1	425	nil
ONGUYI	425	NIL	NIL	NIL	227	nil
KUBHAM	210	NIL	17	NIL	254	1
NACHE	253	1	NIL	NIL	236	nil
ABHAM	186	NIL	50	NIL	61	nil
NYANG	47	NIL	14	NIL	533	2
MPAKWE	531	NIL	2	NIL	172	1
KAJIPU	171	NIL	1	NIL	406	nil
BEKORHAM	406	1	NIL	NIL	465	3
DADI	451	NIL	14	NIL	174	nil
TINTA	2	NIL	172	NIL	246	nil
BADOHAMA	243	1	2	NIL		nil
TIVE				NIL		nil

Source : NAB, File No. 1499/51, Southern Cameroon Plebiscite, 1959

PLEBISCITE DISTRICT MAMFE SOUTH					
(a) Name of Registration Area	(b) Votes Cast for FIRST ALTERNATIVE	(c) Rejected votes	(d) Votes Cast for SECOND ALTERNATIVE	(e) Rejected votes	(f) TOTAL VOTES CAST
MBETTA	38	-	436	-	474
FONJUNGO	8	-	650	-	658
NGUTI	6	-	313	-	319
HUNYAMPE	1	-	427	-	428
B/F	632	1	6349	5	6987
District Totals					
	53	1	1026	5	1035
					8866

Source : NAB, File No. 1499/51, Southern Cameroon Plebiscite, 1959

PLEBISCITE DISTRICT..... **MAHLE NORTH** (10)

(a) Name of Registration Area	(b) Votes Cast for FIRST ALTERNATIVE	(c) Rejected votes	(d) Votes Cast for SECOND ALTERNATIVE	(e) Rejected votes	(f) TOTAL VOTES CAST
DEKUM	6		522	1	529
SEFANG	8		399	1	408
DICHE	9		549		557
SKA	0		482	1	481
KUNGA	2		316		318
APUSAGA	NIL		332		332
MENKA	24		533		557
AWI	18		392		410
ANGARE	32		181		213
AKANANKU	4		557		561
NGJAU	271		360		631
AKHA	135		305		440
AKASSI	7		382		389
PLEBISCITE DISTRICT TOTALS	517	-	5324	3	5844

Signed *X. A. G. L.*
 Returning Officer

15 February, 1961

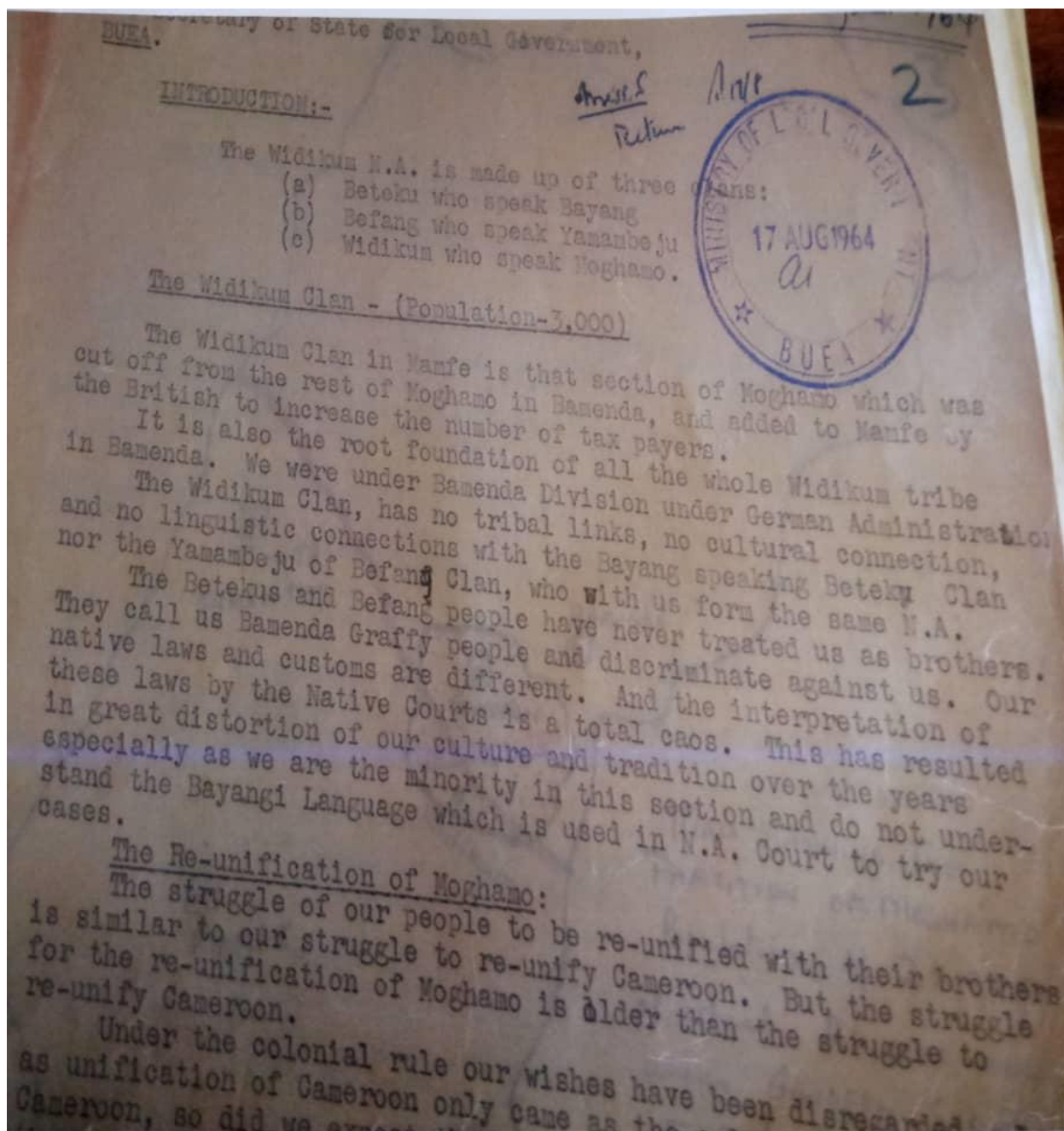
Source : NAB, File No. 1499/51, Southern Cameroon Plebiscite, 1959

PLEBISCITE DISTRICT REGISTRATION AREA		BESONGABANG				
(a) Name of Polling Station	(b) Votes Cast for FIRST ALTERNATIVE	(c) Rejected Votes	(d) Votes Cast for SECOND ALTERNATIVE	(e) Rejected Votes	(f) TOTAL VOTES CAST	(g) Estimated Number of Ballot papers Mutilated
BESONGABANG						
B.M. COMPOUND						
(1)	49	NIL	308	NIL	357	NIL
(2)	76	NIL	228	NIL	304	NIL

PLEBISCITE DISTRICT REGISTRATION AREA		MAKPE WEST MAKPE TOWN				
(a) Name of Polling Station	(b) Votes Cast for FIRST ALTERNATIVE	(c) Rejected Votes	(d) Votes Cast for SECOND ALTERNATIVE	(e) Rejected Votes	(f) TOTAL VOTES CAST	(g) Estimated Number of Ballot papers Mutilated
MAKPE APPEAL COURT						
(1)	51	NIL	302	2	353	NIL
(2)	69	NIL	384	NIL	453	NIL
MAKPE E.C.M. SCHOOL						
(1)	114	NIL	268	NIL	382	NIL
(2)	156	NIL	283	NIL	439	1

Source : NAB, File No. 1499/51, Southern Cameroon Plebiscite, 1959

**APPENDIX 4 : Widikum Petition Letter to the Prime Minister of West Cameroon to
Leave Manyu Divion**



Source : NAB, Widikum petition letter to separate from Mamfe Division to join Bamenda Division

APPENDIX 5: Petition from Ayuk Etaiyak

Provincial Administration Department. 6407		General
FILE NO. <u>4134/1/57</u>		
DATE REGISTERED <u>22. 12. 52</u>		
CP Logo 547651/152/100.000 (J-48)		
<p>SUBJECT</p> <p>PETITION FROM AYUK ETAIYAK UNION, BESONGABANG, MAMFE DIVISION TO VISITING MISSION. 1952. No. 13 ON COM CHNS LIST.</p>		<p>SUBSEQUENT FILES</p>
<p>LIST OF ENCLOSURES IN THIS FILE</p> <p>(Entries to be continued on third page of cover if necessary)</p> <p>20/6</p>		
PREVIOUS FILES	MINUTES OR INSTRUCTIONS	

Source : Petition from Ayuk

UNITED NATIONS
TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

T/PET.4/90
3 February 1953

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PETITION FROM THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AYUK ETAIYAK UNION
CONCERNING THE CAMEROONS UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

Note by the Secretary-General: In accordance with rule 85 and supplementary rule F of the rules of procedure for the Trusteeship Council, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the Trusteeship Council and to the Government of Italy as the Administering Authority of the Trust Territory of Somaliland, a communication dated 18 November 1952 from the Representatives of the Ayuk Etaiyak Union concerning the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under British administration.

This communication was transmitted to the Secretary-General by the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa.

Source : NAB, File No. 4134/1/57, Petition from Ayuk Etaiyak Union, Besongabang, Mamfe Division to the Visiting Mission, 1952, June 2019.

COPY

Ayuk Etaiyak Union,
Besongabang, Mamfe,
Cameroons U.U.K.T.,
W.C.A., 18/11/52.

The Secretary-General,
The Trusteeship Council,
UNO, Lake Success.

Besongabang Aerodrome.

Dear Sir,

We members of the Ayuk Etaiyak progressive union and the entire community of the Clan have the pleasure to write to you this our petition. We have completed confidence that you will receive with good faith this our humble petition and hope that you will do your level best to put things right for us as a governing body.

The construction of the Besongabang aerodrome which we now seek for amenities is presented to you in the following categories of statements:-

(1) That during the construction of Besongabang aerodrome many economic crops - cocoa, coconuts, oil palm trees, kola nut trees and many prematured farm crops for our local use saw their own destruction and to this effect, a block compensation of £610 (six hundred and ten pounds) was paid to the respective owners of the said damaged crops and not buying of the land where the aerodrome is situated. Analysis of compensation paid is as follows: First payment £270 (two hundred and seventy) during the first occasion at the start of work in the aerodrome, 1st October 1939 - cutting of lines, clearing of bush and levelling; 1st October 1940 - 3rd November 1940. The second payment of £340 (three hundred and forty pounds) was during the occasion when the new extension was being made.

(2) That the Government unconstitutionally and against the wishes of the people fell down 168 coconut palms beyond the boundaries unanimously agreed upon by us and as such a compensation of £2 per coconut tree was demanded by the respective owners of the palms which the government turned down and only paid a compensation of 8/- (eight shillings) per palm. Taking the economic status

T/PET.4/90
English
Page 3

of the coconut palm into consideration, we are not satisfied with 8/- (eight shillings) per palm compensation. Though the Government gave deaf ears to our appeal of £2 (two pounds) compensation per coconut tree, we still wish this be done.

(3) That the Government with determined efforts promised to fence the whole aerodrome to prevent our domestic animals from entering it but to our greatest amazement, this promise was a castle built in the air and we were forced by definite instructions from the Authorities to do away with our cows which often grazed in the aerodrome. During this enforcement of cows removal, we sustained a loss of 80 (eighty) cows due to the fault of the Government not fencing the aerodrome. Most of the people killed theirs against their wishes and this caused a breakdown catastrophically in their income which contributed to their tax. To this ends also we demand a compensation. Into the bargain, the then Public Works Department Engineer enforced definite orders through his Overseer that our goats be caught whenever found within the aerodrome. Many of our goats were caught and pound fees of £4 (four pounds) were collected from us. This scrupulous behaviour of the Engineer was reported to the then District Officer and with a firm promise the refund of which was accepted by him with consultation of the Resident, but as yet, not a word has been heard.

(4) We have to make mention to you that several petitions to the District Officers quoting instances, our letters of 1st and 4th June 1945 regarding the compensation for the destruction of the coconut palms have had no definite replies. Our petition for the Resident, Cameroons Province dated 25th July, 1945, also had the same treatment. When the delegates of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons last visited Mamfe on August 28th, 1946, we also petitioned to them on this same matter but no fruitful results are yet achieved. We are now compelled by circumstances beyond our control, to pass a resolution as in paragraph 5 here below which we trust you will help us as able as you can through you, to the United Nations Organisation body at home from who, we look straight forward for amenities.

Source : NAB, File No. 4134/1/57, Petition from Ayuk Etaiyak Union, Besongabang, Mamfe Division to the Visiting Mission, 1952, June 2019.

APPENDIX 6: Petition from the Banyang Improvement Union to the Trusteeship Council Concerning the Cameroons under the British Administration.

Provincial Administration		Department	BUEA.	General 2
FILE NO.	4134/1/9			
DATE REGISTERED	24/2/50			
GP Lagos 2809/1247/118,000				
SUBJECT			SUBSEQUENT FILES	
<u>Petition from the Banyang Improvement Union.</u> <u>to the Trusteeship Council Concerning the</u> <u>Cameroons under British Administration.</u>				
<p align="center">LIST OF ENCLOSURES IN THIS FILE</p> <p align="center">(Entries to be continued on third page of cover if necessary)</p>				
PREVIOUS FILES		MINUTES OR INSTRUCTIONS		

Source : Petition from the Banyang Improvement Union

No.206/35.

Commissioner's Lodge,
Buea, 13th February, 1950.

The Honourable
The Chief Secretary to the Government,
Lagos.

Petitions to Trusteeship Council.

With reference to your telegram No.44540/S7/T of the 2nd of February I forward herewith in duplicate draft observations on the following petitions to the Trusteeship Council which I consider could well be grouped together in accordance with the Secretary of State's suggestion:-

- (1) Petition of Banyang Improvement Union, of which I attach an advance copy. This has not yet been referred to this Government as a Trusteeship document.
- (ii) Address by Mr F.T.Tambe, of which an advance copy was forwarded to you under cover of my letter No.206/12/3 of the 11th of February.
- (iii) Petition by the people of Ejagham, which has been reproduced as Trusteeship document No.T/PET.4/8.
- (iv) Petition by the Assumbo Native Authority, of which I attach an advance copy. This has not yet been referred to this Government as a Trusteeship document.
- (v) Petition of Mr N.D.Fongum, of which I attach an advance copy. This has not yet been referred to this Government as a Trusteeship document.

2. The draft observations now submitted incorporate the contents of your Nigeria Saving No.273 of the 9th of February to the Secretary of State (reference 44540/S7/C4/S40), regarding the Ejagham petition (Trusteeship document T/PET.4/8) and supercede the draft observations regarding Mr Tambe's address forwarded to you under cover of my letter No.206/12/3 of the 11th of February.

E. J. SIBBONS.

Commissioner of the Cameroons

Elufa.

No.206/35A.

Buea, 13th February, 1950.

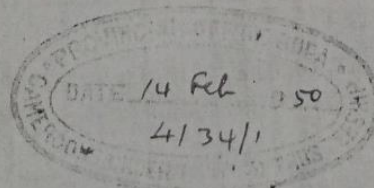
Copies to :-

The Secretary,
Eastern Provinces,
Enugu.

The Resident,
Cameroons Province, ✓
Buea.

For information.

Commissioner of the Cameroons



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T.
 Petitions from the Banyang Improvement Union
 Mr F.T.Tambe, the Ejagham people, the Assumbo
 Native Authority and Mr N.D.Fongum all of
 Mamfe Division concerning the Cameroons under
British Administration.

Observations of the Administering Authority.

These petitions all consist of representations regarding development in the Mamfe Division and it may be convenient to discuss them together. The petition of the Banyang Improvement Union (which comes from the largest tribe in the Division) and the address of Mr F.T.Tambe (until recently engaged in brick-making on his own account in Mamfe) relate to the situation in the Division as a whole: the petitions of the Ejagham Community (who occupy the areas numbered 18, 19 and 20 on the 1:1,000,000 scale map in the 1943 Report to the Trusteeship Council), of the Assumbo Native Authority (representing the area in the extreme northern corner of the Division) and of Mr Fongum (from Widekum on the Bamenda Road) have particular local application to these three outlying parts of the Division.

2. The general views expressed in this address, revealing a natural impatience for rapid development, are discussed at length in the Administering Authority's Observations on document T/PET.4/16, where the references are as follows:-

Communications: paragraphs 27-31.

Education: paragraphs 5-8.

Health and Medical Services: paragraphs 17-21.

System of Administration: paragraphs 22-26.

3. Regarding the situation in the Mamfe Division in particular, it is broadly true that this Division, on account of its former isolation, has lagged behind others in the provision of amenities. The difficulty, as may be inferred from these petitions, has been one of communications. The Division contains 73,400 people living scattered over some 4,300 square miles of mountainous, wooded and heavily watered country. Small isolated villages stand in most inaccessible places, anything up to 10 days hard walking from the Divisional Headquarters. Hills and wide rivers make road building extremely difficult and costly. The Divisional Headquarters itself was not connected to any road system until 1939, and then only to the North East to Bamenda and thence to the Cameroons under French Trusteeship. Recently, however, the position has been revolutionized by the opening, in 1947 and 1948 respectively, of the two road links between Mamfe and Ikom and Enugu on the one side and Kumba and Victoria on the other. A third link, with Calabar, is nearing completion. These enterprises, together with the provision of an aerodrome, also nearing completion, which have accounted for a great proportion of recent expenditure in connection with the Trust Territory, will convert Mamfe into a centre of considerable importance. Development in the Mamfe Division will then be greatly accelerated and it is hoped that popular enthusiasm for community development will extend its advantages far into the presently inaccessible parts of the Division.

4. The following matters of interest to the Division generally, which are mentioned in these documents, call for separate comment.

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(i) Mamfe Government Hospital.

The Ten-Year Development plan includes a project for replacing the existing 60 bed Government Hospital with a modern one of 90 beds. In view of the delay which is likely to occur in implementing this scheme consideration is now being given to improvement of the existing facilities as an interim measure.

(ii) Water Supplies.

The rural areas of the Mamfe Division are on the whole blessed with abundant and good supplies. This has meant a low priority for the Division in work under this aspect of the Ten-Year Plan. The question of improving the supplies for those villages where shortages occur is receiving the attention of the Administration, and a well-boring team will transfer its attention to the Mamfe Division after more urgent tasks in the Victoria and Kumba Divisions have been completed.

(iii) Closing in 1948 of the Mamfe Leper Camp.

This camp was in many respects unsatisfactory and was closed on the advice of the Director of Medical Services. Only non-infectious cases, in respect of whom clearance certificates had been issued, were returned to their villages when the camp was closed. A scheme for a leper settlement for the Mamfe-Kumba area is at present under consideration. In the meanwhile the Mamfe Native Authority maintains thirty leper patients at the Church of Scotland Mission leper colony at Itu.

(iv) Trade.

It is the case that the only large concern at present operating in the Division is the United Africa Company, at Mamfe. The questions whether this firm should extend its activities, or whether other firms should enter the field are ones which must be left to the firms themselves to decide according to their appreciation of the potential volume of trade.

5. Turning to the complaints of more localized application, the Ejagham people, whose petition is reproduced as document T/PET.4/8 live in the South Western area of Mamfe Division and consist of three clans, the Ekwe, Keaka and Obang Clans. The area inhabited by these three Clans is approximately 900 square miles and the total population is between 10,000 and 12,000, giving a density of between eleven and thirteen per square mile. This population is located in sixty-four scattered villages, many of which are no more than hamlets with less than a score of adult male inhabitants. Communication within the area is rendered extremely difficult owing to the hilly nature of the country, while the low-lying ground is intersected by numerous rivers and streams which add considerably to the difficulty of road construction. The Administration naturally sympathizes fully with the desires for advancement expressed by the petitioners but difficulties of communication, in this sparsely inhabited area, make progress slow.

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6. The present position with regard to the matters raised in the petition is as follows :-

(a) Water Supplies.

As a whole the area is fortunate in possessing a good and abundant natural water supply but there are exceptions to this general rule. Attempts which have been made in the past to sink wells in these areas have proved unsuccessful. A boring team is expected to operate in the area when it has completed work in the Victoria and Kumba Divisions where the problem is even more acute.

(b) The Government station at Mamfe is in the Kembong area and not in the area of the three Ejagham Clans. It is held by Government in accordance with the Land and Native Rights Ordinance.

It is assumed that the petitioners refer to the Kembong Native Authority Forestry Reserve, constituted under the Forestry Ordinance and enacted by an Order made in 1934 by the Kembong Native Authority. (This Native Authority is a federation of the three Clans which together compose the Ejagham people.) The creation of this Forest Reserve in no way affects the ultimate ownership of the land but is designed to protect in the interests of the people themselves the natural forest of the area included in the reserve.

(c) Education.

It is estimated that there are between 2,500 and 3,000 children of school age within the area. Attention has been drawn to the wide dispersal of the population which make the provision of educational facilities a matter of difficulty. There are within the area one Native Administration school and five Mission schools, all of which receive liberal financial assistance from the Nigerian Government and which at present provide for some 630 pupils. Facilities will be extended as opportunity arises.

(d) Health.

There is a Native Administration dispensary run by the Kembong Native Authority. During 1949 this dispensary dealt with 7,438 cases at 12,913 attendances. Until communications are improved thus enabling adequate supervision by the Medical Officer further facilities of this nature cannot with advantage be provided. The closing of the Mamfe Leper Camp in 1948 has been discussed in paragraph 4(iii) above. X

(e) Communications.

The difficulties of opening up communications in this area have been briefly mentioned. A preliminary survey of possible traces for roads has been made but this reveals that the cost would be in the neighbourhood of £170,000. This cost has to be considered along with the general problem of improving communications in the very difficult terrain of the Trust Territory as a whole.

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7. The Assumbo Native Authority represents the extremely inaccessible area in the far North of the Division in what is known as "Mamfe Overside", the wild and sparsely populated country lying to the North of the Cross River. Their petition raises three issues:-

- (i) The construction of a motor road from Mamfe to Tinta;
- (ii) The provision of a travelling Medical Dresser in the area;
- (iii) The establishment of Tinta as an Administrative Headquarters.

8. With reference to the first request the distance of Tinta from Mamfe is some sixty miles and at present six days hard trekking on foot is necessary to reach Tinta from Mamfe which involves climbing some 5000 feet up the continuation of the Bamenda escarpment. No trace for this road has yet been approved but a recent very rough estimate by the Provincial Engineer, Public Works Department, Victoria, assesses the cost of its construction at £150,000.

9. With reference to the second request increased medical facilities are dependent upon improved communications.

10. With reference to the third request consideration has been given in the past to proposals to divide the present Mamfe Division into two districts. In pursuance of this project it had been suggested that Tinta should become the Headquarters of one of these two districts, but this again is dependent upon communications. No decision has been reached upon this matter but it now seems unlikely that the splitting of the Division will take place.

11. Mr N.D.Fongum writes from Widekum and complains that:-

- (a) The Widekum Store has no goods in it;
- (b) The Widekum Mumo River has no bridge suitable for lorry traffic;
- (c) Widekum has no adequate Court building.

12. Widekum is 54 miles from Mamfe on the motor road to Bamenda. It is the traditional and administrative centre of the Widekum Clan, now a subordinate Native Authority.

13. With reference to the first complaint there is a United Africa Company buying station at Widekum which concentrates solely upon the purchase of locally produced palm kernels. It is not a retail agency, and it is a matter for the Company to decide whether a venture in distribution would be profitable.

14. There is a Native Administration suspension bridge across the Monni at Widekum. This bridge has, however, recently been declared unsafe by the Provincial Engineer owing to a large crack which has appeared in one of the towers. The bridge, built about 1937, was never intended to carry motor traffic as there is no road in the area on which motors could travel. The Widekum Native Administration does, however, benefit greatly from the Mamfe-Bamenda motor road which passes through the centre of the clan area and makes possible the export to Mamfe of their very considerable palm produce.

15. The court building at Widekum is a mud and thatch building - like most of the others in the Division. The Native Administration could not, at the present affort a permanent structure.

6

Comments on a petition presented on behalf of the people of the Mamfe Division, by the Banyang Improvement Union, to the Visiting Mission of the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations Organization on the 24th November, 1949.

The Banyang Improvement Union which prepared the Address of Welcome is a body representing both the traditional and progressive sections of the Banyang clan, the largest tribe of the Mamfe Division. The aim of the Union is the general advancement of the Banyang people. In their address of welcome, however, which was presented on behalf of all the inhabitants of the Mamfe Division, the Union deals with matters of divisional importance, and not merely with those affecting their particular clan.

2. A description of the Mamfe Division is contained in the notes prepared for the use of the Visiting Mission. 73,400 people living scattered over some 4,300 square miles of mountainous, wooded and heavily watered country. Small isolated villages stand in most inaccessible places, anything up to 10 days hard walking from the Divisional Headquarters. Hills and wide rivers make road building extremely difficult and costly. The Divisional Headquarters itself was not connected to any road system until 1939, and then only to the North East to Bamenda and thence to the Cameroons under French Trusteeship. In 1947, however, the Mamfe Kumba road was opened followed in 1948 by the completion of the Mamfe Ikom road which established Mamfe as the centre of communications for the Bamenda and Cameroons Provinces.

3. With the opening of these roads more rapid progress has become possible but nevertheless by far the greater part of the division is still inaccessible. Communications remain the major problem to be overcome, and one which is receiving the constant attention of the Administering Authority, with two major priorities a road from Bakebe to Fontem and thence to Dschang in the Cameroons under French Trusteeship and the second, a road from Mamfe to Tinta to open up the area to the North of the Cross river and the Mamfe-Bamenda Road.

4. Without roads progress throughout the Division has been slow. It is against this background that the Address of Welcome must be studied.

-2-

(a) Medical and Health Services: The statement made in the address that the population is being reduced "through death owing to insufficient Medical and Health facilities" is not one which can be proved by population statistics. It is true that in certain villages a large decrease in the taxable male population has been observed during the past 10 years. Whether this is due to sickness or to faulty assessment it is not possible to tell at present. Arrangements are being made for a survey of these villages by the Medical Field Unit to ascertain the true facts. Existing Medical and Health facilities are restricted by lack of communications and by the inadequate financial resources of the Native Authorities. Two dispensaries are in existence at Tali and Kembong. New ones are required, but as these amenities have to be sited on or in close proximity to Motor roads to enable frequent inspection by the Medical Officer, no new ones can be constructed for the time being. The Native Authority also makes provision for 8 travelling dressers to tour the more inaccessible areas. These have not proved entirely satisfactory as their work cannot be supervised, with the result that two recent vacancies have not been filled.

(i) Hospital facilities.

Proposals to improve the existing hospital in Mamfe are being considered. It is agreed that the people of the remoter areas derive very little benefit from it, but the needs of the territory as a whole and the difficulty of obtaining senior Medical Staff, prevents the opening of any new hospital to serve the more inaccessible areas. The solving of the problem of communications will considerably improve the position.

(ii) Services of Midwives and female Nurses.

Great difficulty is experienced in finding female staff for the hospitals of the territory.

(iii) Leprosy.

A proposal to provide segregation and treatment facilities for the territory is being considered by the Administering Authority. At the present time the Native Authorities maintain pauper lepers at the Itu Leper Settlement.

(b) Education: The provision of secondary education facilities is dependent upon a number of factors, suitable staff, financial possibility, and an adequate number of suitable candidates from the primary schools. The problem

-3-

APPENDIX 7 : Popular Action Party (PAP) Press Statement for the Creation of a Coalition of Cameroon Federalist Groups and Activist (CCFGA).

PEACE-WORK-JUSTICE



A NEW PEOPLE, A NEW CAMEROON



POPULAR ACTION PARTY

PARTI D'ACTION POPULAIRE (PAP)

HEAD OFFICE/SIEGE: Kumba/Authorization N°:134/D/MINAT

<p>P.O Box 333, National working secretariat, Bakassi Na Cameroon building, Bomaka, Buea S.W.R Cameroon.</p>	<p>Tel: (+237) 674 690 306 / 673 970 009 Email: popolaractionparti@gmail Facebook: Popular Action Party Twitter: Popular Action Party</p>
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Press Statement

The Popular Action Party (PAP) by this press statement wishes to congratulate the *Coalition of Cameroon Federalist Groups and Activist (CCFGA)* and all federalist political parties, opinion holders, members of the civil society who for once, saw the need to come together under a common platform to push forth for a return to federalism in Cameroon. This Federalist groups and activists' platform is therefore timely as it comes at a time when the Popular Action Party is pushing for a Platform for a credible Anglophone President to put the country on the right track and redress the numerous problems of which according to the PAP can be best solved under a well designed Federal structure. I therefore encourage every Cameroonian to rally round and garner support for this initiative which until now, remains the one and only historical and constitutional way out in the face of the present stalemate.

Federalism being the most civilized and advanced state of the so-called decentralization that the regime showcases or their Special Status, we urge all of us to stand as a people under this federalist platform and grant ourselves our freedom from political dictatorship, socio-economic stagnation, marginalization and not forgetting the challenges that we face as a (Former Southern Cameroon) and as a country (Cameroon).

We all aspire for a society where we can freely vote our leaders, leaders who are accountable to the masses who give them such power. A society where we all respect the rule of law, a society where no one is above the other or the law. A society where we are tolerant and loving, a society where we are one another's keeper, where one man's problem is everyone's problem. As it stands now, this can only be guaranteed by a federalist system of governance looking at the historical, constitutional and contemporary challenges of Cameroon.

National President



Buea, 23rd November 2021

Njang Denis Tabe

Source : From Njang Denis Tabe archive, Mamfe, March 1922.

APPENDIX 8: FRAMBO LETTER OF RESIGNATION

“You might have been given a letter of resignation by one of the KNC/KPP leaders said to have been my resignation from my party KNDP. I want to inform you that I have no intention to resign from the KNDP but merely signed under force of arm a printed letter presented to me at midnight on Sunday the 8th by Dr. E.M.L .Endeley and N.N. Mbile.

I have since reported this incidence to the police and a statement has been recorded from me about it.

I have the honour to be,

Sir your obedient servant (SGD) D.N.Frambo.

Cc: to Hon.J.N. Foncha premier of the S.Cameroons”

Source : N.N. Mbile, Cameroon Political Story, Memories of an authentic eye witness, pp. 43-44.

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