

Ejagham Cross Border Re-integration between Cameroon and Nigeria 1916-1961

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Abstract: - The 1913 colonial boundaries which came on the heels of a series of Anglo-German border agreements from 1885 officially divided the Ejagham community putting them astride in the German and British territories of Cameroon and Nigeria, respectively. This colonial administrative surgery was plotted along the Cross River and the Awa stream which lay within the Ejagham land. These natural waterways that hitherto served as an economic vacuum for loose exploration and exploitation became lines of political and economic division among the Ejagham of the two territories. The German attempt to rigidly control and prevent the flow of goods and people to the British territory seriously affected, although did not completely perturb the interactions among the Ejagham of both sides in all spheres of life. The article on this premise posits that the German departure from the territory and British succession was a blessing for the Ejagham communities severed by the colonial borders. The British decision to jointly administer the Southern Cameroons as an integral part of South Eastern Nigeria reinvigorated the firm resolve for the Ejagham to re-establish economic and socio-cultural integration on both sides of the border.

Key words: Administration, Border integration, British Cameroon and Nigeria, German Kamerun, Re-integration

I. INTRODUCTION

The German withdrawal from Cameroon in 1916 after the First World War was an opportunity for the Ejagham of Cameroon to renew their old ties with their kin and kith, and Efik trade partners of Nigeria. They earlier expressed their discontent for the German administration through the 1904 resistance and by simply allying with the British forces during the war against the Germans. The British defeat of the Germans and subsequent administration of the area was a changing fortune for the Ejagham people, though still in separate colonial territories but with little or no border control. Cultural and commercial exchanges were reinstated because of British gesture to harmonize the administrative and educational systems of Nigeria and that of Southern Cameroons and by constructing roads linking their Nigerian colony with Southern Cameroons via the Ejagham communities. The British administration willingly or unwillingly revamped the inter Ejagham integration across the international boundary of Cameroon and Nigeria from 1916-1961.

II. THE ANGLO-GERMAN INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND THE EJAGHAM DISSECTION

The Ejagham were situated in a very strategic area along the banks of the Cross River (See Map I) where trade was flourishing between their territory of Cameroon and the British territory of Nigeria long before the German annexation. The people were well established middlemen in the trade that existed between the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon and the Cross River region of British Nigeria. (Atem, 2001,24).The Germans obsessed by the zeal to maximize commercial profit, developed strategies to undercut the middleman monopoly which the people had enjoyed for a very long while. This was quite similar to the attempt by Adolf Woermann to circumvent the middleman monopoly of the Duala indigenes at the coast who were making exceeding profits in the coastal trade with Europeans (Ardener, 1968, 22).

The German penetration into the Ejagham area was as a result of the Germano-Duala treaty in 1884 which marked a veritable beginning of exploitation of the Cameroon territory. Their commercial ambitions in the territory needed to be buttressed by the political support of the home Government. (Temgoua 2014, 4) After the political grip of the coast of Cameroon and guided by the Hinterland theory of the Berlin West African Conference of 1884-85 and the uncontrollable expansion of the British from the coast of Calabar to the Upper Cross River Basin, the Germans decided to accelerate their political influence to cover the cross river area where their interest converged with that of the British. With this conflicting interest over the area there was need for diplomatic arrangement. On 4 March 1885, Herbert Bismarck, the son of the German Chancellor went to London to negotiate a settlement on the Anglo-German colonial differences (Anne 1970, 67). On 29 April 1885, the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Gravelle notified his counterpart on the German side, Count Munster, of the willingness of Her Majesty's Government to agree to a specific line of demarcation which will divide their respective spheres of interest on the Gulf of Guinea. On 7 May, Count Munster replied to the British informing them of the acceptance of his government for necessary arrangements to demarcate the

region officially.¹ The first boundary agreed upon by Britain and Germany to divide the people and the ethnic groups that made the region including the Ejagham was,

.... the interior right river bank of Rio del Rey from the mouth of the river to its source, thence strikes direct to the left river bank of the Old Calabar or Cross River and terminates after crossing that river,... of longitude east of Greenwich, marked "Rapid" on the English admiralty chart.²

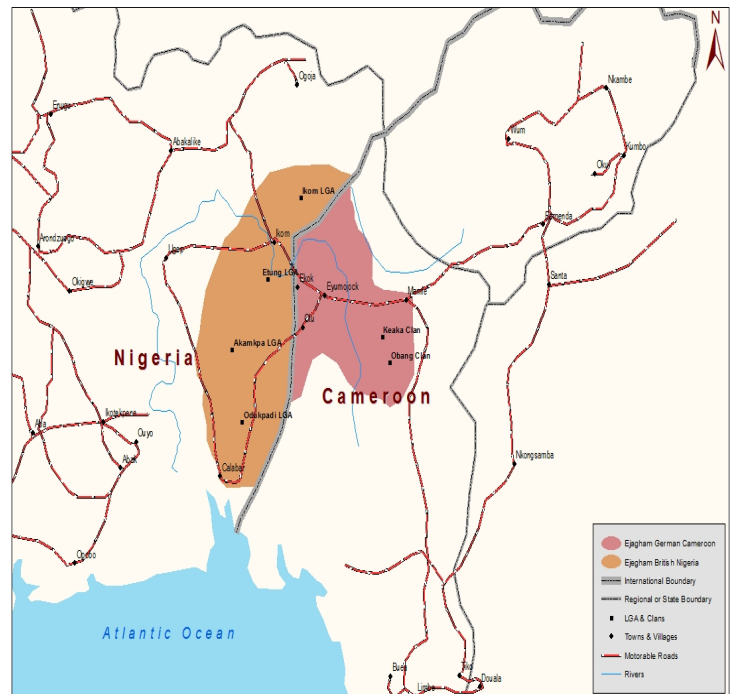
The Rio del Rey point was proposed by the British who were convinced that it will safeguard the Efik commercial empire which was of their economic benefit since they abandoned the Cameroon Mountain project. The Germans, on the other hand, based their argument in respect to the Cameroon boundary on the hinterland theory. The legal acquisition of Douala gave them the exclusive right to exploit the region beyond the effectively occupied territory. It was for this reason that they proposed the Rio del Rey – Cross River region as the international boundary. With the above agreement, Britain promised not to make any acquisition of territory, accept any protectorate or interfere in any way in the German sphere of influence. By 1893, this boundary line on the Rio Del Rey was subjected to amendments due to some new developments up to 1913. Despite the amendments the Ejagham ethnic group remained hived off between the German and the British territory of Cameroon and Nigeria until 1916 when the Germans were evacuated from Cameroon. The new colonial boundary and the Germans administrative and economic policies alienated the Ejagham culturally and economically until the departure of the Germans.

III. GERMAN OCCUPATION OF THE EJAGHAM

The Germans did not immediately occupy the Ejagham land as soon as the boundary agreement with the British was established in 1885. The German occupation and administration of the Ejagham effectively started because of the British interest in preventing the split of the ethnic group. After attempts to preserve the Ejagham unity botched, the Germans decided to effectively occupy their land, which involved the putting in place of different aspects of their administration. The treaty did not automatically place the Ejagham under the German protectorate, for they were far off the coast where the Germans had established their administration. But the Berlin West African Conference of November 1884-85, which took place under the auspices of the German Chancellor, Otto Von Bismarck, stipulated among its articles that the interior or the hinterland of any already occupied coast by the European powers could equally be occupied by the same power. This principle was otherwise

known as effective occupation of the occupied area in question (Wesseling, 1996, 118). It was in accordance with this clause of the Berlin Act that the Germans at the coast of Cameroon penetrated and took control of the Ejagham area in the hinterland and made it part of the German Kamerun protectorate. It was this claim that took them right to the banks of the Cross River where they met with the British.

MAP1: THE EJAGHAM LAND IN BRITISH AND GERMAN CAMEROON



Source: Ita Ayuk, "A survey of the Pre-colonial History of Ejagham people", p. vii (Adapted and modified) Drawn by Yungong T. Jong.

The penetration of the Germans into the Ejagham territory was aimed at setting up their administration in the Cross River region bordering the British territory of Nigeria. This was to prevent the British from occupying the entire region. Establishing an effective administration here was also in accordance with the expectations of the Berlin West African Conference which concluded that an effective possession of a huge territory would be recognized after the establishment of an effective administration in the areas. (Wesseling, 1996, 118). The Germans therefore penetrated into this area to link it up with the coast where their administration had been well established.

The Germans also penetrated into the Ejagham region and the territory of Cameroon in general in order to recruit labour for their plantations at the coast. They were investing much in the domain of agriculture at the coast where they first established and opened up plantations. They expected to get labour from the interior of the territory. Since the coastal people could not provide the required labour in these plantations, they turned to

¹ Supplementary Arrangement between Great Britain and Germany Relative to their Respective Sphere of Action in the Gulf of Guinea, 27th July-2nd August 1886.

² Ibid.

the people of the hinterland for labour to meet the demands (Atem, 2001, 24). The Ejagham region and the entire Cross River region was seen as populated land where labour could be recruited and supplied to the coast. The Germans, therefore, embarked on the exploration of the Ejagham area.

The annexation of Nigeria by Britain and their advancement towards the banks of the Cross River created a lot of panic among the Germans because they could easily lose the whole of the Cross River region to Britain. They were determined to divert the flow of trade from that region to the region occupied by Germany. (Atem, 2001, 25) They thwarted this flow of trade to Nigeria by changing the direction of trade. They did this by creating over land routes from the Ejagham region to the Cameroon coast. In order to secure this trade, they quickly constructed a station at Nchabit and later at Nsanakang in 1899 and in Agborkem Ossidinge in 1900.³ The Germans' zest to contain trade and movement across the border was shattered with the advent of the First World War which led to their defeat by the joint British and French coalition in 1916 and the subsequent partition of German Kamerun into British and French Cameroons. The Ejagham integration came into limelight when Britain decided to further divide its own part into Southern and Northern Cameroons and administering them as separate parts of its Nigerian territory.

IV. THE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION AND THE EJAGHAM INTEGRATION

The Ejagham of Cameroon came under British administration immediately following the defeat of the Germans after the First World War. The principal British interest in this area was to switch the trade that the Germans had controlled during their occupation of the territory. The Ejagham area had once been under the Efik commercial influence and when the Germans occupied and established their trade post at Nsanakang, it prevented the flow of trade to the port of Calabar controlled by Efik and Ejagham middlemen. There was euphoria everywhere among the African and the British when the area became British territory, despite the conditions laid down by the League of Nations and the Mandates Commission. Prior to the end of the war, Lord Lugard Governor General of Nigeria had ordered British political officers into the parts of Cameroon occupied by British troops, following instructions from the Colonial Office (Niba, 1986, 50). On 1 April 1916, the Governor-General personally installed British Officials in Buea the capital of what eventually became the Cameroons Province. The British decision to administer their own territory of Cameroons as an integral part of Southern Nigeria automatically reinstated the once divided Ejagham community under one colonial administration and this was in conformity with article 9 of the League of Nations which states that "Mandatory shall have all

powers of administration and legislation in areas subject to the mandate. This area shall be administered in accordance with the laws of the Mandatory as an integral part of his territory"

V. THE EJAGHAM AS INTEGRAL PART OF SOUTHERN AND EASTERN NIGERIA

The reintegration of the Ejagham of Cameroon and Nigeria emanated from the British decision to jointly administer their mandated territory of Cameroon together with their Nigerian territory. The reasons for the British decision are contained in the Cameroons Annual Report to the Mandate Commission of the League of Nations in 1929. According to the report:

... the territory is administered as an integral part of Nigeria although it is not, and will not become an integral part of that country. Its size, situation, and bipartite shape preclude it from being financially autonomous if the standard of administration and development is to be maintained at a level which would be compatible with the due performance of the obligation of trusteeship. The economic advantages which accrue to such a territory as the Cameroons under British mandate from being administered as an integral part of its great neighbour Nigeria are indeed many, and by utilising the resources of central and departmental organisation of Nigeria, the mandatory power is able to offer to an area under an entirely separate organisation.⁴

There were other reasons beside economic ones. The British found it easier and more convenient to extend their Nigeria administrative machinery to British Cameroon, than setting up an entirely separate structure for the new territory. Such a separate administration would have suffered from the dearth of trained personnel. They might not have been able to provide enough colonial officers to administer the territory. This was because even at the local level, the personnel that had served the Germans neither understood the English Language nor were versed with the British system of administration.⁵

Furthermore, in the Ejagham area formerly under German rule no schools were established that would have possibly trained some personnel. That is the more reason why the entire area was ruled directly by the Germans themselves.⁶ The only local Ejagham traditional rulers who assisted in governing the people as already stated were the chiefs of Ossing and Kembong who were given some powers to try minor cases because of their loyalty to the Germans during the 1904

³ NAB, File No.133/1927 An Assessment Report on the Ekwe District of Mamfe, p.3.

⁴ NAB *British Cameroons Annual Report*, 1929, p.45.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ NAB File No.1034 Ossidinge Division Annual Report 1961.

Ejagham revolt.⁷The British authority had to integrate the administration of Cameroon with that of Nigeria so as to utilise Nigerians as administrators in the Cameroon territory.

The initial phase of integration was the setting up of administrative structures in Cameroon that linked up with those in Nigeria. The British Cameroons Order in Council of 1923 laid down principles for the territory to be partitioned into North and South. This was to effectively integrate the respective territories with their corresponding Nigerian Provinces in terms of religion, geographical proximity and ethnic affinities. The area from the South of Lake Chad towards Gembu was designated “Northern Cameroons” and incorporated into three different provinces of Northern Nigeria. The Districts of Dikwa, Bema and Gwoga were incorporated with the Bornu Province. The Adamawa Province absorbed the Districts of Gulak, Mubi, Ganye, Serti and Gembu, while Baissa District went to Benue Province (Atem, 1984, 171-177).

The southern region from Gembu to Victoria on the Atlantic Ocean was designated “Southern Cameroons” and incorporated into the Southern Provinces of Nigeria as the Cameroons Province. This Cameroon Province comprised of the Districts of Victoria, Kumba, Bamenda and Mamfe (Kale, 1967, 9). The Ejagham constituted part of the Mamfe District. The division of British Cameroon and its integration with the corresponding Nigerian provinces was based not only on the already mentioned religious and geographical factors but also on ethnic affinities. It was because of these elements that the Ejagham people were reunited with their kith and kin under British rule in Nigeria. The British initiative to administer Southern Cameroons as an integral part of Southern Nigeria served as a platform for the Ejagham re-integration.

The British once more brought the Ejagham together after a long period of economic and political separation. The barriers which were colonial boundaries and language to a large extent reduced the level of ethnic unity among the people. The carving out of British Cameroons offered the Ejagham the opportunity to be lawfully identified once more as a unified ethnic group. The feeling of solidarity augmented by the initiatives of some Ejagham elites by 1930 led to the organisation at Oban of the Ejagham Improvement Union (EIU).⁸ Through this union the colonial administration became aware of the fact that the Ejagham people of both Nigeria and Cameroon had a very strong feeling of affinity. Dewhurst, the Provincial Resident attests that on 25, 26 and 28 July 1930, he attended a meeting of the Ejagham Improvement Union held at Oban. The Union was comprised of the Ejagham kinfolk from the Mamfe, Ikom and Calabar Divisions.⁹

During that meeting the Ejagham elites in Cameroon and Nigeria unanimously denounced the name, which referred to them as Ekoi. Ekoi which meant camwood was the description of them by their Efik trade partners in the pre-colonial period. Their main trade item was camwood. During the meeting, they adopted the name “Ejagham” which encompassed all of them. The EIU was not only a forum for ethnic identity, but also acted as a forum that could foster the development of the Ejagham territory through collective requests to the colonial government. It was understood that the call for development would be easily listened to if it was done by a single association of many clans rather than each clan acting alone. The germ of the idea was stimulated in the 1930s by the existence of similar ethnic associations such as the Ibiobio and Igbo State Unions.¹⁰ Through the EIU, the people persistently clamoured for the construction of a highway linking Calabar in Nigeria to Mamfe in Cameroon, and also Ikom to Mamfe.¹¹ These roads had the potential of opening up the Ejagham country to numerous economic and social opportunities. All the development problems and aspirations of the Ejagham were canalised through this union.

After the EIU had established the foundation for ethnic unity, visionary leaders like Ntoe Ika Ika of Qua II in Big Qua Town and some of his sub chiefs took upon themselves to revamp and rejuvenate the collective Ejagham consciousness throughout the 1940s.¹² This was done through visits to the Mbakang village in Cameroon where they claimed ties of historical origin. During his visit to Mbakang in 1947, Ntoe Ika solicited for an accredited delegation to be sent to Calabar on the occasion of his father’s funeral ceremony that was scheduled some few weeks after the visit (Takang, 1986, 70). This was to reciprocate his trip and maintain their ancestral links.

In 1949, Ntoe Ika made another trip to Mbakang to meet the Ejagham of Afap. During this visit, he suggested that the Afap market day be changed from Sunday to Monday because Sunday was supposed to be a day set aside to worship God Almighty (Takang, 1986, 70). The Afap market day was accordingly shifted from Sunday to Monday, thanks to those who wanted to encourage Pan-Ejagham solidarity in Cameroon and Nigeria. His last visit to Cameroon was in the 1950s where he met Chief Tataw of Ossing. During this visit he expressed his inclination to work in collaboration with the Ejagham of Cameroon in order to foster Ejagham unity. He supported the initiative of the Ejagham of Cameroon and Nigeria to cooperate in the writing of the Ejagham language (Atem, 1984, 16).

Ntoe Ika was so determined and consistent in his efforts to encourage Pan-Ejagham solidarity in the Southern Cameroons that, he strongly campaigned during the plebiscite among the Ejagham to vote to join the independent Federal Republic of

⁷NAB File No 3364, Af28, Keaka Assessment Report, 1927, p.23.

⁸ CADIST, 1/4/193, pp.25-30. “Ejagham improvement Union” by J.V. Dewhurst.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid, p. 169.

Nigeria. He based his campaign on the fact that the Ejagham had the same historical origin, language, custom and tradition. They had lived together during the pre-colonial period. The plebiscite was therefore another opportunity for them to unite and live forever as one and indivisible ethnic group in one nation state. During the visits of Ntoe, the cultural relation between the Mbakang village and the Qua groups of Calabar were resuscitated through the traditional dance known as *etuk abvi atuh*,¹³ which the people jointly presented to confirm their common ancestral descent (Takang, 1986, 70).

VI. THE CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC REFORMS TO THE EJAGHAM INTERACTION

The socio-economic reforms introduced by the British administration to harmonise development in Nigeria and Southern Cameroons laid the foundation that enhanced the interaction of the Ejagham of both territories. Despite the long neglect of the economic development of the Southern Cameroons, the interaction of the Ejagham in both territories was very favourable. This was largely because of the existence of motor vehicle roads that linked the two regions and also because of there were no restrictions on the movement of persons and goods between Nigeria and Southern Cameroons.

This economic harmonization brought the Ejagham of the Southern Cameroons and Nigeria together once more. The harmonization fostered freedom of movement and trade among the once divided people. The interactions were encouraged from 1921 onward when the fiscal barriers between the two territories shifted to the new borders between British and French Cameroons.¹⁴ Prior to the application of custom tariffs of Nigeria in the Southern Cameroons, the British authority had taken steps to integrate the economy of the two countries. On 29 of March 1916 for example, the Nigerian Governor General had issued a proclamation legalizing the use of Nigeria silver coins in British Cameroon. According to the proclamation, all silver coins which were legal tender in Nigeria were to be legal tender for all purposes in British Cameroon and the rate of exchange was one shilling for one mark. Any coins imported in contravention of the said proclamation were to be seized and the importer was liable to a penalty of twice the value of the imported coin.¹⁵

Furthermore, on the 14 of October 1916, the Nigerian Customs Ordinance was applied to British Cameroon. In 1917, a modification was made on this ordinance stipulating that goods whose exportation was prohibited in Nigeria could also be prohibited in British Cameroon. The ordinance was

¹³*Etuk abhi atuh*, was a form of dance performed only by people of the same blood origin. It is highly discriminatory; membership was only by common ancestral descend. Those whose origin could not be traced or from slave origin are not allowed participating.

¹⁴ NAB, File No. Ph/1915/1,78/15, Proclamation of the Governor General 1917.

¹⁵ Ibid.

modified because of the British desired to control all the exports of British Cameroon.¹⁶ Yet, the German tariff was maintained until 1921 when the Nigeria tariff was extended to British Cameroon. After the British occupied the Southern Cameroons in 1916, they maintained the German tariff which served as a source of revenue for the territory. This revenue enabled them to meet up with the cost of administering the territory. This was because goods from Nigeria in to the new territory were taxed.¹⁷

VII. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MAMFE-IKOM AND CALABAR-MAMFE ROADS

The construction of these major highways laid a solid foundation for Ejagham cross border integration. The Mamfe-Ikom road which passed through Ejagham country was a wonderful commercial network in this part of the Cameroons Province. This and other facilities were required for rapid communication between the province and Nigeria, which facilitated the economic interactions among the Ejagham of both sides. During the dry season when the water level of the Cross River that was the major means of transportation dropped, the road became the means of transportation of produce from the Cameroon territory to Nigeria. This means that the road connected the most populous parts of the Southern Cameroons to the main roads in the Southern Nigeria. It also provided a cheaper outlet for produce via the navigable Cross River to Calabar. The road also connected the section of Mamfe to Widikum which was a rich palm belt. This greatly stimulated the palm kernel trade between Widikum and the factory in Mamfe, hence, its transportation to Nigeria.¹⁸

Prior to its construction, the British attached little importance to the road because of its timid traffic compared to that of the Calabar–Mamfe road. This Ikom-Mamfe section of the road was not greatly used, except for administrative purposes. In the strict sense of a trunk road, it could not be regarded as an essential means of communication between Bansara Abakiliki in Nigeria and the Southern Cameroons. This was the belief the British had before the construction of the road proper taking into account the little pedestrian traffic compared to that experienced in the route Calabar-Mamfe (Etta, 2007,46) .

The objectives of the British in the construction of the road might not have been met, but to a greater extent it favoured the Ejagham communities both in Nigerian territory and in the Cameroons Province. The people through the Ejagham Improvement Union had been clamouring for such a road to connect their people on both sides of the border. The survey of this Ikom-Mamfe road was preliminarily carried out by Adderley, when he travelled through the area to Lagos. The survey was completed in 1928 by Nash, a road engineer who

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ NAB, File No sp 65939 /1/1926, Ikom-Mamfe Bamenda road.

¹⁸ Ibid.

took over from Fitz Henry.¹⁹ The survey was made possible by the complementary efforts of some Ejagham hunters who had a good mastery of their terrain (Etta, 2007,47).

The construction proper began in 1936 and by 1947 the exercise was completed, connecting the Ejagham villages from Ikom-Ekok through Eyumojock, Ndebaya to Keaka including villages such as Bakwelle, Mpot and Mamfe through the Banyang communities,²⁰ (See map XI). Before the construction of the road most of these villages were hidden in the interior. The deviation of the road from its previous foot track still left some of the villages far away from it. The inhabitants of such villages were persuaded to move to the road sides and resettle. These were villages such as Ekok, Eyumojock, Ndebaya, Akwen and Taboh in Cameroon.²¹

The Calabar-Mamfe road was another major highway that linked up the Ejagham people of Nigeria and those of Southern Cameroons. The pedestrian traffic on this road, especially that to Calabar was considerably higher and the villages along and near the routes derived a prosperous trade in the sale of food to travellers, particularly given the spatial nature of the villages with no market for their farm produce except around the Keaka villages which are gathered in thick cluster round Kembong and are easy to reach the large Mamfe market.²² The idea of the two road networks was to access the immediate border people who were the Ejagham on both sides of the Nigerian-Cameroon border. This was the initiative of the Ejagham Improvement Union, which argued that if the roads could pass through all the Ejagham villages of Southern Cameroons and Nigeria, they would boast their relationship tremendously. Notwithstanding, remote villagers both Nigeria and Cameroon were persuaded to move their villages to the road side. Villages such as Mbeban, Nkame, Nfameyen, Ojock, and Ndebiji in the Nigerian territory migrated to the road side; it was the same for villages in Cameroon.

The construction of these roads brought some economic advantages to the Ejagham. Many villages supplied paid labour for the construction. The money earned from daily payment for labour gave them the opportunity to improve upon their trading activities and fostered greater interaction. Both roads served as a unifying factor for the Ejagham of Cameroon and Nigeria.

VIII. EDUCATIONAL REFORMS AND THE EJAGHAM INTEGRATION

The Ejagham of Nigeria were privileged to benefit from the British system of education before those of the Southern Cameroons. The decision to administer the Southern Cameroons as an integral part of Nigeria automatically expanded the British educational system to it (Ngwar, 1982,14). However, the Nigerian system was extended to

Cameroon through Native Authorities and put in to effect mostly by missionary bodies. This made it possible for the Ejagham communities on both sides of the borders to benefit from the same system of education and even attended same schools.

The colonial educational system in Nigerian which was a consequent of the policy of Indirect Rule, which Lord Lugard had devised for British West African colonies. The system was extended to the Southern Provinces of Nigeria after it had been tested in the Muslims Provinces of Northern Nigeria. Southern Cameroons further adopted this educational system when it became a British mandated territory and administered as an integral part of Southern Nigeria.²³ It was against this background that the Ejagham began to benefit from British schools that were established in their area due to the same language of instruction other than the German.

In 1922, the Native Administration had a very flourishing school at Mfuni that initially began with 80 pupils on the roll, with an average attendance of about 75.²⁴ The school was staffed by a teacher and an assistant. Much of the teaching was done in the local dialect.²⁵ Another Native Authority school was opened at Ndebaya. After the construction of the Ekok-Mamfe road in the late 1940s this school was later transferred to Eyumojock in 1952 after migration of the people of Eyumojock to the new road in 1951. Before the opening of the first school in the Ejagham area those will to go to school attended schools in the British territory of Nigeria. Schools located at the Cameroon-Nigeria border served Ejagham villages in both Cameroon and Nigeria. The primary school at Otu village in Cameroon for example benefited the Ejagham communities in Nigeria such as Ekang, Mfaniyen, Nkame and Ojock (Etta, 2007,84).

As concerns post-primary education, the Ejagham did not have any of these institutions. Early institutions in the territory were the Catholic Teacher Training College set up at Njinikom in Bamenda Division in 1944 before it was moved to Bambui in 1947, the year the Basel Mission opened theirs at Batibo in the same Division. This was followed by the Basel Mission secondary school in Bali in 1949. Before then the government had established the first and only technical institution in 1952, the government Trade Center at Ombe, some twelve kilometres north of Victoria. In 1956 the first secondary school for girls was founded by the Catholic Mission at Okoyong in Mamfe.²⁶ Of course, some smart Ejagham sons and daughters benefited from these early post-primary colleges in Cameroon as well as from those in Nigeria because education in the Southern Cameroons was overwhelmingly primary throughout the colonial period with very few post primary. Southern Cameroonians went to other secondary and post-secondary institutions in Nigeria. The

¹⁹ NAB, File No sp 65939 /1/1926, Ikom-Mamfe Bamenda road.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² NAB, File No. 1460/1937 intelligent Report on Kembong Area.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ NAB File No 3364, Af28, Keaka Assessment Report, 1927, p.36.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

Ejagham benefited the most from such institutions because of their proximity to Nigeria. As early as 1937, Nigeria already had twenty-seven secondary schools, twenty six in the South and 1 in the North. The harmonisation process permitted the Ejagham to fit in the educational system of Nigeria providing an enabling platform for cross border integrations given the fact that most of schools were found in Nigeria.

IX. CONCLUSION

The German evacuation from the Cameroon territory in 1916 after the First World War was a changing fortune for the Ejagham community which lay astride the Cameroon-Nigeria borders. After about 32 years of alienation from each other due to the Anglo-German colonial political and economic policies of severely restricting cross border movement and trade. The British acquisition of Southern Cameroons resuscitated and reintegrated the Ejagham cross border interaction through their decision to harmonise colonial administrative and educational policies of Nigeria and Southern Cameroons. The English language, Pidgin English and the Ejagham all permitted the Ejagham community on both sides of the border to effectively interact with each other more than when German colonial policy and Language alienated them culturally, politically and economically.

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