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Distortions on Cameroon's War-Time Economy, 1914-1916

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Abstract

Purpose. The paper examines the degree of turbulence that was meted on the colonial economy of the Cameroons between 1914-1916.

Methodology: The study was built on the theoretical method, garnered largely from secondary sources, and an analytical pattern that is highly conventional.

Results: The indicated that wartime conditions led to increased distortions on Cameroon's economic patterns especially in the form of higher taxations, agricultural shifts and restrictive trading regulations and concluded that this metropolitan based economy was literally altered to pilot allied war efforts.

Unique contribution to theory and practice: The paper recommends that, a shift from the archaic system of bitter revanchist that placed nation-states at war with each other as a necessary corollary for imperial expansion, for a more peaceful approach to cross country rifts, would lessen future tensions and make futile any eminent war with bitter lessons on world economies even as national rivalries persist until the 21st century.

Key Words: *Distortions, Cameroon, Wartime, World War One, Economy and Trade*

INTRODUCTION

General surveys of the First World War in Africa always discuss the importance of the economic participation of the colonies to the war effort. As Hew Strachan noted in his financing the First World War, historians have generally neglected economic agents such as war financing, probably because its administration was not apparently decisive to the outcome of the war (Hew, 2004). However, not only that but the European powers' capacity to effect a maladjustment on the economic order of colonial states like Cameroon in the midst of wartime escalations in a careful scheme to get the colonized peoples contribute, (financially and militarily, as carriers, porters, and spies), towards the European war. Colonies in Africa and elsewhere were important venues for organizing the war and were used by colonial powers both to contribute to the war in Europe and to finance the campaigns in Africa and this could not be realized without a total overhaul of the economic patterns of these territories where the "smoking gun" was pointed.

There is no comprehensive analysis on the economic distortions mated in colonial state of Cameroon though this African colony participated in the war effort. The subject is treated only incidentally by the works that deal with specific African colonies during First World War. As in the case of the war economies, and history of Cameroon since 1800, the lack of a thematic approach, in favour of a more country –or regional-based treatment of the First World War in Cameroon, produced a patchy, even if in some cases very detailed, picture of the waring situation of the colony with scant overview at the economic distortions imposed on the colonial state between 1914-1916. The war in Africa, had important shifts on colonial economic structures and balances. The limits put on agriculture, taxation, commerce and shipping by the outbreak of hostilities reduced imports and exports and as a consequence, colonial state revenues. All over Cameroon, direct taxation and trade tariffs were increased while agricultural production and construction was stalled. Another direct consequence of the war was the reduced supply of agricultural raw materials and money to this German colony, owing to shipping problems and the lack of metals to produce coins.

Karin Pallaver has argued that some countries were actually only marginally touched by the war, like Ethiopia, while others, like those neighbouring with German East Africa, contributed

significantly both with manpower and the production of food for the troops after an imposed economic turbulence (Pallaver et al 1987). Nonetheless, the outbreak of the war changed the international trade patterns, business environment, crop production and the degree of control of European governments over German Cameroon and other African economies, and this caused a general twist of fortunes on colonial economic designs envisaged by instability, interrupted trade, crime wave, displacement of people from one economic activity to those directly responding to the war-time needs. In view of the foregoing, Ngoh has hailed that the Germans and ally powers, raised and trained Cameroonian soldiers and questions whether the war in Europe was to transcend and include other areas notably the colonies (Ngoh 1996). Taking note that economic progress was impossible in the phase of this devastating war, we thus assert that the participation of the indigenous Cameroonians in the foreign war by 1914, and the war being fought on Cameroonian soil and abroad, involving Cameroonian recruits for European fronts with the ally powers (France, Belgium and Britain) resisting German penetration in the region resulted in the wanton destruction of several economic patterns in the hinterlands of Cameroon where the war occurred, creating trade stoppages, the displacement of the labour economy and rendered food self –sufficiency unattainable at least during the war periods as existing economic systems were watered down to support mostly war demands. Analysis of Cameroon’s economy from 1914 to 1916 helps to illustrate how the Cameroons got integrated in the global economy with the world war I spring injecting major shifts in colonial economic edifices of the Cameroons where the militia was unleashed. More generally, understanding colonial economies during the period helps make clear the real extent of distortion (reorganization) on Cameroon’s economic organization with their contribution in the First World War.

From an African perspective, this territory and most of Africa were already under foreign occupation before World War One began with a well-tailored economic course (destiny) with the Germanization of the territory. The war changed the nationality of the occupiers and simultaneously altered the economic designs and tenacity to which Cameroon’s business environment evolved in the phase of war-time escalations. The article is an attempt to connect the

available evidence and to identify both some general trends in the ways in which the colony was dislocated to contribute to the European war effort.

The alliance system, militarism, economic influences, colonial conflicts, belief in national self-determination, and national rivalries which began in the 19th century had entered the 20th century with an unbearable momentum that could only be deflated through a major war that hit Cameroon and its economic organization. In Europe, the Armistice had silenced the guns on the Western Front the day before this last clash in Africa. Germany had four African colonies in 1914 one of which was Cameroon (Cameroon and territory in northeastern Nigeria) in what was referred to as German West Africa today's Western central African sub region. After already grasping the territory's jurisdictional status, like all German-or Ottoman-controlled colonies-for example, Syria, Lebanon, Togo and Rwanda, Urundi, and "Kamerun," conquered by the Germans in the early twentieth century, became an internationally colonized territory before 1914 under the axes a foreign power working for the "well-being" of those who were then still classified as "natives" (indigenes). When the war began, British and French decision-makers saw Germany's colonies as a threat to Allied shipping in the Indian Ocean and South Atlantic. Colonial shortwave stations and ports could be used to support German commerce raiders. Given the superiority of Allied naval and colonial forces, Britain and France were eager to end the threat and take advantage of their adversary's vulnerable position. The war that began in 1914, and which was to last for 4 years and 3 months, was in many ways entirely novel in human history (Hew, 2004). The war that was fought from 1914-1918 swept across the streets and towns of Cameroon briefly between the period 1914 to 1915 in a wave that witnessed the demise of German business and occupation of Cameroon in 1915 through the military that was unleashed against them by ally forces (Britain and France).

The paper is billed on the Lewis' dual-sector model in development economics. Accordingly, the basic assumption of the epistemology is that there exists surplus labour in the subsistence sectors. It includes labour whose marginal productivity is zero as well as that whose marginal productivity is positive but is less than the institutional wage. This labour comprises farmers, agricultural labourers, petty traders, domestic servants and women. It explains the growth of a developing economy in terms of labour transition between two sectors, the capitalist sector and the subsistence

sector (Lewis, 2003). The surplus labour in the agriculture sector acts as a source of unlimited supply of labour for the manufacturing sector. By unlimited supply of labour, Lewis means that the supply of labour is perfectly elastic at a particular wage. This particular wage is somewhat higher than the institutional wage which each worker in the agricultural sector gets (Lewis, 2003). It hinges on Lewis' dual-sector epistemology to argue that World War I escalations, caused a transition in Cameroon's subsistence wage labour to meet ally war needs in the capitalist sector. It assumes that the belligerent powers-France, Britain and Germany, probably considered as surplus, subsistence labour in the Cameroons and was therefore exploited to aid war efforts to expand former empire territory for capitalist development in Europe by the confrontational nations in which local economy was spasmodically altered. Fazed by this sorry story that inches across a century, it is worth while noting that previous wars such as the French Revolutionary and the Napoleonic Wars had involved as many states and had lasted longer. In every decade since 1815, there had been a war somewhere and thirteen separate wars had been waged in Europe itself, not counting wars fought by the European states outside Europe.

Perhaps, such hostilities often imposed unwanted structural adjustments on the economies affected these wars. But if there has not been general peace, there had been no general war. This was the first general conflict between the highly organized states of the 20th century on Cameroonian territorial space which were able to command energies of all their citizens involving indigenous Cameroonians to mobilize the productive capacities of modern industries, and to call upon the resource or modern technology to find new methods of destruction and defense. It was the first war on the scale large enough to dislocate that international economy and that of Cameroon in particular which had grown up during the 19th century. It was the first between the European nations which collectively controlled most of the rest of the world. The war was fought with tenacity in Europe, and Cameroon to a point of exhaustion or collapse and with unprecedented changes in the economic set up of Cameroon's colonial economy and destruction to respond to the war-time demands of the belligerent/antagonizing forces on Cameroonian soil. This was so because the two sides-the Allies and the central powers were so evenly matched and had for long prepared for the battle. It was fought on land and above land, on sea, and under the sea. The use



of tanks and air planes dreadnaughts and submarines, made war-fare 3 dimensional. The “*Great war*” as it quickly came to be called got so utterly out of hand, as an instrument of policy with significant alterations of Cameroon’s colonial economy to contribute towards war-efforts as Britain and France took the war from Europe to Cameroon, a German possession in German West Africa to settle old colonial rivalries that demanded unlimited liabilities from the local economy (Elango, 1985). It’s greatest novelty, historically, was a remarkable disparity between the end sought, the price paid and the result obtained. The 1914 war seemed to have taken Cameroon and the world unaware. This was because the growing tension according to the observers had passed given that, relations between some countries had improved. For instance, France and Germany had concluded an agreement in February over economic spheres of influence in Turkey. Britain and Germany had operated in the Balkan crisis in 1913 and June 1914 had reached an agreement over the future of the Portuguese colonies and the Baghdad rail way. By 1914, there were indications that governments were increasingly cooperating in the management of common affairs, but the up spring of a global war with Cameroon at the epicenter of battle left the bartered colonial economy of this triangular former German possession with serious lessons to be learned (Elango, 1985).

Pre-World War I Colonial Economy Of Cameroon

In the early 19th century, there was considerable activity in Cameroon by British and American missionaries, but a German connection began only when the Woermann Company of Hamburg built a warehouse in 1868 on the estuary of the Wouri river. Other German traders followed in sufficient numbers to send requests home for the appointment of a consul. Their hopes were met in full by Bismarck's dramatic decision in 1884 to establish a German empire in Africa. Gustav Nachtigal arrived in Cameroon in that year and made a treaty with one of the local kings and annexed the region for the German emperor. A consul who was appointed before the year was out, followed by a governor in 1885 (Eyongetah & Brian 1974). The Germans had considerable difficulty in enforcing their authority over the colony. German colonial economy was the economic undertaking which were operated by the colonialist or was the king of the economy introduced by the colonialists in their colonies. These included agriculture, mining, communication and transportation of commerce and trade. The colonialists in Cameroon introduced this kind of

economy in order to fulfill their economic demands such as raw materials, cheap labor, areas for investments and areas for settlement. It was export-import oriented colonial economy specialized in the production of raw materials for the metropolitan industries and importation of manufactured goods in the colony. It was based on the exploitation of indigenous resources such as man power, land, and so on. It was based on monoculture system of production. They specialized in the production of major commodities such as rubber, palm oil and cocoa in Cameroon. It involved the building of physical infrastructures such as roads, harbours and railways for easy transportation of raw materials via the use of cheap African labour and raw materials. It was characterized by domination of this European power. Colonial production was based on coercion.

At first, like other colonial powers in Africa, they left the local administration largely to commercial companies. These were granted concessions over vast territories and ruthlessly used forced labour to make a profit on banana, rubber, palm-oil and cocoa plantations (Eyongetah & Brian 1974). Agriculture prevailed with the German West African colony with a mono-cultural plantation system that was dependent on the exploitation of indigenous labour for the realization of this plantation schemes. This witnessed the mass exodus of indigenous Cameroonians (men, women and children) from the hinterlands to be employed as labourers in the coastal plantations. This was especially the case with the civil administration of Germans in the Bamenda grassfields who were more concern with the only “thing” they found economically profitable-human resources (Nkwi & Warnier 1982). Chilver rightly asserts that German firms found the Grassfields disappointing. The region was “devoid of worthwhile surpluses of palm oil” and was “not significantly blessed with resources of ivory and rubber except Kola which repaid the heavy cost of collection and transport to the coast” (Chilver 1963 91; Chilver 1902-1954; 1963 89-139). Man power was the only exploitable labour for the coastal plantations (Nkwi 1989). Perhaps, plantation agriculture was not the first form of agrarian system in the territory that witnessed the exploitation of labour. A traditional system was in practice. Although the imperial masters failed to improve this system and relied more on encouraging the plantation system, both systems dominated the agricultural economy of the colonial state. (Basung 1916- 1960; 1976 16-17). Basung has maintained that this oversight was dangerous for the economic development of the territory

because a large population of the territory lived on the system (Basung 1916- 1960; 1976 16-17). Positing further, he contends that the dichotomy between the traditional and modern (Western) agriculture thus produced an imbalance that aggravated the periods of famine that occasionally took place (Basung 1916- 1960; 1976 16-17). These early years were not without local troubles for the organization of business in the territory. Internal and external trade for the Cameroons was dominated by German companies like the Woermann of Hamburg, Jantsen and Thormahlen on the eve of the war. But Cameroon is moving gradually towards a more state-controlled administration when its existence as a German colony is brought to an abrupt end. When World War I break's out in 1914, aligning France and Britain against Germany, the two German colonies on the Gulf of Guinea are in an impossible position. These turns of events marked the beginning of turbulence in the economic regime of the colonized territory in the build up to World War I.

Wartime Shifts in the Colonial Economy of Cameroon

Some major changes took place in Cameroon's colonial economy with the outbreak of World War I in 1914. Prior to this "Great War" diplomatic manoeuvres had taken place between the British, French and Germans in 1884 in an attempt to annex the Cameroons. At the outbreak of World War, I in 1914, Cameroon was a German possession but was sandwiched between French and British colonies (Nghoh 1996 121). France had the Congo to the south and controlled most of Equatorial Africa. Britain, for her part, controlled Nigeria which boarded Cameroon to the West. The general history of Africa provided a brief overview of the contribution of African economies to the war and of the ways in which colonial economies were re-organized to respond to the war-time demands. In this enterprise, Cameroon and other African economies were integrated into the European war economies and economic relationships (transactions) with metropolitan powers changed in a world dominated by the war (Nghoh 1996 121). The question is whether the war in Europe was to transcend European boundaries to include other areas, notably the German Cameroon colony that changed the economic fortunes of West African possession in a foreign war through which indigenous Cameroonians became deployed as soldiers and porters. This question remained unanswered until early attacks began to be made on German colony in 1914 by some allied powers (Britain and France). In the wake of the 1914 allied aggression it is remarkable to

note that the populace of the former German territory had come under the imperialist economic designs of the Germans under which plantation and subsistence agriculture, trade, business, were practiced simultaneously in a relatively peaceful environment on which business and other economic activities could thrive.

At the time of the outbreak of the Great War, the Cameroonian territory, was entirely colonized by the Germans with the help of the Jantsen, Carl Woermann and Thormahlen firms. Since Germany constituted the prime target of the ally forces in Africa, as a consequence, virtually the entire nation of Cameroon and African continent was involved in the conflict where ever Germany had stepped foot. The more direct effects in this German sphere were felt in the economy as the war was actually fought on several theatres in Cameroon, for example the German colonies and the neighboring territories, and in those areas where soldiers were recruited for the European fronts. However, all the peoples of Cameroon and their economy were involved in the war, either directly, through the production of strategic materials to sustain the European war effort, or indirectly, because of disruptions to internal and cross -border trade, as well as the exclusion of German companies from Cameroon and African markets. In actual fact, to indigenous Cameroonians who fought as soldiers in Europe or carried munitions and food on African battlefields, and to Cameroonians who contributed to the war off the battlefield with their labor and their produce, the war seemed to revolve on displacing economic priorities on the colonized Cameroonians (labour, time, economic preferences) for the war (Pallaver Karin 1914-1918-online; Daniel Gatrell et al 2015).

These changes to the economic life of the Cameroonian peoples was not often received with good tidings. Evidence from the history of the Cameroons showed that the Dualas resented German tactics of trying to get them out of their fishing and middle man trade economy, to work as carriers during the August 1914 war (Eyongetah and Brian 1974). Rudin on the economic history of the Cameroons has maintained that the Germans had long disliked the Dualas because of their trade and because of their refusal to work on the plantations or to carry goods for white traders. Positing further, Rudin contends that, Natives regarded such work as beneath them so long as it was possible to make a good living from their trade monopoly. As natives were compelled to give up their trade

many tuned to fishing and to farming. For many natives the land they owed offered the sole remaining hope of making money by selling at the very highest prices. (Rudin 1884 -1914 409). Moving them from their land and fishery for the war-time demands, Rudin articulates that this meant they claimed that, those who were dependent upon fishing and upon farming were now being forced to live at greater distances from the river and from their farms. (Rudin 1884 -1914 409). This change in the economic fortunes of the indigenous Cameroonians in the war years which was apparently the same picture for their African equivalents where the war was fought arguably depicts that, the Dualas like other indigenous Cameroonians had developed a capitalistic mentality in their local economy centered on profit and did not want an occasion where their services would be exploited by the Germans for the war at the detriment of their private sector economy characterized by fishing, sales of landed property and farming. Concurrently, the agitations emanating from some of these Cameroonians (Dualas) to serve as carriers for the Germans brings us to the conclusion that these indigenous Cameroonians were not only profit oriented but were conservative to any form of economic adjustments/ changes lavished on them by the Germans as a fallout of the August 1914 war. (Rudin 1884 -1914 409). A prognosis of the maladjustments suggest that Cameroonians were forced with obdurate structural adjustments to leave their subsistence crop sector to become porters, carriers and even combatants for a war that was not, as the 1914 hostilities fought on mainland Cameroon caused a shift in labour preferences from the subsistence sector, namely, agriculture, for militia campaigns championed by capitalistic high wage paying countries-France, Britain and Germany, is consistent with the basic tenets of Lewis' dual-sector model. Accordingly, it postulates that labour will leave the subsistence sector to the capitalist sector where there is high wage demand (Lweis, 2003) and World War I though unprecedented and forcefully impressed on the indigenous people, probably presented hopes for higher wage settlements in the post-war era for those engaged in the capitalistic class imperial war imposed by Britian and France on the German occupier of the Cameroons.

To dissent from the above epistemological application, the reluctance of the indigenous people to yield to Germany's intrigues that sought to lure Cameroonians to leave their subsistence activities to aid war-time efforts as earlier cited deserves a second look. Accordingly, the resistance of the

native Duala amid German attempts to alter their economic set up and to forcefully employ them as war-time carriers and soldiers with the war that caught them unawares between 1914 to 1915 needs to be understood against the background of Manga Bell's telegram dressed to stage a protest against the Reichstag on January 15th, 1913 against the actual work of moving natives and their huts into new settlements between 1912 to May 1914 by Governor Ebermaier. The Reichstag became interested in the matter very early and by May 1914 the agitation of Manga Bell took more serious turn. He formally admitted that he had arranged to send Ngoso Din to Germany. What was worse was his effort to win the support of a number of powerful chiefs in the Cameroons against Germany. There is some evidence as early as December 1913 to show that the natives were planning some to kind of appeal to the English and the French. The coming of war in August 1914 made it appear likely that the Duala people might aid Germany's enemies. Against this backdrop in the Cameroons, and German East Africa the discontent of the peasantry African against the reorganization of their economy prior to the war had nursed in these indigenous Africans the brute attitude to oppose German calls for military duties whose direct impact was to be felt of human cargoes quitting vital economic activities like trading, farming, and fishery to support war time efforts. (Rudin 1884 -1914 409). Admitted, it can be argued that cash deficits were to be incurred by these Africans by foregoing their indigenous economies activities to assume others like carriers, porters, and food suppliers in the midst of the war that often placed their lives at great risk. Elena has aptly articulated that the labour force of the economy also changes with the effects of war most often due to the drastic loss of life, change in population, the labour force size shrinking due to the destruction of infrastructure which in turn allowed for a deterioration of productivity in the near future in the economy. (Ianchovichina, Elena & Ivanic 2014; 2016).

A war that was fought on both land and air could not have escaped distortions on the agricultural economy of the territory. The inddigenes of Bafut, Bali, and Nso had been involved in the war to aid ally powers (France and Britain). In view of this perspective, one must needs argue that agricultural as a major economic activity of the indigenous peoples was disrupted in the following ways: the farming seasons for maize were altered for the period that characterized this war (1914-1918) in the Bamenda grassfields and the direct effects were felt on the melt down of corn yields

as the years went by. Secondly, by involving the Bamenda indigenes in the war meant that labour out was reduced from maize farming to assist ally war time efforts with an inherent decline on maize production whose fallout became food self-insufficiencies in maize production. Although some (Hyla Myint) will be quick to argue that Africans who were integrated into supporting ally war efforts like carriers, potters and soldiers must have been idle resources (Myint) or labourers who were not being utilized (employed) in their African territories, begs us to contrast this orthodoxy as the general history of the Cameroons and even Africa showed that every indigene was first an agriculturalist before the war displaced them into military services and even moved them out of other economic activities (Fanso 4-12). By involving the indigenous labour force from Cameroon in a foreign war, the following shifts were recorded; the labour force of the economy had to be changed with the effects of war. The pre-existing labour force was affected in a multitude of ways most often due to the drastic loss of life, change in population, the labour force size shrinking due to the destruction of infrastructure which in turn allowed for a deterioration of productivity in the near future in the economy (Ianchovichina, Elena & Ivanic 2014; 2016).

There was no doubt that this armed conflict that carried Cameroonians to the diaspora directly injured, and caused the death of more men than women in that combatants were predominantly male. This sharply distorted the economy's sex distribution of population with an overthrow by women for positions especially in the farms and households previously held by men for families victimized by the war. Twenty first century, political scientist Povey in explaining these wartime maladjustments has hailed that when men head off to war, women take over the jobs they left behind (Povey Tara 2016). This caused an economic shift in certain countries because after the war these women usually want to keep their jobs. In affirming to the aforementioned citation, the recruitment of male contingents from the Cameroons especially in the Bakweri land and Bali Nyonga to join German, French and British military regiments probably created a male labour deficiency in the territory (Eyongetah & Brain 1974). The fallout of these developments was an unprecedented inter-change that witnessed female inhabitants taking up jobs previously held by men prior to the war. In women and work in Iran, Povey pointed out that, war reducing the supply of male labour is one factor. Following up this master piece on war economy, Povey reiterated that

war increased the number of women seeking work or resisting exclusion. Thus, concluding that war made many women to even occupy important positions for the first time” (Povey Tara 2016). While this war altered the gender structure in key positions in Cameroon’s economy and other Africa colonies, by 1916, it would be adequate to state that Cameroonian women who experience these wartime conditions surely took over their husband’s jobs occasioned by displacements these male contingents for war, (massive recruitment of men than women for war) and received more economic equality as a result. It was against this backdrop that wartime tensions in the Cameroons gave the latitude for trade, agriculture and business arrangements to take a different twist in the inter war years.

Disruption of Trade, Agriculture, Employment and Restrictions on Colonial Economy

Whether or not directly involved in the fighting, nearly all of Cameroon’s territory and continental Africa was affected by the wartime economic twists ensued by shortages of imports caused by scarcity of shipping, the sudden booms in demands for strategic war resources, and the exclusion of German companies from African trade (Marc; 2003). The outbreak of the war created problems in shipping that caused a reorganization of the international trade on which the economy of Cameroon had depended. During the war, shipping remained vital to maintain economic links between Cameroon, Germany, and Europe but pre-war shipping patterns that coordinated business between Cameroon and the German industrial firms like the Hamburg, Jantson and Thomahlen were disrupted by higher freights and increased scarcity of tonnage, as well as by the German U-boat campaign (Rudin; 1963; Rudin, 415). Shipping shortages resulting from the war tensions produced bottlenecks that distorted international trade. Since the war laid a plain field where maritime trade could not flow smoothly especially with the German U-boat campaign on the coastal region of Duala, shipping shortages became particularly evident for indigenous Cameroonians who produced commodities which were not essential for the war effort. These included tropical cash crops such as banana, tea and cocoa. In affirmation to this fact, Killingray has hailed that in the Gold Coast, the export of cocoa was dramatically reduced to favour the export of oleaginous products, and this affected local producers, middlemen, merchants and shippers (Killingray; 1978). (David, 19/1 (1978), 42). Before the beginning of military hostilities between



the French, British and Germans in the colonial state, German commercial houses had dominated the import and export trade in many West African colonies with Cameroon as the core of business for German industrial trade in West Africa. War pundits like Daly in affirming to this view in Cameroon and the rest of German West Africa have argued that in Sierra Leone, for example, they enjoyed an 80 percent share of the total trade (Daly 1986; Daly 1898-1934; Cambridge 1986, 228). Paradoxically, the hatred that had marked relations in Europe between Germany and the ally forces in the build up to world war I caused the belligerent forces to impose an international ban on all sorts of trade with Germany in the colonies. The immediate effects of this international economic sanction and power diplomacy was felt on Cameroon's business environment with a destabilization of international and internal trade in the colony. What this measure communicated with the outbreak of the war was that, it reduced the number of international agencies and countries trading in Cameroon due to these economic sanctions mated against Germany. The outcome of international commercial on embargo against Germany on Cameroon's economic structure was that fewer goods or product variety was limited for the populace of Cameroon (Reynolds et al 1916 77). This was remarkably envisaged by the acute shortage of flour, liquor that were being imported into Cameroon from neighbouring Nigeria during this period by German commercial enterprises like the Humburg companies that were present in the territory. However, the Allied colonies with German companies and commercial houses (Crowder; 1985). (Crowder 1985 301). Prior to these, the war German companies had been very powerful in the Nigerian market, dominating Lagos' export trade, and maintaining a good share of the imports. The ban on trade with the enemy cut off commercial links between Nigeria and Germany. With no more German competition, British merchants could increase their share of the colony's trade (Rudin; 1968). (Rudin, Germans in Cameroons, 401-429.) Perhaps the tenacity to which world war I hit the hinterlands from Bafut, Mankon, Bali, Duala, Yaounde and Nsanakang leaves us with the puzzle to conclude that not only trade and businesses were hard hit in the economy but also everyday activities of the communities in Cameroon were disrupted, property damaged. Admittedly, it is undeniable that as people became displaced by the warring parties, they could not continue to work or keep their businesses open, which caused damages on the war infested economy. While the economic defects waxed

gross, colonial finance was channeled to foot war efforts meanwhile factory, plantation and subsistence agriculture and indigenous craft industry suffered budget deficits.

Against this backdrop with the ban on German companies in Africa, German shipping companies had to be withdrawn for example the Woermann Linie in Cameroon and West Africa. The elimination of German competition changed pre-war economic systems of sea trade and ushered the inaugural for new business networks/opportunities for British shipping companies, especially Elder Dempster in the Cameroons (Henry; 1999). In general terms, war conditions favoured large European shipping and commercial companies at the expense of petty Cameroonian producers (Daly 1986, 228.) The alteration of pre-war commercialization patterns and problems in shipping reduced the amounts of goods that could be imported to the Cameroons and the entire structure of the economy. At the same time, the wartime demands for foodstuffs and labor increased internal price levels and caused a rise in import prices and the cost of living. That is, prices rose more rapidly than wages and this caused a sharp increase in the cost of living and contributed to heightening social conflict.

As a continuing discussion on the distortion of Cameroon's economy during the war, two main aspects have to be taken into consideration. On the one hand, the German colonial government tended to expand the production of already existing exports that could be useful for the war effort, and tended to neglect those products whose commercialization was made difficult by the outbreak of the war. Such included maize in the Western grassfields and South Wester part of territory. On the other hand, new resources were developed both to sustain the war effort in Europe and to be used as replacements for goods whose trade had been limited by the war. Arguably, these were swift diversifications in the colonial economy that posed challenges for the indigenous peoples towards adapting to the sudden war imposed economic atmosphere. What is more, a resource board was established to control food supplies in the colony. Since the colony was directly involved in the fighting, the production of foodstuffs had to be increased in order to feed local troops and porters. In this vein, Paice has hailed that in German East Africa, the internal food supply was reorganized through the creation of collecting points along the central railway, where food was assembled and then redistributed to the troops. German settlers, who did not enlist in the military,

turned their production of export crops into maize, potatoes and wheat to sustain the troops. (Paice, Tip & Run Weidenfeld & Nicholson 2009 [2007]). The war was a true watershed in the economic history of the Cameroons, as it created a destabilization situation of the indigenous economy and European business, and at the same time caused a closer incorporation of Cameroonian peasants into the colonial economy. Besides, Cameroons suffered from the decline of shipping, loss of markets, high price of imports, loss of manpower diverted to the war and a decrease in public works construction. In the road sector, some constructions in the plantation regions were developed, whereas others were interrupted after the outbreak of the war. The German farms in the territory in particular were ruined and thousands of local workers, mostly poor rural laborers from the grassfields, Duala and Bakweri lands became unemployed. Overall, during the war the colonized Cameroonians and other Africans had to pay more for their non-subsistence requirements, pay more taxes, and supply more labor and produce to the colonial government. At the same time, Cameroonians received the same wages and were confronted with dramatically different market conditions.

As a matter of fact, German colonial markets were entirely cut off from Germany by British naval blockades. Pallaver has asserted that many German factories closed down, because they had no more access to international markets, and also because German settlers enlisted in the military. As a consequence of the blockade, the domestic and civilian economy became largely self-sufficient: quinine, cotton cloth, blankets, khaki shirts, candles, soap, cigarettes, spirits and shoes, among other goods, started to be produced locally. Of the 1,000 kilograms of quinine used during the war, half were produced locally (Pallaver et al 1987; Richard 1978 & 3 September 2015). The need to better exploit the colonial economies to support the war effort caused major state interventions in many of the colonial economies. *Laissez-faire* economic policies that had dominated the British approach were abandoned during the war in favour of a stronger imperial direction and control.

Far from that, the German colonial administration in Cameroon between 1914 to 1915 strictly controlled the local economy in order to respond to the problem of disrupted property inflows and outflows with Berlin to the Cameroons. In Duala, soon after the outbreak of the war, Governor Karl Ebermaier (1862-1943) took control over all supplies and properties in the colony and imposed a

centralized and interventionist control over the economy through the mobilization of manpower (Ngho; 1996: Eyongetah and Brian; 1974), the local manufacture of munitions, a policy of price control and the requisitioning and rationing of foodstuffs (Osuntokun; 2004). (Osuntokun, Michel & Hew 2004, Nigeria 1979, 29, Les Africains 2003, 159). One could best argue that the restriction on internal trade by the Germans during the war years diminished the idea of a free enterprise economy in the colony for indigenous Cameroonians as well as foreign trading companies who had before this war induced atmosphere carried out business transactions with lesser restrictions and control from the administering colonial authorities in Mora, Bafia, Bakweri, Tiko, and Duala. This was never the pre-war organization of the colony in this German controlled sphere. The colonial government in Cameroon fixed the price of foodstuffs and basic commodities: tinned food and cloth were fixed at 25 percent above pricing that prevailed before the war (Strachan 2004; Hew 2004, 24-25). In explaining the forced adjustments in the economic structure of colonial states in Africa victimized by World War I, Myron has clearly stated that African economies were reorganized to favor the production of those commodities that, owing to the war, had become scarce in Europe, or that were strategically important to the war effort. Consequently, those products that had dominated the Cameroon's territory before the war, like oleaginous products or palm oil production were neglected and exports decreased or stagnated (Myron 1991, 29).

As a follow up to this colonially structured economy whose nerve shifted towards meeting war-time demands while brutally distorting economic activities in the colony, Daniel Steinbach has aptly maintained in his rhetoric that all colonial powers promoted the idea of a European civilizing mission – that is bringing the rule of law, order and stability and peace to Africa. Yet in August 1914, they showed little hesitation before turning this part of Africa into a theatre of war. The reasons for this he argues are manifold; Britain was initially concerned with the destruction of naval and communication infrastructure that could allow German boats to attack Allied ships in the Indian Ocean, while Germany wanted to prevent an attack or conquest of the Cameroon colony by attacking its neighbours itself. Quickly, the patriotic desire to support the war by fighting their nations enemy in Africa, combined with the prospect of conquering 'new territory' became destructive on the economic edifice laid down by the opportunist German crusaders in Cameroon

which was beneficial for the indigenous peoples although a larger share of the German Cameroon economy was tailored to profit imperialist designs the most. The war in Cameroon rapidly developed from localized bombardments and skirmishes into a full campaign that lasted for about two years and cost the lives and economic fortunes of many indigenous Cameroonians and foreign firms operating in the colonized state. As case in point was the Hamburg company that was forced to leave the Cameroons by 1915 as a result of the destabilization of German business in the Cameroons envisaged with the high death toll caused by the war. With the death toll of Cameroonian and foreign soldiers on the high during this European campaign, life expectancy for many was shorten and GDP lost as a result of the war. The distortions this had on the economic system at the time was envisaged in the dwindling of the productive population in numbers as lives were cut short from military assaults, skirmishes and bombardments of the antagonizing forces and those Cameroonian directly recruited and serving into the different British, French and German regiments of the war.

Putting aside the real human cost, by making Cameroon a theatre for war, the indigenous peoples involving the Bakweris, Beti-Bulu, and natives hailing from Duala became incorporated in the war as porters, soldiers, and spies. The effects of these break downs on the economy of the colonized peoples inter-a-lia included fear and panic that gripped the economic life of the colonized territory. In explaining these disruptions and accompanying changes imposed on the Cameroons as well as in German West and East Africa by the belligerent ally forces, begs us to argue that the war unleashed serious economic costs- loss of buildings, infrastructure, a decline in the working population, uncertainty, rise in debt and disruption to normal economic activity on Cameroon and her colonized world equivalents arrested by the war. Yet, from some perspectives, the war caused major shifts in the colonial economy of the Cameroons at the time with beneficial effects in terms of creating demand, employment, innovation and profits for business as food supply from across the territory was on high demand. However, agricultural theatres at home and food supplies from Nigeria into the Cameroons was equally disrupted given that trade could not be carried out smoothly in the phase of an armed militia in the 1914-16 era (Nwenfor 2018: 120). This World War I situation in which agricultural production stalled, can be understood from more recent

experiences in the 21st century like the war-torn Afganistone where the fall of the Taliban in 2001 coincided with the severest drought in recorded history, lasting from 1999 to 2002. Both factors together, Hectar intimates, caused crop production in 2001 to be one half of the normal amount (Hectar, 2004).

Perhaps given that the war –time condition injected an uneasy atmosphere of agricultural and political instability, trade, local business and above all plantation agriculture became disserted. The prevailing war-time conditions on these indigenous Africans brings us to the conclusion that, these were ultimately periods of business shocks and slumps in a colony where the indigenous people had been denied their path of economic progress in the phase of a brutally imposed colonialization. As the indigenous Africans were regarded as an inferior class of humans incapable of determining their direction of economic advance. In view of the foregoing surmounting economic derailments lavished on this developing economy alongside other war torn economies across the globe where this “Great war” was manifest,Oxfam in his Africa’s missing millions” (Mitchell 2003a) extrapolated that the cost of war in Africa has been equal to the amount of international aid. Positing further, he asserts that ongoing war and increased availability of weapons led to increase in the rate of armed violence and organized crime. The aforementioned rhetoric begs us to question whether the Cameroons was ever exempted from the atrocities of war some of which included armed violence and organized crime with the outbreak of the world war 1 seeing that it lasted over a year in the territory. Admittedly, since war attributes were generally similarly in the different territories, one must needs evoke that the holocaust of the 1914 military skirmishes, patrols and manoeuvres in this German African possession certainly brought with it wanton atrocities such as organized crime and smuggling especially as Cameroonians from Douala, Mora, Nsanakang, Yaounde, were displaced from their homes, businesses and farms by the terror unleashed on them by the waring militias. This unwanted escalations in the economy probably laid the plain field for tactical ambushes wherein crime and smuggling waxed great in the Cameroons against business, trade and agric-business. It would suppose that indigenous Cameroonians who were employed within the territory saw themselves in unhealthy situations of

joblessness occasioned the sporadic incidences of human displacements and theft stemming from the war.

In reality, the chaotic environment created by the ravaging war on the economic status-quo of this colonial state was grossly negative, as was illustrated by struggles for employment by people physically displaced by the perturbed atmosphere induced by the war in the hinterlands of Cameroon. Credence to this school of thought is Pettinger who literally hailed that the UK struggled after the end of The Neopoleonic war and after the end of the First World War. The author remarks that in the 1920s, the UK struggled with a long period of unemployment-returning soldiers found very poor employment prospects. In explaining the economic atrocities in detail, Pettinger did not mince words when he made the revelation that the German economy was ravaged by the aftermath of the First World War and the demand for reparation payments. Struggling to meet reparation payments, Germany resorted to printing money-leading to hyperinflation (Strachan; 2004). Admittedly, the evidence from the German economic meltdown shows clearly that Cameroon and other major war zones that played host to this catastrophic war have not had it easy on their economic systems during and after 1916. The hard hit implications of these escalations on Cameroon redefined the functioning of the pre-existing colonial economic patterns and laid the basis for a siege of underdevelopment from a peoples whose indigenous socio-economic organization had been hijacked and denied the path of progress by German crusaders before the 1914 episode of a war that became termed the “World War One. The labour needs of the war was a monumental milestone in changing the economic arrangements of the colonial state.

Cameroonian Products for the European War

Although World War I would be won or lost in Europe, the Allies decided in 1914 to attack Germany’s oversea possessions (Cameroon and German East Africa (modern-day Tanzania). Thus, the war in Europe was carried into Africa and Cameroon in particular, where the territories governed by Britain, France and Belgium provided soldiers and supplies to fight the colonies ruled by Germany (Elango 1914-1916 & Boston 1985, 656-673). In the years preceding the First World War, the German government had deemed it unwise to recruit Cameroonians into German military

service on a large scale, considering the widespread resistance to German rule. When the War erupted, the German colonies had been provided with only minimal military support, and hence they came to depend heavily on African soldiers (Jacqueline de Vries, 56/1998). The situation became all the more dramatic when the British maritime blockade, imposed immediately after the outbreak of the war, prevented Germany from recruiting military support from the homeland. The forced labour policies of the pre-war period were easily adapted to military conscription of Cameroonian men, and again the Bamenda Grassfields proved a trustworthy supply of manpower. (Jacqueline de Vries, 56/1998). Some Cameroonians volunteered for service in the German armed forces, attracted by the relatively high wages, prestige, and health care, but more often than not conscription was involuntary, and Cameroonian support for the German effort was, on the whole, minimal (Quinn XIII (Cahier 52) 1973). Stoecker has aptly asserted that the Cameroonian population at large was either hostile or indifferent, assisting the Allies in many ways. (Stoecker, Helmuth 1906-1914 & Stoecker 1986, 74-161). Numerous incidents of disobedience in the armed forces, including a mutiny in June 1915, hampered the German war effort. Whether labour was obtained by forceful conscription or voluntarily, the picture depicted by these events was an apparent distortion of commodity labour arrangements (which was primordial to production) in the territory from the civil economy to the military service. In the scheme of things, labour which was increasingly being exploited from the Cameroons especially by the Germans (recruitment of labourers for the coastal plantations) had between 1914-1916 taken another twist. This time around (1914-1916) labour conscription increased militarily and not agriculturally as was the case prior to the outbreak of World War I. Perhaps, this changing dynamics in the economic preferences of Cameroon's labour economy begs us to argue that with more productive resources in terms of human labour redirected towards the military as soldiers, production in the civil economy and mortality rates declined drastically with the mass exodus of human cargoes especially men to the war frontiers in Cameroon and the Diaspora.

Simultaneously, in the Bamenda grassfields of Cameroon the war induced major ramifications on the labour economy which was a key factor of production and became brutally tapped with the subjugation of these regionally based grassroot Cameroonians into the colonial labour economy.

Given that other regions of the country were hostile to assist the German war efforts against ally forces, the Bamenda Grassfields seem to have constituted an anomaly in this respect. The powerful chiefs in the Grassfields were generally loyal — at least superficially — to the Germans, who had considerably enhanced their authority. Some adapted their allegiance to changing conditions: *Fon* Ngam was judged by the British to have played a "dubious" role during the war, supporting the winning party (Strachan 2003: 33). With only a few exceptions, the *fons* provided the Germans with the labour and provisions demanded, perhaps because of the threat of severe sanctions should they refuse to comply (Stoecker 1991: 244). The British also made use of native soldiers, though an explicit policy of conscription was not adopted. Britain relied primarily on Nigerian soldiers in the Cameroon campaign, but when Yoruba wartime resistance against British rule increased, the British recruited about 100 soldiers from the Bamenda area, a fraction of the number recruited into German service (Andrzejewski 1954: 67). Many Cameroonians were conscripted by whichever power happened to be operating in their locality, so that some served first German and later British masters (Elango 1987: 10). The question this begs us to ask is why the European powers manipulated the indigenous Cameroonians to abandoned their vibrant indigenous economy based on subsistence agriculture, hunting, long distance trade, craft and industry to aid them in a war that was not caused by them nor focused on liberating them from the brutal reign of colonial rule but were ignorantly helping a change of colonial rulers and ultimately a continuation of the colonial system. The fallout of these was a distortion of their pre-existing economy with stupendous spending, mass exodus and displacements of persons and infrastructural break down ensued by an economic meltdown in the developing but waring economy. Thayer in this regards rightly asserted that:

Destruction of infrastructure can create a catastrophic collapse in the social interrelated structure services, education and health care system. If certain infrastructural elements are significantly damaged or destroyed, it can cause serious disruption of the other systems such as the economy. These includes loss of certain transportation routes in a city which could make it impossible for the economy to function properly and also for people to be evacuated (Adin 2009, 7-43).

Admittedly, the tenacity of the war in Cameroon witnessed indigenes on both sides of the Cameroons conscripted as labourers by the colonial forces with accompanying destruction on valuable business and domestic property as tensions mounted within war (Andrzejewski,1954). They served not only as soldiers, but also as porters or carriers of supplies and weapons to the Europeans. The latter was often a dangerous and exhausting job as they often walked over 14 miles per day through war-torn areas to deliver their goods to the armed forces. Dobell, historicizing the Great War estimated that in Cameroon and German East Africa, some 200,000 to 250,000 Africans died during the war-a death rate of slightly more than 10 percent of the two million who saw service as soldiers and labourers during the war. Not only did these indigenous Cameroonians suffer large numbers of casualties, but also, they faced racism and mistreatment on a regular basis (Dobell; 2014). This brute extinction of the human economy leaves us with the question as to whether Africans like Cameroonians who were ill-treated in their service as labourers in the war were born as second class citizens or better still, if the Europeans who started this war in the first place knew that these indigenous African labourers were not commensurate to the war task at the time, why did they wrest efforts to get such African recruits who became maltreated like outcasts on a regular basis by the same European (white) employers at war zones while serving their savage Europeans masters (Germany, France and Britain). While this question remains unanswered, these colonized indigenous Cameroonians and their African equivalents still had to be used in the war efforts by the Germans, French and British as soldiers, and porters due to the acute shortage of labour thereby causing a disruption in the labour indices of the colony. By the end of the war, the poor territory had been greatly dislocated and damaged by the occupying Europeans powers with serious lessons for the growing economy to be learned.

Conclusion

The First World War landed on the Cameroon's economy an unprecedented overhaul which cannot be misremembered (Andrzejewski,1954). This trend, unfortunately, has a precedent. Since this heartbreaking event, historians have always been required to discuss the manifestation, course and contribution of Africans in the war. Off course, this has always been done: many economic atrocities have been erased and the driving forces of these atrocities were rarely, if ever, critically

examined. Colonial accounts propagate a sugarcoated version of Cameroon's bloody past and state of the war economy. Countless to recall that Cameroon's economic systems were brought under tighter control by Germany, France and Britain by way of price controls, the requisition of food crops, the compulsory cultivation of certain crops, and the recruitment of labour, both for the army and for economic production. This was so without considering the alterations on the local economy notably the state of internally displaced persons, agri-business and trading patterns. The outbreak of the war caused a great dislocation in the internal and external flows of trade, but war demands and import substitution encouraged and increased domestic economic activity though with fragility and instability. But the problem extends beyond the Cameroons though diehard German, French and British as a whole continuously extol their wartime history in Africa. All over the country, innumerable streets and headstones pay homage for lost soldiers though with their remaining spoil in this former colonial state as they showed their worth as the worst economic destroyers in the Cameroons in the role as hungry imperialists who justified a white supremacist racial hierarchy, and the imperial army's violent feats. The ex-colonialists stubbornly refuse to remember, much less commemorate, the handy works of their economic crimes when they utterly crushed namely, trade, agriculture, and controlled the colonial state to suit their taste and left a sad story for this third world economy to remember. Undoubtedly, the First World War changed the prevailing economic schemes in Cameroon and her corresponding European economies, and served as the basis for post-war colonial economic policies. Campaigns in Cameroon took a terrible human toll. Ultimately, allied victory over the Germans in Cameroon in Africa led to the partition of Cameroon between Britain and France and the persistence of the distorted economic scheme.

Recommendations

As the corona virus inches across the world, one hundred years after the outbreak of World War I, successive younger generations across the globe have been taught about this watershed event in world history. The foregoing section seeks to fill a notable gap in literature as it makes commendable recommendations in extant research on World War I that are telling in avoiding another upsurge in international relations with abduate structural adjustments on economic forms. Preponderant to this, it is adept to assert that no approach or system is perfect, of course, but we



understand how revanchism, resource scarcity, hegemony, colonialism, economic stress, refugee flows and racism all fuel the endangering of conflicts. We understand the importance of history and culture, the role of gender, capitalism and the ways in which different political systems exacerbate or diminish the risk of conflicts. Instead of the choice for war with almost irreversible consequences on local systems, the Balkans could have settled their conflict without war and everyone else did not have to get involved as did the Cameroonians. Sadly, emerging out of the war with regrettable outcomes as the organization of its local systems was sanctioned by war skirmishes, evidenced by the imposition of new patterns among other domains, trade, agriculture, logistics and communication.

Germany, Britain and France should play a political role commensurate with their economic and financial power for a more integrated Europe where conflicting interests among European countries can be sung to the lowest ebb. This will minimize the potential of another global war with traceable roots from Europe. Europe should adopt more preventive than curative war measures-taking meaningful action to deviate from imperialist and colonialist competitions for influence and power throughout the world, most famously the scramble for Africa in the 1880s and 1890s and instead deepened the European integration project, trying to ensure a closer connection between the EU institutions and European citizens for the greater good of averting the hegemonic path of imperial competitions among Europe's bigwigs with a beckoning for a war of global impetus as in the past. Sadly, with a tear on even more fragile world economies like those in Sub-Sahara Africa by the early 1900. Germany's European partners should also take a break to reflect on how the EU has contributed to a resolution of the historic 'German question'. These gains should not be under-estimated to eschew another worldwide confrontation.

As a leader of Europe, Slovenia again has a key role to play. It has also profited hugely from the EU and thus has a moral duty to ensure the continued success of the European project to make Europe and world powers live in obscurity of another world war. This entails Slovenia fosters a continuous path of peace by strengthening European integration. Needless to mention, this will go a long way to ensure independent states within Europe will be distanced from political maneuverings in which nation states within the same continental bloc remain disintegrated and at

the same time plunged into petty isolated rival blocs with an existential military threat on non-members of such groupings. A sphinx like example were small rival blocs in Europe, namely, the Triple Entente, and Triple alliance by 1914, on the eve of World War I (Norman 2003: 70-248), which ended up setting up member countries of Europe as enemy states against blocs to which their interests were not best represented when the Ottoman Empire Join the Central powers. This was a framing in the making for a universal confrontation by 1914-the First World War, which ruptured the economies of those countries and the satellite states where the militia was unleashed. The reverberations are still widespread and consequential in the 21st century. The Great War unexpectedly tested military, diplomatic, social and above all, economic capabilities to the limit. Bartered established economic systems to meet the fortunes of their war games. And that of the Cameroons cannot be left in oblivion.

In a synopsis, the anniversary of the First World War should often give us the occasion to reflect for a better Europe unparalleled to that of 1914. A Europe dominated by populists and nationalists has never brought a more peaceful or prosperous Europe. It has only led to warfare. But as the results of the European Parliament elections in May 2014 confirmed we cannot take the progress in European integration since 1945 for granted. We owe it to the fallen in both world wars to fight for a closer and more intergrated Europe that until now has not experienced another worldwide menace. Only rifts matching one state against another, among others, the combustion between the Russia and Poland in 2001 have since then rattled Europe. Admittedly, without every world nation trapped in a combustion.

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