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## Conflicting Pre-colonial Relations as Foundations of Frosty Associations between the Aghem and Their Neighbours in Colonial Administrative Units 1921-1937

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### Abstract

Colonialism played an important role in bringing independent African kingdoms into common political or administrative units. However, such endeavours created conflicting situations and groups hitherto dominated by their neighbours in the pre-colonial period opted out of these associations. Using the example of the Aghem and their neighbors in the present day North West Region of modern Cameroon, (west/central Africa), this paper contends that such a union, particularly the one created by the British in 1921, could not survive as it instead intensified the hatred and bitterness that existed between them in the pre-colonial period. The Aghem, who had once defeated the Weh, resisted a union where the Weh chief was to act as one of the judges, lording over them. They thus rejected membership in the Weh Native Court area while demanding their own court area. Even though the British colonial authorities heeded their demands and created the Wum (Aghem) Native Court area in 1927, they were uncomfortable with the presence of the Bebas, Befang, and Esimbi in the same unit with them. They ill-treated these groups and could not embrace equality with a people who were once tribute payers. In spite of the Aghem's claim of superiority over them, the Bebas, Befang, and Esimbi persevered in the union until 1933 when they rejected the Aghem highhandedness and started clamouring for their own court area. This demand had a favourable response and, in 1937, colonial authorities created a new court area for them.

### Introduction

Colonialism destroyed and destabilised the growth and development of African kingdoms. In the pre-colonial period, powerful African kingdoms easily dominated their neighbours and the struggle for supremacy was common. Once they achieved domination, the more powerful kingdoms brought their weaker rivals under direct control or forced them to pay tributes in order to maintain their independence. This was the situation met by the Germans when they annexed the Kamerun in 1884 and the British and the French had to grapple with these

problems when they took over the administration of the territory after World War I.<sup>1</sup> In order to establish viable economic and administrative units, the colonialists either had to relieve these subjugated groups from their conquerors and attach them to different administrative units, or maintain the status quo they met. However, these new administrative organisations instead brought hatred and intensified the conflicting situations that existed in the pre-colonial period as every group tried to resist domination within these structures from their former conquerors. While conquered groups strived for separation from their pre-colonial masters, their overlords wanted to maintain the status quo and continue to govern their previously subjugated neighbours. They could not understand why the colonial masters had to bring them into equality with a people they once lorded over or treated as slaves. In this way, they did everything possible to suppress any attempt at making them equal in these new administrative structures.

It is because of this that the paper discusses the state of affairs between the Aghem<sup>2</sup> and their neighbours. The choice of the area under examination is exemplary due to the poor relations that existed between the Aghem and their neighbours, the Beba, Befang, Esimbi, and the Weh. Nevertheless, colonial authorities, especially the British, minimised them and brought these people together into the Weh Native court Area in 1921.<sup>3</sup> Later, the British cut off the Aghem, Beba, Befang, and Esimbi from the Weh and created the Aghem (Wum) Native Court Area in 1927.<sup>4</sup> The pre-colonial wars fought between these groups as well as bitter relations laid the foundations of discord in the newly created administrative units, as suspicion and hatred loomed between the Aghem and their neighbours. This was because the Aghem still wanted and struggled to dominate their neighbours in terms of politics, representation, and the quest for resources in this newly created administrative unit. When these were not forthcoming, agitations followed. After World War I, the British believed the best way to integrate different groups into political unions was to consider pre-colonial political arrangements. Even though the British colonial administration tried as much as possible to dissuade the dominance of the Aghem over their neighbors, and they made efforts to promote equality in the new administrative dispensations, the quest for superiority still lingered among the Aghem after 1921.

In spite of the Aghem's attempts to dominate their neighbours, the colonial administration refused those conquered by the Aghem a separate political unit even though they had little or nothing in common with them in terms of origin, migratory history, customs, traditions, and systems of administration. This turned out to be a failure as they opted out of the arrangements. The Aghem felt that they were dominant and superior to the people they had once defeated or received

tributes from, especially the Beba, Befang, and Esimbi. The Aghem were also unenthusiastic about the seat of the Native Court in Weh. They claimed superiority over the Weh in relation to wars fought in the pre-colonial period.

### **Background and Setting**

The Aghem are in the present day Menchum Division of the North West Region of Cameroon. They are bounded to the north and northwest by the Esu and Weh, to the West by the Kuk, south and southwest by the Beba, Befang, and Esimbi settlements (see figure I and II for the location of the study area).



Figure 1. Map illustrating study area in Cameroon. Adapted from the Map of Africa, Google.

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Some schools of thought believe that the Aghem originated in either the Munchi or Benue regions of Nigeria. However, this is doubtful, as there is no similarity between them and the Munchi. For instance, their marriage practices differ. The Munchi practice marriage by exchange and the Aghem use the dowry system. However, the Aghem point to the Munchi land as their region of origin.<sup>5</sup> Awah-Dzenyagha, who has carried out a study on the Aghem, also contests this and

argues that they are not of the Tikars but points their origin to Ndobbo in the northern region of Cameroon. It is from here that they moved to the southern part of Nigeria and then through the northeast of that country before joining the Munchi.<sup>6</sup> It was from the Munchi lands of Nigeria that the Aghem moved to their present site or settlement.

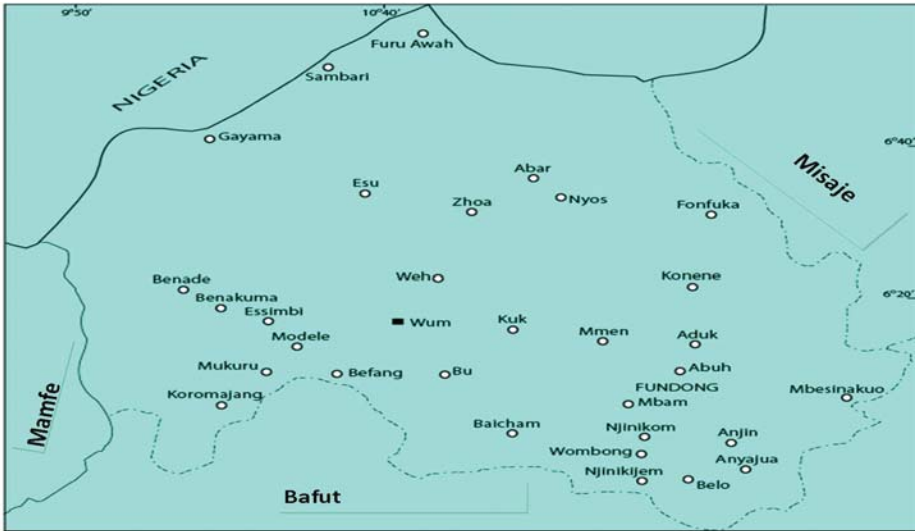


Figure 2. Map of Menchum Division Showing Aghem and their Neighbours, adapted from the Administrative Map of Cameroon, 2009, NIC, Yaounde.

The Aghem left the Munchi country as one group but broke up into two upon approaching Esu. This took place at about the second half of the eighteenth century. One group went through the Fungom area to their present settlement. The other group went through Befang, turned east to the south of their present settlement, through the area now occupied by Beba, Befang, and Esimbi settlements or Widikum groups. They reached their present site and met the other group that had passed through Fungom. This created the Aghem Federation.<sup>7</sup> Here they met the Upkwa who had already settled in the area and dislodged them.<sup>8</sup> Some of the Upkwa blended into the Aghem society while others moved to Esu. Found on the borders of the Aghem and the Esimbi are the Atong and Otui. Their origins are uncertain but they may be remnants of the original Upkwa.<sup>9</sup>

Upon settlement, the Aghem established a federation that consisted of five subgroups, the Zongeku, Tseregha, Su, Wanagwen, and Waindo. Five headmen, or the Batums, governed them. Quarrels over succession led to the

development of other autonomous groups as they broke away from their Batums. Magha emerged from Zongheku; Naikom was an offshoot of Su and Zonetuge from Waindo.<sup>10</sup> Even though they established autonomous chiefdoms, there was the Deng Keghem who, as the first among equals, coordinated activities for the entire village. After settlement and consolidation of their position in the area, the Aghem dominated their neighbours and wreaked havoc on them. Those greatly affected were groups that settled south of the Aghem: the Beba, Befang and Esimbi.

The Beba, Befang, and Esimbi trace their origins to the Widikum in the Mamfe region of Cameroon in the eighteenth century. However, there is no legend that adheres to this and it is only conjecture that maintains this position.<sup>11</sup> These migrations began in the eighteenth century and of all the Widikum settlements, only the Beba, Befang, and Esimbi settled near the Aghem. The Esimbi moved into Beuta from the Mamfe region and later divided into groups. One group moved north and settled near the Esimbi settlement. This group later gave birth to the Benakuma and Benahundi. However, they still recognised the Esimbi as their superior. The other group moved through Meta and settled at a hill to the east of Befang, called Abaton.<sup>12</sup>

They lived under Bazunga, a single head, before segmenting into four units. Four different leaders led these segments. The four units or settlements evolved into the villages of Modele, Befang, Batomo, and Okoromenjang. They settled as independent units but recognised the natural ruler of Befang as their ancestral leader as he was the direct descendant of Bazunga. He had the privilege of trying criminal cases from the three villages of Modele, Batomo, and Okoromenjang. The other settlements offered him a dog and a Dane gun annually in return for his services to them. This practice only ended after the Germans moved into the area.<sup>13</sup>

Closely related to the Befang are the Bebas (Mubadji and Bazi). They left Widikum under the leadership of Unseibekum and first settled at Mezang and later at De, around the Bameta area, but the Bameta, who inhabited the area, pushed them out. They moved further south and settled in the Bafut area where the Bafut people subjugated them. As such, they became tribute payers for seventy years. The Bafut dismissed them because they failed to fulfill their obligations. In one instance, they failed to provide the Bafut leader with a leopard skin. They moved further south where they settled on the edges of the Bafut, Okoromenjang, and Bamundum settlements. The Chief of Su forced them out. He led the Aghem federation in war and commanded their warriors in the struggles with their neighbours.

The Bafut made the Aghem to understand that the Bebas were a rebellious group of people and, if allowed to settle near them, they would be a bad influence to groups loyal to the Aghem. In order to avoid the unforeseen, the Aghem took the Bafut's warning seriously and took measures to prevent any disaffection. In this connection, the Aghem warned the loyal villages of Menchum Valley against allowing the Bebas to settle near them. The Befang and the Mukuru strictly followed these instructions and they used force to stop the Bebas from settling near them. The fear of the Aghem was so great that even the Mukuru could not allow their own brothers to settle near them.<sup>14</sup>

Caught in this unfortunate web, solace for the Bebas could only come by moving further away from the Aghem. As such, they acquired land between Okoromenjang and Batomo at a prize of shovels and axes. The acquisition of this land never meant that all was well, as the Aghem followed them to their new settlement and molested them. However, a great calamity befell the Aghem. The Aghem believed that the gods were angry with them for continuously maltreating the innocent Bebas. With little explanation, mysterious deaths occurred in Wum. Only peace and reconciliation with the Bebas could normalise things. It is in this light that a feast was organised in Wum and the Aghem and the Bebas dined together and reached an agreement. They exchanged the heads of all the people who had been killed during the war. Both sides concurred never to fight each other and friendship was established.<sup>15</sup> It was only then that the Bebas settled peacefully and consolidated their position in the area just like their brothers, the Mukuru.

The Mukuru originally left Widikum with the Bebas but separated from the family at De.<sup>16</sup> They moved northward to their present site and the Bakaw were to follow their example. They broke away from the Bebas at Bafut. Three of them left their brothers and wandered away. To the North of Bafut, they founded a settlement and were later joined by their friends and relations. The settlement developed into the Bako village. With the villages of Beba, Befang, and Esimbi firmly established, they now had to face the Aghem who consistently attacked them. While these groups settled in the southern borders of the Aghem territory, the Weh were situated to the north. The Aghem attacked both groups on several occasions.

The Weh on their part migrated from Ndobbo, around northeast Nigeria (the Lake Chad region). They settled near Ngaoundere in the present day Adamawa Region of Cameroon, in an area that they named Mbum. It was from here that they journeyed south and passed through Papum, Banyo, and then to Ndop.<sup>17</sup> From Ndop they settled at the present day Bamenda Hill Up Station

before moving to Bafut. Due to their need for better lands, internal squabbles, and the Bafut's attempt to subjugate them, they left the area, passed through Wum, and settled at their present site.

### **Aghem Domination of Their Neighbours in the Pre-colonial Period**

The Beba, Befang, and Esimbi suffered under the Aghem domination before the introduction of colonial rule as the Aghem consistently raided and defeated them on all occasions.<sup>18</sup> They subjugated them to the payment of tributes and dominated them. Though they remained autonomous and managed their affairs, the Beba and Befang were answerable to the Aghem leaders. Most of the wars fought between them and the Aghem were around 1850.<sup>19</sup>

Befang was the first casualty and readily accepted Aghem sovereignty. In this process, the Aghem overran the Befang and made them tributaries. The Befang paid their tributes in the form of palm oil. They readily accepted the domination of the victorious Aghem and their position as tribute payers.<sup>20</sup> This helped improve relations between the victor and the vanquished. This was a blessing to the Befang as an understanding developed between them and the Aghem. The leaders of Beba, Befang, and Esimbi later used the Aghem as a shield against the Bafut who constantly raided them. However, the Esimbi remained adamant and the Aghem used force to procure tributes. The Aghem resorted to constant raids capturing men and women as the only means to make the Esimbi budge. In this situation, the Esimbi had no choice but to pay such tributes for the release of the captives. In about 1870, the Esimbi thought the time had come to shake off the Aghem domination after acquiring their first Dane guns. They attacked, but the Aghem defeated and humiliated them. The Aghem dominated Benum and Benagudi just as they did to the Beba, Befang, and Esimbi settlements.

Division and skirmishes among the Beba, Befang, and Esimbi facilitated Aghem domination. Of particular interest is the Bufi War between the Esimbi and the Babadji. The Babadji initiated the war when they set up hunting camps in the heart of Esimbi territory without permission. The Esimbi responded with a surprise attack on the Babadji who were hunting wild pigs and this resulted in the loss of lives on both sides. The Babadji and their neighbours, the Menke, also fought wars. This initiated a period of poor relations before colonialism between Widikum settlements (southern neighbors of Aghem). The Aghem used this to their advantage.<sup>21</sup>

The Aghem attacks were not limited to the Menchum Valley settlements. The Aghem were notorious for their attacks on the Weh. The first war with the



Weh erupted when an Aghem woman secretly married a Weh man. The Aghem responded with an attack that resulted in much destruction and the capture of prisoners. The Weh appealed for peace and the Aghem responded favorably. Nevertheless, the Weh paid reparation with a collection of hoes and shovels. This fostered an understanding between the Weh and the Aghem who had been suspicious of each other earlier, since many Weh men desired Aghem women. In spite of this understanding and improved relations, a second war erupted when a Weh man committed adultery with the wife of an Aghem clan head. It was a heinous crime and only war could settle the issue. The Aghem attacked first and killed six people. In addition, the Aghem took five women to Wum as prisoners. This outbreak occurred just before the arrival of the Germans who returned the five women back to the Weh.<sup>22</sup>

### **Colonial Administrative Unit Uniting the Aghem and Their Neighbours**

The consolidation of the Aghem and their neighbours into the same administrative unit began with the German colonisation of the area in the late nineteenth century. Germany colonised Cameroon in 1884 after the Germano-Douala treaty. By 1902, they had explored the western grasslands of Cameroon. The Germans recognised Aghem domination over their neighbours and in 1908 established a German military station (district) at the Aghem settlement. Thus, it became the administrative headquarters of the newly created government unit and the point from which the Germans coordinated activities for the entire district.<sup>23</sup>



Figure 3. German Lieutenant Steinhausen and native policemen in Cameroon, 1891.

Other areas brought under the control of this administrative unit included the Weh, Beba, Befang and Esimbi settlements. It should be noted that the Germans created districts or local administrative units to effectively manage the area and appointed military officials as local administrators. Meanwhile, the German colonial administrators used local authorities, chiefs, as part of the administration at the local level. Under the direct supervision of colonial administrators, the chiefs administered justice, kept the peace, maintained law and order, collected taxes, and provided labour and porters to the Germans.<sup>24</sup>

As aforementioned, the British and French forces ousted the Germans from the territory during World War I and instituted a joint administration of the territory. The inability of the two victorious powers to successfully co-manage the territory led to its provisional partition in 1916, resulting in British Cameroon and French Cameroon. In 1922, the League of Nations endorsed the partition and recognized British Cameroon as a mandate territory. Due to cultural differences and communication setbacks, the British divided their territory into two parts, Northern and Southern Cameroon. They administered them as parts of the Northern and Eastern Region of their Nigerian Protectorate. The area under study is part of Southern Cameroon.

Between 1915 and 1922, the British had not instituted a definite policy or administrative system. As such, they embraced the system used by the Germans. This was especially true in the Bamenda Division (where the Wum district under study existed). This division included very large and centralised chiefdoms with the chiefs having maximum authority over their people, especially in judicial matters. Due to the absence of administrators, G. S. Podevine, District Officer (DO) for Bamenda Division, had to use local authorities or chiefs and their institutions in the administration of the area until 1921 when the British created courts in the Bamenda Division, among which was the Weh Court.<sup>25</sup> The Weh court saw the merging of the Aghem, and their neighbours, among other groups, into the same administrative units. Its jurisdiction covered Wum (Aghem) and Beba, Befang, Esimbi, and Weh (neighbours of Wum) among other areas.<sup>26</sup>

Pre-colonial dominance of the Aghem became a factor that not only magnified differences but also led to challenges over the decision to seat the establishment at Weh. It was because of this that the British dismantled the Weh native court in 1928 and created the Bum, Fungom, and Aghem Courts. Weh became part of the Fungom court and separated from Wum and the Aghem, while Beba-Befang, Bu and Esimbi groups fell under the jurisdiction of the Wum Native Court area. Chiefs of the area shared authority in the Wum Native Court but the Aghem leader was paramount. The British colonial authority had appointed him to

serve as the only president of the Court. This became a source of future conflicts. However, the presence of these new courts did not put to an end to the demand for a new court by the people of Beba, Befang, and Esimbi. They requested a court area absent of the Aghem. Colonial administration granted this request in 1937.

### **Nostalgic Feelings of Aghem Dominance over the Weh and the Creation of the Wum Native Court**

The absence of the Aghem leader as one of the bench members of the Weh Court ignited jealousy and envy from the Aghem. The Aghem believed their leaders were superior and the natural rulers of Weh, Kung, Esu, and Mmen; in this way, they believed that they should hold the presidency and preside over the court. The Aghem did not take this matter lightly. In addition to a court of their own, they demanded a change in the membership and structure of the Weh court. This Weh court was one of the best in the Bamenda division as members performed their duties well but the Aghem remained uncomfortable with the seat of the Court in Weh. Cooperation from the chiefs of Aghem and their people was, therefore, lacking especially since their leader, Deng Keghem, was not one of the court presidents. They could not imagine that the Weh chief they had once defeated in war and his village dominated by them should be deciding their cases and collecting taxes from them. In response to these grievances, A. G. Gregg, Assistant DO, proposed the construction of another court in Wum. To address Aghem grievances concerning the location of the court in Weh, the court had to sit alternately once a month in Weh and in Wum. Nevertheless, this did not solve problems stemming from representation. Furthermore, the Resident resisted the idea of opening more courts and the Divisional Colonial administration discontinued the project in August 1922.<sup>27</sup>

### **Beba, Befang, and Esimbi's Quest for a New Court to Thwart Aghem Domination**

The creation of the Wum Native Court reignited the Aghem feelings of dominance as they saw the Esimbi, Beba, and Befang inferior to them based on pre-colonial relations. The Aghem clan head was made the permanent president and the chiefs of Befang, Beba, Esimbi, and village heads of Su, Waindo, and Zonghefu acted as members of the court.<sup>28</sup> Even though the Beba, Befang, and Esimbi persevered in the union, things took a different turn in 1931 as they rejected the amalgamation with the Aghem and the presence of the headquarters in Wum. They thus refused collecting taxes promptly and attending court sessions in the

Wum Native Court.<sup>29</sup> Preferring to use their own traditional institutions, the people of Esimbi avoided and discontinued to use the court. They relied on the Mbellifang village leader. He had both spiritual and secular powers. He was assisted by the clan heads of Modelli, Nkoremanjang, and Batomo, which were separate units with some degree of independence. However, the clans generally accepted the village head of Mbellifang as *primus inter pares* (first among equals). As such, though not mandatory, the clan accepted and respected his judgements. Thus, they viewed the court in Wum as a foreign institution and facilitated their quest for a separate court.<sup>30</sup>

As a result, the Beba and Befang accepted the jurisdiction of the Wum court reluctantly. Again, the Aghem saw their presence in the Aghem court as a privilege for them to be attending the court in their land. They thought that the court was meant only for them.<sup>31</sup> Suspicions loomed between the chiefs of Aghem and those of Beba, Befang, and Esimbi who at one time were tribute payers. They feared this might surface again in the present set up.<sup>32</sup> The British believed the dominant position of the Aghem was legitimate because of their position in the pre-colonial period. Furthermore, due to the autocratic nature of the Aghem, differences in language, culture and customs as well as their origins, relations worsened.<sup>33</sup> The Beba, Befang, and Esimbi groups argued that it was impossible to maintain any union with the Aghem who were of the Munchi and the former of the Widikum. Their origin and migratory history had nothing in common and they saw no reason why they should be in the same court area and take orders from the Aghem. These groups thus drew the attention of the British to the differences in inheritance practices between them; they practised patrilineality while the Aghem relied on matrilineal inheritance.

There was no similarity between the languages spoken by the two groups but the Aghem language dominated during proceedings. The Beba, Befang, and Esimbi also suffered from injustice in the court as the Aghem were noted for discriminatory practices on litigants from the former. This view and reasons are summarised by the chiefs of Beba and Befang when they noted,

Most of our cases were upset without due consideration merely because we were not Aghem people and they looked down on us and still regard us as low class of people in their midst. . . . They decide cases in their Native Court by looking at the face of the parties and no person outside their villages has to be given favourable judgement, and here we do not desire to be under such curious regime of deliberate mischief towards other fellow men and ourselves.<sup>34</sup>

With this notion of Aghem injustice practiced against the Beba, Befang, and Esimbi, it was common for litigants from these areas to refuse summons and resist surrendering to arrest warrants. Of a greater magnitude was the inactiveness of the Native Authority, which could only meet when the DO summoned it. This, therefore, means it essentially existed only in theory.<sup>35</sup> It was because of these reasons that as early as 1933, the Esimbi, Beba, and Befang clans started clamouring for a separate court that would take care of their interests. Each clan wanted its own court or one that separated them from the Aghem.

A temporary measure to address the grievances of the Beba, Befang, and Esimbi was put in place and the court alternated on a monthly basis between Wum and Mukuru. Geographically, Mukuru was in the Beba-Befang area but the Esimbi could easily reach it. In 1935, stronger arguments cropped up for the necessity of courts for the three clans, Wum, Beba-Befang, and Esimbi. R. Newton, Assistant DO, argued that it was necessary to create them for the most remote backward areas in the Southern Cameroons because this would promote communications between the courts and colonial administration.<sup>36</sup> The Resident, the colonial administrator for Southern Cameroons, approved the proposal. As such, the Aghem Native court area split into two. The Aghem and Bu village (that hitherto was part of the Wum Native Court) became a court area and another was created for the Beba, Befang, and Esimbi clans in 1937.<sup>37</sup>

## **Conclusion**

This study examined the attempt made by colonialism to bring the Aghem and their neighbours into a single political unit. It argued that the coming of colonialism destroyed and destabilised the growth and expansion of some African chiefdoms as it put a stop to their expansionist tendencies. Europeans either had to relieve subjugated groups from their conquerors and attach them to different administrative units or maintain the status quo they met in a bid to minimise differences. These unions did not work in the area of study. The Aghem dominated their neighbours in the pre-colonial period. As such, they did not understand why they should recognize the authority of chiefs they once dominated.

During the German colonial period, the Germans recognised Aghem domination of their neighbours by making Wum the administrative headquarters of the Wum District that was created by them. However, with the coming of the British and the establishment of the Weh Native Court area, the British brought the Aghem under the authority of the Weh Court. Because the Chief of Weh and others presided over the court, the Aghem never welcomed it. They demanded not only a

change in the membership structure of the court, but also their own court. They could not imagine that the Weh Chief they had once dominated should be deciding their cases and collecting taxes from them. The lukewarm attitude of the Aghem towards the Weh Court saw the inclusion of the paramount ruler of the Aghem as one of the presidents but this did not put an end to their complaints. Their continuous disregard for and rejection of the Weh Court led to the carving out of the Aghem Native Court area from the former in 1927.

The Aghem viewed the Esimbi and Beba-Befang as inferior. As such, the Aghem found their presence in the Aghem court disturbing. The former found it difficult surviving in such a union and rejected it. They thus refused collecting taxes from their area and attending court sessions in the Aghem Native Court. In order to address their grievances, the colonial authorities put in place an alternating court between Wum and Mukuru (for the Beba, Befang, and Esimbi) on monthly basis. The Beba, Befang, and Esimbi finally realised a permanent court in 1937.

## Notes

1. Before the German annexation of the territory that came to be called German Kamerun, it was made up of independent ethnic groups, which were only brought into a single political unit in 1884 with the coming of the Germans. However, the defeat of the Germans during World War I saw the British and French establishing a joint administration of the territory. Difficulties in jointly administering the territory led to the provisional division of the territory with Britain taking about 20% and the French, 80%. With the end of the war, the provisional division of the territory was endorsed by the League of Nations and British and French Cameroons became Mandates of the League and Britain and France became the mandate authorities. The British authorities decided to rule their area as an integral part of Nigeria. Due to communication difficulties between the Northern and Southern parts of the territory, the British colonial authorities divided their territory into two—Northern and Southern Cameroons, administered as parts of the Northern and Eastern Regions of Nigeria, respectively. They thus became Provinces in these administrative units and were managed by Residents. Divisions were further created out of these Provinces and in the Southern Cameroons which is our area of focus, the Bamenda, Victoria, Kumba and Mamfe Divisions were present and were under the command of the Divisional Officers who were assisted by District Officers. In the Divisions were Native Authorities and Native Court areas. The area of study was found in the Weh Native Court Area of Wum District in the Bamenda Division.

2. The Aghem are an ethnic group; the area they occupy is also referred to as Aghem, as is the language spoken. The land or place is also referred as Wum.

3. Ad/1922/14, No. 772/22, Wum Assessment Report, Bamenda Division, 1922-1932 (Buea: National Archives, 1922), 27.

4. Md/e/1926/1, BamendaNkom Native Court Constitution of – 1926 (Buea: National Archives, 1926), 1-2.

5. Ad/1923/14a, Notes of Late Mr. Gadman on the administrative on the administrative Problems of Wum District, Edited by CJ Gregg ADO, 1 July 1923 (Buea: National Archives, 1923), 1.

6. Awah – Dzenyagha, Aghem: A Federation of Chiefdoms (Baffussam: March 1990), 10.

7. P. N. Nkwi, and J. P., Warnier, *Element for a History of the Western Grassfields* (Yaounde: SOPECAM, 1982), 202.

8. Ad/1922/14, No. 772/22, Wum Assessment Report, Bamenda Division, 1922-1932 (Buea: National Archives, 1922), 9.

9. Ibid.

10. Nkwi, and Warnier, *Element for a History*, 202.

11. Ad/1922/14, No. 772/22, Wum Assessment Report, 7.

12. Ibid.

13. Ad/1923/14a, Notes of Late Mr. Gadman on the administrative Problems of Wum District, 2.

14. Ad/1922/14, No. 772/22, Wum Assessment Report, Bamenda Division, 1.

15. Ibid., 12.

16. Nkwi, and Warnier, *Element for a History*, 209.

17. Ab/1925/2, No.3325. Assessment Report on the Bafut Area, 1925 (Buea: National Archives, 1925), 5.

18. Ad/1923/14a, Notes of Late Mr. Gadman on the Administrative Problems of Wum District, 5. Edited by CJ Gregg ADO, 1 July 1923 (Buea: National Archives, 1923).

19. Ad/1929/10, Fungom District Assessment Report, 1919 (Buea: National Archives, 1929), 202.

20. Ad/1922/14, No. 772/22, Wum Assessment Report, 8.

21. P. C. Mafiamba, "Notes on the Esimbi of Wum Division" (*ABBIA: Cameroon Cultural Review*, 1965), 5 – 12.

22. Ad/1922/14, No. 772/22, Wum Assessment Report, 11.

23. P. M. Tem, "The Establishment of the Native Authority System and Developments in Fungom Area, 1927 – 1972," (MA Dissertation, University of Yaounde 1, 2005), 18.

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