

## Review

# The Inconsistencies and Shifting Fortunes of the Bali-German Alliance, 1889-1916

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**The First World War (1914- 1918) began in Europe and extended to Africa because European were present on the continent. The war abridged relations not only between European powers but also with most of its African allies. Such was the case of the entente of the Bali-German Treaty running since 1891 but became punctured by the war uncertainties. The likelihood of a possible German return placed Bali in the predicament of accepting the British and risks the vindictive hand of the Germans. Bali chose therefore to ally with the British as their new master. Obviously, the Germans did not take this Bali stance kindly as falling short of open betrayal. The Germans consequently responded with utmost vengeance placing Bali in a horrible state. This paradoxical and changing pattern in Bali-German relations during the war in Cameroon is the principal argument in this study. It establishes the premise that the extension of the First World War to Cameroon placed Bali in a dilemma and strained the Bali-German long standing bond. The work concludes that the war transformed former allies to arch adversary.**

**Keywords:** Bali-Germans, First World War, British-French, Paradoxes

## INTRODUCTION

It was on July 12, 1884 that the Germano-Duala Treaty was signed (and a German flag hoisted in the territory) that the territory Kamerun officially became a European protectorate. This was new albeit the presence of European merchants and missionaries who had visited and settled in various parts of the coast. As German expeditions opened up the territory, they encountered resistant indigenous people as well as collaborating communities. By penetrating into the interior creating such alliances and opening stations, the Germans were respecting the principle of "effective occupation." Henceforth, German administrative policy in the Bamenda Grass fields was tailored to sustain village-groups from whom they enjoyed fruitful collaboration. This policy was hinged on an alliance with the village of

Bali<sup>1</sup> and was cemented by a Treaty of Protection signed in 1891 by Dr. Eugen Zintgraff, (representing the Germans) and Fon Galega I (representing the Bali people.) In the wake of all hostilities, Bali-Nyogha under Galega singled out as the only to accept and welcome Zintgraff being the first colonial explorer to the Bamenda Grassfields.

The Germano-community diplomacy were not to remain same prior to and during the First World War in Cameroon. Prior to the outbreak of the war, the Bali-German bond had collapsed and during the war, the relationship was transformed to animosity as Bali supported the British forces against the Germans. Haunted by fury and sense of duplicity from a former ally, the German vengeance on the Bali was a

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<sup>1</sup>The name Bali as generally used in the study is the shorten form of Bali-Nyonga

mishmash of wrath and vindictiveness. This paper thus probes into the intricacies of the Germano-Bali relations and argues that the shocks of the First World War in Cameroon distorted relations and transformed hitherto allies into arch enemies.

## I DERIVATION OF BALI-GERMAN ALLIANCE

### The Annexation of Cameroon

The Germano-Duala Treaty of 1884 made Cameroon a German protectorate and became the ultimate link to the creation of a Bali- German alliance. The colonial authority extended its influence from the coast into the interior of Cameroon. Despite sporadic contacts between European explorers, merchants, missionaries and the Cameroon coast from the 15th to the 19th Centuries, according to Moberly [1931:78], the Cameroon hinterland in general and Bali in particular had never seen a Whiteman. This authenticates the freight and bewilderment that caught the Bali during their first contacts with the German explorer, Zintgraff in 1889. The doubt and panic that characterized the attitudes of the Bali was revealed by Zintgraff himself in Chilver [1966: 3], “[...]. Finally the Chief [Galega] appeared....He looked at me for a moment and suddenly seized my right wrist and raised up my arm, and told his fifty or so elders that the whiteman’s skin did not burn [italic mine].” Ndifontah [1987:95] further elucidates:

Expectedly, the first encounter between the Bali and the whiteman was full of curiosity and suspicion. In 1889 when news came from Bamessong that there was a *strange creature* [italics mine] coming, perhaps a spirit, Galega dispatched a group of “chitet” to see the sight on his behalf. They were also instructed to ascertain whether it was a man.

Therefore, Bali-German liaison came as a result of Bismarck, the German Chancellor’s change of mind to join the colonial band wagon in 1884. He appointed Nachtigal, accompanied by Max Buchner and Moebius to head a mission to Cameroon and Fernando Po. They were to be joined in Cameroon by Eduard Woerman, Emile Schutze and Eduard Schmidt. The outcome of this mission was the signing of the Germano-Duala Treaty in July 12, 1884.

Following the treaty that took place on a Saturday, Nachtigal officially hoisted the German flag in Cameroon on Monday July 14, 1884 which according to Fanso [1989:16] “[...], By this act (hoisting of German flag), Germany obtained the rights of sovereignty, legislation and management over Cameroon.” Thenceforth,

Cameroon became a German protectorate but as Nkwi [1989:13] highlighted “After the declaration of Cameroon as a German protectorate, the rest of the country except the coastal regions remained undisturbed.” It was for this reason that Rudin [1938:76] admitted:

The territory actually occupied in the summer of 1884 was confined to the coastal region; but there was no intension on the part of the Germans to restrict to that narrow strip of land. From the very beginning the Germans were afraid....

This intention, coupled with the Berlin Conference resolution on hinterland policy took the Germans into the interior where they actually met the Bali. As such our argument in this section is on the premise that, had the Germano-Douala Treaty not materialized in 1884; there would not have been a possibility for a Bali-Germano alliance. This is treaty therefore gave the leeway to German penetration that permitted the contact between Bali and the German, a contact sealed by the Germano-Bali Treaty.

### The Hinterland Penetration

It was in respect of the hinterland theory and German ambitions to explore and exploit the resources of the territory that Zintgraff in late 1889, (five years after the Germano-Duala Treaty) undertook a reconnaissance mission to the Grassfields. Although such an expedition was a demonstration of the spirit of private enterprise and adventure characteristic of the Scramble for Africa, the expedition ended up becoming a lee-way to the German-Bali alliance that was to safeguard German activities in the Grassfields, and the in the territory at large. His expedition was of such immense significance that the story of his passage is now inseparable from the origin of the German-Bali Alliance.

In the main, Zintgraff (1888 - 89)’s mission to the Bamenda Grassfields went along with 175 carriers, a hundred of them from Lagos, the rest mostly Liberians that he took along with him. In order to gain acquaintance, avoid hostility and keep memories en route, Zintgraff established a post at Barombi as a first installment on the line running to the unexplored interior. According to Chilver [1961: 223-58]: ‘It was no easy task penetrating the interior, fighting the heavily mounted ‘resistances’ from the slave raiding Banyang chiefdoms opposed to his passage.’ Zintgraff however was well received in the Moghamo village of Babassong, after which he was escorted and handed to the Bali envoy. When he got to Bali-Nyonga with his hostages trailing behind him, *Fon* Gelega took him to be a slave dealer

and offered to facilitate his negotiation for additional purchases. When Galega discovered Zintgraff's real mission to the region, he decided to keep him within close-range. The *fon's* interpretation of Zintgraff's status was prescient. Galega declared himself the lee-way into the region which extended to the entire Western grasslands. The warm reception reserved for Zintgraff impressed him and saw Galega the favourite ally he needed in the region. To win Zintgraff, and retain his favour as well, Galega antagonized his mind about his rival traditional authorities in the region. As Chilver [1966:11]: relates it:

Fon Garega (sic) warned Zintgraff that there were many hostile tribes on the route to Adamawa and that the Fon of Bafut was outstanding for his cunning and greed: a few years back (i.e. before 1898) he had robbed and murdered some white people ( perhaps Fulani) who had settled with him to trade for some five years.

This was the bedrock to the Bali-German alliance which confined Zintgraff to Bali alone. Assure of his protection and assistance Zintgraff made up his mind to build his station in Bali. The paradox was that despite mutual suspicion that beset the Bali-German contact at the beginning, their relations later assumed political and even spiritual connotation, obviously mutually beneficial at the genesis but terminating in malice as asserted by Ndifontah [1987:96]. At this stage the relation was spite when news of another white man warring in the nearby forest caused Galega to call for a joint military mobilisation to arrest him and share the spoils with Zintgraff. This greatly disturbed Zintgraff and as Chilver [1966:6] affirmed, "Zintgraff told Galega that, in the circumstance no white man could be safe." Consequently something needs to be done. This section builds on the premise that, had Zintgraff not braved the expedition to the interior and especially to the Grassfields, he would not have discovered Bali and the possibility of such alliance would not have been workable. In reality, it was Zintgraff's mission to the Grassfields that resulted to the Bali-German Alliance sealed by the 1891 treaty.

### **Contract of the Alliance**

It was in the spirit of mutual gains and suspicions that Galega and Zintgraff went into a number of deals, rites and accords to safeguard their relationship. To Galega, Zintgraff's arrival was quite timely because he had just conquered a number of neighbouring villages and needed such a powerful ally (the white man's might and intelligence) to consolidate his rivalled, position as

paramount ruler of the entire unlimited northern grasslands. Such intentions coincided perfectly with Zintgraff's prospects of gaining allies on the ground as protector and guide especially with the intrinsic weakness of the German military position in the hinterlands. Naturally this point of view was well approved by both parties but to avoid any suspicion Galega performed a blood-brotherhood pact with Zintgraff. The words with which Galega performed the ceremony were remarkable and reassuring to Zintgraff, as pinpointed by Chilver [1966: 6]:

You came like a little chicken into my house, white man, and I could have killed you and taken your valuables. But since you have been staying with me, I have seen and learnt something of the fashion of the whites. Yet there are many people round me advising me to kill you. But do not fear, for I will not harm you or allow others to harm you, for it is better to obtain the knowledge of the whites and to have them as friends to our lasting benefit, than to make a short-lived advantage of them by robbery

Cognizant of the implication of a blood-brotherhood rite; the mutual drinking of the blood of the parties seeking alliance, the consummation of the Galega - Zintgraff rid the relationship of any fear or suspicion. It was a relation that was to be scrupulously adhered. The "mixing of bodies" was expressed by Galega as, "We have two bellies, but one head". There is no doubt that Zintgraff left satisfied and Galega was well assured of making Bali a focal point in the region. The Galega-Zintgraff blood-brother oath had preserved for Zintgraff a comfortable ally in Cameroon but such an ally was yet to be recognized in Germany.

After establishing a station in Bali, he left for the coast. Back in Germany, he defended the idea of Bali paramountcy in the region to the Government and in 1890; he received the power to act in the whole Grassfields on behalf of the Foreign Office. It was in this vein that Zintgraff returned in 1891 and presented to Galega a draft treaty for approval and signature as Chilver [1966:30] affirmed "In the first week of Zintgraff's return to Bali, he discussed the terms of a treaty with Galega and did his best to explain its terms in detail." But as Ndifontah [1987:98] contended:

It was a typical colonial treaty, a document of grandiose intent but dodgy substance. For, whereas the aim of the treaty was to "bring Bali in such a power and influence as will enable it to lead the tribes of northern Kamerun, the treaty itself sanctioned the gross abdication of Galega's power over his own very empire. The Fon was to surrender to Zintgraff all his powers of life and death, and peace and war over his empire. And he would implement all decisions in those matters taken

by Zintgraff. Only then will the “establishment, recognition and protection of Galega’s position as paramount chiefs of the surrounding tribes be assured.

However, whatever interpretation was later given to the content of the treaty, a deal of friendship had earlier been initiated by both through the blood-brotherhood pact and was later sanctioned by an ancestral recognition as Hay [1925:34] insinuated:

Fon Galega felt that his dead father should share in his pleasure and should not be without knowledge of his white visitor and their gifts. So the paternal grave was opened and Galega deposited in it a pair of cloth presented to him by Zintgraff after the treaty.

Nothing could be so binding than such a rite that evokes the spirits. It was the latitude that enabled Zintgraff to get in contact Galega and the consequent oath as well as the 1891 treaty that internationalized the union. Germano-Duala Treaty originated and the hinterland expedition paved the way to an alliance that was sealed by the Germano-Bali Treaty of 1891. The paradox in the alliance and treaty in particular was that despite the controversies in analyzing, it was at the interest of both parties to achieve their rapacious gains, Doh, [1988:52-55].

In sum their sojourn for four months according Chilver M. [1967:4] led to the creation of a German Station in Bali, Zintgraff marriage to Bali woman, a blood friendship between Zintgraff and Galega I and finally a treaty between Bali and the Germans, signed in August, 1891. The treaty according to Adig [2012:100], was cemented, sealed and finally ratified by the German Colonial Office in 1905.

## II GAINS FROM THE GERMANO-BALI UNION

The rationalizations of Africa range from economic, social and political in order to exploit the continent, underdeveloped it and develop Europe. It was the economic factor more than any other reason that took Zintgraff in 1889 to engage in an expedition to the Bamenda Grassfields where the Bali-German alliance became a mere by-product. This rationalizes Ndifontah [1987:100] assertion that “The Zintgraff-Galega Treaty was a typical colonial mirage sold to unsuspecting Africans.” Nonetheless, Fokwang [2003:105] debunked this that:

Bali chiefs have tended to align with more powerful political forces to foster their interest. This could be witnessed by Galega’s pact with Zintgraff, Fonyonga II collaboration with the British, Galega II prominence under Ahidjio and Gayonga II involvement in contemporary politics under the CPDM.

The mutual fear and suspicion that motivated the oath taking and the signing of the treaty signifies that the alliance was incontestably beneficial to both parties, especially as seen from Argenti [2007: 96]:

At this point, the Germans signed a treaty with Fon Galega of Bali, recognizing him as the “paramount chief of the surrounding tribes of the northern Cameroons hinterland.” Unbeknown to the Germans involved, their policy of dealing only with those chiefdoms they perceived as the most powerful had the effect of exacerbating the hypertrophy of centralized military state of the region....

Bali wanted to ally with the more powerful political forces and the Germans considered Galega I as the ‘paramount chief of the surrounding tribes of Northern Cameroon’ As such, the manifestation of these mutual benefits to both signatories constitutes the object of this part.

## Gains to the Germans

All in all, the alliance to the Germans was to gain safety and protection owing to the intrinsic nature of the German military in the hinterland. After creating the alliance with Bali, Zintgraff returned home and presented a memorandum to the Colonial Bureau of German Foreign Office, as quoted by Chilver [1966:12]:

The Bali lands - he meant by this the Western Grassfields so far known to explorers should be developed for German trade, as a market for German exports, and as a recruiting area for soldiers and labourers .... With Garega’s [sic] help to recruit his subjects as labourers and soldiers in to the government service. Zintgraff pointed out that a military force was necessary if only for police purpose

Zintgraff thus identified the Bamenda Grassland in the German frame-work as a labour reservoir from where military, plantation and trade labour could be recruited. It was therefore thanks to the Bali-German alliance that the Germans achieved their economic goal in the territory. Even when Zintgraff died in 1897 and Galega I died in 1901, Glauning, the German Officer gave these obligations to Fonyonga II, according to [File No. NW/IB/4, 1921:32], “[...], collect taxes and recruit labour for German plantations in the coast.” Tasks which both Galega and Fonyonga even executed with impunity and exaggeration, especially on neighbouring rivals with whom Bali had ancient malice. Hay [1925:19] was of this view, as he argued, “Although the Bali helped the Germans to collect taxes, recruit labour and soldiers, it was evident such assistance was related to their territorial ambition in the Grassfields.”

On the political sphere, the Bali assisted the Germans in the subjugation of resistant neighbouring groups such as Mankon and Bafut. Indeed, the Bali put at the service of the Germans 6000 Bali warriors that were trained by German officer Hutter and given 1500 rifles [File no NW/PA/a, 1923:6] to help the Germans in their Wars of pacification. For example, according to Chilver [1966:26] there were 100 Bali warriors among the 300 German soldiers that attacked Mankon. There were 2000 more with dane guns later joined before their attack on Bafut. That was why after the wars, according to Hunt [1925:39] “Hutter was impressed by the military qualities of the Bali, who responded well to an understanding commander.”

Bali continued to assist the Germans in the pacification and extension of German colonial rule in the entire Bamenda Grassland. Even after the transfer of the German station from Bali to Bamenda in 1902, the Germans continued to use the trained *Balitruppe*, to subjugate the Kom fondom in 1904, and the Nso and its neighbours in 1906. That trend of assistance from Bali continued till the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. This section of the work has therefore illustrated how the Bali-German alliance was important to the German economic and political exploitation of the Bamenda Grassland in particular and the protectorate of Cameroon in general.

### Gains to the Bali

The terms of the treaty for Bali, were clear; “establishment, recognition and protection” of Bali paramountcy in the whole Grassfields. In the same vein, Hunt [1925:13] avowed that: “From 1902 to 1914, the German colonial government recognized Bali suzerainty over the whole of north Cameroon [...]”. Also on July 15, 1905, in an assembly of 47 Grassfields Fons, General Hauptman Glauning- a German emissary, formally installed Fonyonga II as the paramount chief of 31 non-Bali villages from where he recruited labourers for the colonial exigencies Adig [2012: 125-127].

Really, the predominance the Bali enjoyed during the German administration had multiplier effects as she became the most influential and widespread in the region. In fact, Hongie [2014: 287] considered Bali a German creation. Even villages that were brought under Bali were later liberated without claim on their lands which have resulted to many land and boundary conflicts between and neighbours. Mbah [2004:14] rationalized this view:

German colonial support for Bali resulted in the arbitrary demarcation of boundaries reflecting this

dispensation. This was the case between Bali and Wedikum villages. With the German support, Bali was able to maintain a strong hold over Wedikum surrounding villages, depriving them of some of their ancestral land.

In addition to the preeminence enjoyed, the Germans also created a station in Bali-Baliburg, which took control of the entire region until 1902 that it was transferred to Bamenda. Furthermore, Fonyonga II requested the opening of a Basel Mission Station in 1901 and it was granted in 1903. With the first Basel mission in the region, Bali not only became the economic and political headquarters but religious as well [File no. NW/IB/4, 1921; 8]. This was toughened with the creation of the first school in Bali and adoption of Mugaaka as a lingua Franca and language of evangelization. Indeed, when part of the Bible was translated into Mugaaka in 1915, Bali spanned beyond the Grassfields as Mugaaka was one of few local languages alongside Douala and Isubu that were translated by London Baptist Missionaries before German annexation.

In sum, the Bali-German bond traced from the Germano-Douala Treaty and sealed by the Bali-German treaty was a mutually beneficial agreement and proved the willingness of two dominating partners to satisfy their avaricious and egoistic interests. Paradoxically, the adage “thieves’ quarrel over stolen items” held water here because conflicting interests that emanated prior to First World War and reached its apogee during the war; put the former allies at dagger drawn. Below are reasons and manifestations of this sudden twist.

### III THE STRAIN IN BALI-GERMAN ALLIANCE

#### German Double-standard Nature

The reason for the sour relations between the Bali and German revolved around the latter double-standard attitude. The hilarity with which Galega received Zintgraff was not only indicative of his territorial ambition in the region but revelatory of African hospitality. Paradoxically, as Nkwi [1989:23] argued:

The Zintgraff-Galega Treaty was a typical colonial treaty, a document of grandiose intent and dodgy content.[...]. Whereas the aim of the treaty was to bring the Bali to such power and influence as will enable to lead all the groups in northern Cameroon, the treaty itself sanctioned the gross abdication of Galega’s power over his own very people.

Consequently, as the German realized their dual aims of pacification and recruitment of taxes and labour,

the centrality of Bali in German administration dwindled. For example in 1889, the Germans began to dislike Bali control over long-distance trade hence looked elsewhere for suitable allies, Bayang and Bagam. Again, in 1902, the Bali Station was transferred to Bamenda and others created in Fouban and Banyo, this to remove Bali from the centre of Grassfields politics to the periphery.

Obviously, these were conspicuous signposts of failing an ally and situations were compounded when Glauning, head of German administration in the region died in 1908. Soh P. [1985:34] stated that later German officials: Menzel, Ravel, recommended reduction of Bali supremacy, claiming she was more a liability than an asset to the German. This was confirmed during Governor Seitz's visit in the region as he removed Bangang and Babadju, from Bali and attached to Dschang, compensating Fonyonga for this loss at 300 marks. The separation of Bangang and Babadju from Bali was symbolic as other villages requested liberation hence the genesis of trouble within the empire. Moro so, Ebermair took tougher measures against the Bali, describing Fonyonga according Chilver [1967: 500] as "misleading negro intriguer with lust for power" and attributing the discontent with the Bali empire to "the unreliable egoistic Bali policy." Indeed, he recommended to the Colonial Office that "The importance of Bali as a supplier of labourers has for some time past been considerably on the wane and that "Fonyonga has proved himself utterly unsuitable as an intermediary between the Germans and other tribes." In fact as Adig [2012:209] remarked:

In the face of all the many local wars, the German distanced themselves from the Bali-Nyonga and began to strip the fon from the position he had been empowered to hold for long. In effect, Bali-Nyonga separated from the German era more frustrated than the German met them.

All these antagonized the Bali as they waited for the right time to revenge hence the First World War gave the opportunity for such a ploy.

### **Bali Decline**

Having been told that slave trade was abolished and peaceful trade established, Galega I did not expect that the German request for labour was more or less another form of human slavery. He believed the people sent to the plantations were going to make fortunes and return with riches to the kingdom. Gwanfogbe [2017:128] confirms that:

... towards the end of his life, Galega I realized that the people he sent to serve the Germans were not

forth returning. He also noticed that his relations with his neighbours and subjects were increasingly being compromised because of his association with the Germans, so he had to retract.

As a result of Galega's refusal to send more workers to the plantations, the Germans undermined him and began to deal directly with the other villages in the region that were under Bali. That was the beginning of German dissociation with Bali especially after Balitruppe had been used to defeat the Grassfield chiefdoms and establish German rule. One can also argue that the transfer of the German headquarters from Bali to Bamenda in 1902 was partially because Bali had been relegated to the periphery in German policy in the region.

Normally, the declining Bali Empire was a bitter pill to be swallowed by Fonyonga and his people and Ndifontah, [1989:124] attributed Ebermair's actions to Baliphobia and accusing him of having "inborn hatred for Bali" and concluded "Bali was the convenient scapegoat of German contradictory colonial policy." Governor Ebermair's action in 1912 in which he summoned a meeting in Bamenda he told all Bali vassals to deal directly with the administration and in 1914, 18 villages were freed from Bali Empire. According to Adig [2012: 172]:

Bali-Nyonga ended up more devastated and ridiculed than in her pre-colonial days .... What remained of Bali-Nyonga was her fighting spirit which was again used to support the various parties during the First World War

The effective decline of the Bali Empire had thus been set on motion with the reversal of German policy towards her. Doh [1988:78] concludes, that "The last nail on the coffin of the empire was put by the tax reforms of May 1914" in which 29 villages were to pay tribute to Bali for the political lost.

Thus, the initial cordial relations between Bali and the Germans deteriorated as the Germans firmly consolidated their rule in the region. Henceforth the supply of labour and collection of taxes from the different villages of the Grassfield was done without the use of Balitruppe as people of other ethnic origins replaced Bali people.

From the above analyses the German-Bali relations by 1914 could be situated within the paradigm of Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart. When the First World War broke out in July 14 in Europe and reached Cameroon, August 5, 1914, the Bali saw it as an August opportunity to pay the Germans back in their coins.

## IV THE PHASE OF RETALIATION

### Bali Support to the British Forces

Though the 1914-1918 war was a European debacle, Europeans' worldwide sphere attracted and spread the war to become the First World War. So as hostilities progressed, German interests all over the world came under attack as was the case in Cameroon. The war reached Cameroon in 1915 when the British and French forces converged in neighbouring colonies. As Moberly F. [1931:42] revealed, before the attack on Douala in August 4, 1914, the British had penetrated under Major Crookenden and reached Bali in October 1915 and used as base for the attack in the Grassfields. According Adig and Nfi [2017: 3-5], it was a general pandemonium specially among the major chiefs of the Bameda Grasslands who doubted which party to support; a dilemma of either to accept the British as their new master and risk the Germans vindictive reprisal or the vice versa. But when the British reached Bali, with Fonyonga still leaking the wounds of German treachery he decided to support them. He thus received the British troops as his predecessor, Galega I had received Zintgraff in 1889. Hunt [1925:40] indicated how the Bali gave the British ample supplies of food, services, victual and information that were very vital in the British offensive throughout the whole Grassfields. They equally revealed all the footpaths and short cuts, ravines and mountain passes that neutralized the advantage of any knowledge of terrain by the Germans. According to Ndifontah [1989:128] "Fonyonga had not forgiven the Germans for letting him down and the German war situation had revealed that only a fool would have continued to stand by them."

### German Retaliation

The Germans did not take Bali support to the British during the First World War in the Grassfields kindly and thus launched a reprisal. The commander who led the raid on Bali, Abramowski razed the area, stormed Fonyonga's palace, plundering it of goods and money worth some 2000 dollars and setting the entire place ablaze. According Chilver [1967:512], "[...] how Fonyonga managed to escape capture and the rescues of sacred objects were subject of miracles." The revenge on Bali was even extended to kindred villages as Balikumbat and Bali Gham were attacked. Gagwanyin II of Balikumbat was arrested and tortured by German soldiers causing him to die before reaching Bamenda Station for treatment. In any case, Bali support

to the British respected the common aphorism in local parlance "an eye for an eye". Both adversaries departed in declining status quos.

## CONCLUSION

This study is a demonstration of a mirage alliance during the colonial era in Cameroon. It has been illustrated with the colonial history of fondom of Bali-Nyonga in the Western Grassfields which was tinted with imperialistic tendencies, little wonder; it augured well when the Zintgraff with similar motive reached their vicinity. This is validated by the rationalization that the Bali was a black imperialist of the Western Grassfields whose ambitions in the region fitted squarely with those of the Whiteman. Consequently, the Bali-Germano Treaty of 1891 was simply an entente between two signatories with similar interest and the question was rather the extent to which either interest was protected. Obviously, the lifespan of any relation having interest as the foundational stone is obstinately linked to the continuous validity of the said motive. There was no doubt both made earlier gains, but such gains eloped with time. Thus when Bali seized to represent a force to German administration in the region, she was jilted. So they began to look elsewhere for more suitable allies. Accordingly, the Bali could not be indifferent to German treachery as she decided to support the British rather than the Germans. Bali had not forgiven them [Germans] for stripping Bali of its paramountcy. Bali support to British invited heinous reprisals from the German hence former allies became foes. The study concludes that the Bali-German alliance was not only dynamic but incoherent resulting top arting in mutual frustration.

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Adig Mathias Azang holds a PhD in the history of International Relations from the University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon. He is a researcher with a number of original scholarly works in national and international journals to his credit. His areas of interest include crisis, the labour problem, colonialism, land, politics, ethnicity and issues of marginalization. He is the Head of Division of Admission and Records in the Higher Institute of Transport and Logistics of The University of Bamenda and an Associate lecturer, Department of History, of the same University.

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