

Political, Economic and Social Transformation of Gyaman under the French Colonial Rule 1900-1950.

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Abstract—Gyaman also spelt Jaman and usually referred to as the Bono or Brong or Abron Kingdom of Gyaman was a West African traditional Kingdom that flourished in the last decade of the seventeenth century. The Kingdom was founded by a section of the Akwamu people who fled their original home in the Eastern Region of Ghana as a result of succession rancor between two rival candidates. The fugitives led by Queen Nkansa and Obiri Yeboa, the son of a woman by the name of Asiduma migrated from Akwamu. They settled in such places as Oboo, Nyanoase (Nsawam), Asumegya, Amakom and finally in Suntreso now a suburb of Kumasi where they lived as Dormaa people. A section of them fled Osei Tutu's military hostilities, moved towards the northwestern direction and carved a new Kingdom known in history as the Brong Kingdom of Gyaman in the last decade of the seventeenth century. Gyaman was partitioned between the British and French in 1893. The British section fell to the Republic of Ghana, while the French section fell to the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire. Institutional changes occurred in Gyaman as a result of the supplanting of colonialism on the people. This led to political, social and economic transformation in both sections of Gyaman. However, this work focuses on the socio-economic and political transformation in the French section of Gyaman in the era of colonial rule. The researcher used primary and secondary materials for his historical investigation. He also analyzed the data using scientific style of empiricism, rationalism, and positivism. In the data analysis the researcher detached himself from a priori speculation and his emotions did not influence his analysis. The research makes the following findings. Firstly, that western institutions and values were supplanted on traditional ones. Secondly, that the French colonial rule resulted in social, political and economic transformation of the area.

Index Terms—Gyaman, French, Colonial Rule, Transformation

I. INTRODUCTION

Gyaman¹ was an Akan kingdom that flourished in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. The founders of the Kingdom migrated from Akwamu, an Empire that was located in the contemporary Eastern Region of the Republic of Ghana. A version of their traditional account relates that the founders of Gyaman were a section of the Akwamu who broke away from their motherland on account of secession dispute that occurred around 1600, after the demise of King Ansa-Sasraku I. The deflected Akwamu group who were members of the Aduana clan joined their brethren at Asumegya in the contemporary Ashanti Region of the Republic of Ghana.² The group migrated further to carve the Suntreso traditional state where they lived as Dormaa people.³ Bellicose encounters between the Dormaa and the Kwaman and later the Asante compelled a section of the Dormaa to flee towards the northwestern direction where they carved the Gyaman Kingdom.⁴ At the peak of its prowess, Gyaman was bounded by Wenchi to the east, Banda to the northeast, Asante to the south, Sefwi to the southwest, Bouna to the north and the Comoe River to the west. Gyaman was annexed as a colony to Asante following the former's defeat in the Abo Kofi War launched by Asantehene Opoku Ware I, in the 1740s.⁵ However, the Gyaman people declared themselves independence from Asante's colonization in 1874 when the British defeated Asante in the Sagrenti War 1874.

In the meantime, after the British had defeated Asante in 1874, the former sought to bring Gyaman under their control not only to weaken the Kumasi government, but also gain upper hand in Gyaman's trade. In 1879, Lees the British Governor dispatched an emissary led by John Smith to the Gyaman country to sign a treaty of protection with them. But, Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman's provincial chiefs would not accept to put their kingdom under European control.⁶ Available evidence revealed that it was one faction in Kwaku Agyeman's government led by Kwaku Kosono, the Akyidomhene also nicknamed Pape that denounced the King's decision to avail his country to the British protection.⁷

Mensah Bonsu, the King of Asante who succeeded Kofi Karikari expedited action to recover Gyaman and other territories Asante had lost. This frightened the British; therefore, in 1888, the

¹Gyaman is also called Bono or Brong kingdom of Gyaman. Francophone scholars refer to it as Abron. Britwum and Terray call it Brong Kingdom of Gyaman or *Un Royaume Abron du Gyaman* respectively. K.A., Britwum, "Kwadwo Adinkra of Gyaman, a Study of the Relations between the Brong Kingdom of Gyaman and Asante 1800-1818, *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, Legon, xv, no.2(1974),230-45. Emmanuel Terray, "L'Economie Politique du Royaume Abron du Gyaman, *Cahier d'Etude Africaine*,87/88, No.22(1982),251-75, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4391810>,(accessed on 12th September,2021).

² In this work, I use "Asante" while referring to the Asante traditional Kingdom and "Ashanti" in reference to the Crown Colony of Ashanti or the administrative region.

³ Eva, L.R. Meyerowitz, *Akan Traditions of Origin*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), 102.

⁴ A. A., Boahen, *Ghana Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and the Twentieth Century*, (London: Longman,1975), 25.

⁵ Ebenezer Assinoah Agyemang, "Gyaman-Its Relations with Ashanti 1720-1820", (MA Thesis Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana,1965),35. The war was named after Gyamanhene Abo Kofi hence the Abo Kofi War.

⁶ Charles Andre Julien, *Les Africains, Tome xii*, (Paris: Edition, j.a.,1990),263.

⁷ Akbar Muhammad, "Djula Intellectualism in Ivory Coast and Ghana a Study of the Life and Career of Alhaji Salih b. Muhammad b. Uthman", (PhD Dissertation, University of Edinburg,1974),39-39.

Governor and the colonial office abandoned the old policy of non-interference beyond the Pra River.⁸ In the meantime, Treich Laplene and Authur Verdier, a planter had been dispatched by the French Government to sign treaties of protection with Bettie, Ndenye and other kingdoms of southern Cote d'Ivoire.⁹ The two reached Gyaman in June, 1887, but on account of bad environmental condition that bred mosquitoes, Treich Laplene was infected by malaria. Sojourning at Abengourou to receive treatment, Treich Laplene dispatched Quattie, his interpreter to contact Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman at Amanvi, the traditional capital of Gyaman. Quattie was instructed to inform the King that the French had vested interest in his Kingdom. Meanwhile, a British expedition led by Captain Lonsdale was at Denkyira preparing to enter Gyaman. Lonsdale's advanced team led by Van Dyke, an African military Corporal left to see Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman on the 19th of June, 1887 at Amanvi. Acting on Lonsdale's admonition, Van Dyke presented Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman a Union Jack to symbolize the British readiness to sign a treaty of friendship and protection with him. Later, Van Dyke returned to Abengourou through Bondoukou.

The success story Van Dyke conveyed to Lonsdale became a source of happiness to the British expedition. Later, Treich Laplene and Authur Verdier ambushed and forestalled Lonsdale by concluding with Gyamanhene Agyeman a protection treaty in November, 1888.¹⁰ In the same year, Kofi Dabie, a citizen of Gyaman went to Cape Coast to inform the British Governor that he had been sent by the Gyamanhene. The object of Kofi Dabie's invitation was to put Gyaman under British protection. Accordingly, the Governor dispatched an emissary led by Inspector Lethbridge of the Gold Coast Police to conclude provisional treaty with the Gyaman and bring them under the British protection. The Inspector left for Gyaman accompanied by Richard Austin Freeman, the Assistant Colonial Surgeon and Anglo-German Boundary Commissioner.¹¹ Having set off in November 1888, the expedition reached Bondoukou on the 3rd of January, 1889. Though Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman and his Elders gave the expedition a warm reception, but surprisingly, Kwaku Agyeman told Lethbridge and his team that he had no knowledge of their coming to his country and that Dabie should be released to him for decapitation for that was the deserved punishment for a treasonable conduct. The British officers declined the request and told Kwaku Agyeman that he was well disposed to the English; consequently, they hoped that a treaty of friendship would be signed with him. On the 24th of January, 1889, the Gyamanhene sat in state with his Councilors ready to do business with the British envoy. Lethbridge's confidence boosted when he saw the Gyamanhene holding the Union Jack that Lonsdale had presented him earlier in 1887. At this juncture, Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman vehemently denied having put his Kingdom

⁸ W.E.F. Ward, 'Britain and Ashanti 1874-1896,' *Transaction of the Historical Society of Ghana*, xv, no.2(1974),131-64.

⁹ Seraphin Nene Bi, *Les Institution Colonial de l'Afrique Occidental Francais* (Abidjan: Edition ABC, 2011), 34.

¹⁰ Julien, *Les Africains*, 271. At Amanvi Van Dyke met Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman and a pocket of his councilors including Kwaku Nyaka, his biological son; Salia Ba Timitey, a representative of the Djula Muslims of Bondoukou and Kwadwo Agyeman who later became the occupant of the Ankobea Stool of Gyaman.

¹¹ Richard Austin Freeman, *Travel and Life in Ashanti and Gyaman*, (Wesminster: Archibald Constable and Co, 1898.), 2.

under the French protection. He further explained himself, and said that he had indeed accepted the French colonizers' flag, and signed a treaty whose intent was nothing more than to encourage trade with the French port at Krinjabo near Assini, and to maintain friendly relations with Europeans in general. He went on to say that previously Gyaman traded with the Europeans at Cape Coast, but the Sagrenti War 1874 and the chaotic situation that ensued had made the trade route that passed through Kumasi unsafe. For this reason, they had diverted Gyaman's trade to the French port at Krinjabo near Half Assini. At this point, the British envoy became convinced by the King's explanation; consequently, they went ahead to execute a treaty of friendship, protection and trade. The British officers signed the treaty on behalf of the Queen's Government, while the King and his Councilors made their marks. A pole made of a crooked wood was used to hoist a British flag in Bondoukou amidst cheers and merry making.¹² Thereafter, the expedition returned to Cape Coast. Ward reports that shortly afterwards, the colonial office received the news of Lethbridge negotiation with Gyaman, but would not ratify it because Louis Gustave Binger had forestalled him.¹³ Asante was disillusioned in the French treaty with Gyaman because its dream to reclaim Gyaman had landed on the rocks.

Later in 1895, Samory Toure (Samori Ture) occupied Gyaman. He was a Malinke Djula Muslim who carried out military activities with his band of soldiers, the *Sofa* between 1861 and 1898. He aimed at expanding his Malinke-Djula Empire from a place in modern Sierra Leone through the western direction of the Comoe River in Cote d'Ivoire to modern Ghana in the east. The French had blocked Samory at Assikasso in modern Mali in 1888 to shatter his political fortunes there; consequently, he turned to the east. Panicked over his success in northern Cote d'Ivoire (formerly French Sudan), the French army confronted Samory at Djimini in March, 1895 and ousted his army from there.¹⁴ The *Sofa* combatants then turned their attention to the gold rich kingdom of Gyaman. On the 26th day of April, 1895, the French colonial administrator at Zaranou reported to the Governor of Cote d'Ivoire at Grand Bassam that Samory had occupied Bondoukou (Bonduku), the commercial capital of Gyaman.¹⁵ Meanwhile, Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman's request to the French for protection did not yield any fruitful results. In desperation and short of arms, he fled to take refuge at Dadiase.¹⁶ Kwabena Afram, the ruler of Suma, a provincial chiefdom of Gyaman went to Cape Coast to request British protection not only against the *Sofa*, but also against Asante, its traditional enemy. In July, 1897, a British military detachment occupied Bondoukou and in September, 1897 decisively defeated Samory. Following his defeat, Samory retreated to Bouna (Buna), a country that lay north of Gyaman. No sooner had the British rescued Gyaman than two French colonial officers namely: - Clozel, the Colonial Administrator and Lieutenant Lamblin

¹² Freeman, *Travel*, 207.

¹³ W.E.F. Ward, "British and Ashanti 1874-1898", *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, xv, no.2, (1974), 131-65.

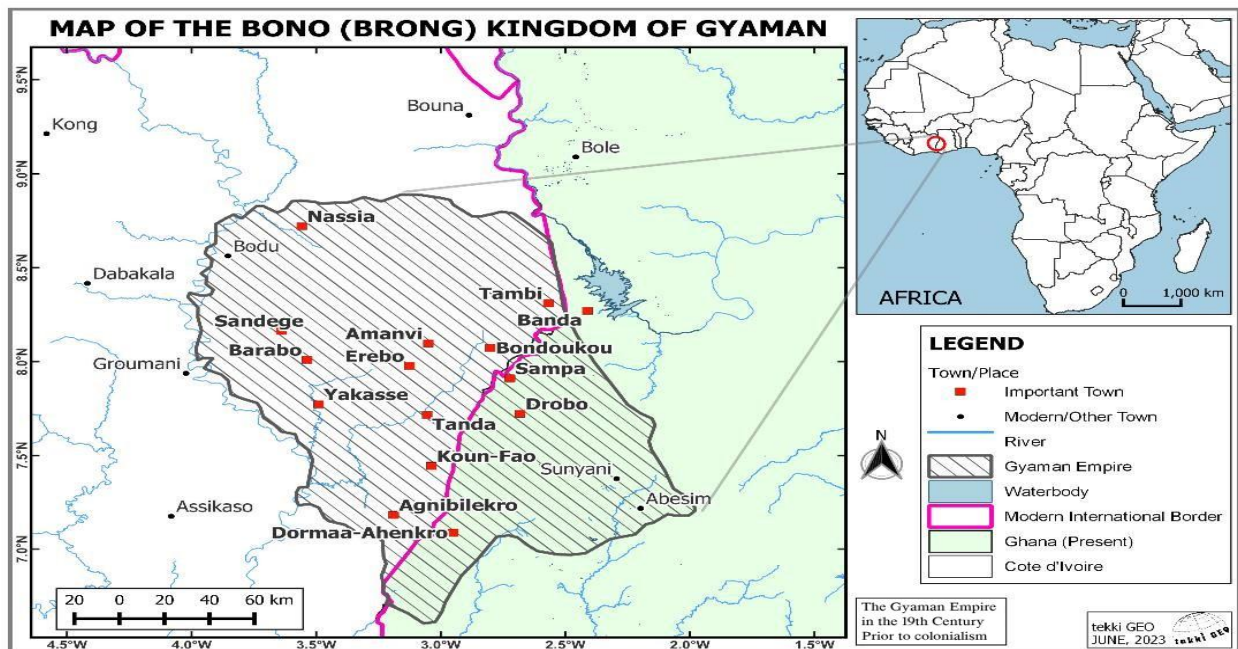
¹⁴ Akbar Muhammad, "Samorian Occupation of Bondoukou, an Indigenous View", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 10, no.2, (1977), 242-58, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/217348>, (accessed on 25th July, 2022).

¹⁵ Archives Nationales de Cote d'Ivoire, [hereafter ANCI], IEE 9 (1), a Letter from the Colonial Administrator to the Governor dated Le 26 Avril, 1897,

¹⁶ Guy Kanga, *La Cote d'Ivoire Par Les Textes de L'aube de la Colonisation a Nos Jours*, (Dakar: Les Nouvelles Editions Africaines, 1978), 75.

came to Bondoukou with twenty-five soldiers. They informed the chiefs of the French Government's readiness to effectively occupy Gyaman and provide them protection. Kwabena Afram, Basarko and Kwaku Kosono who were paramount chiefs of Suma, the Nifa; Gomere, the Akyidom and the Fumassa provincial chiefdoms respectively protested against the French decision because of their earlier disappointment. As a result, the French arrested the three and shot them dead in cold blood at Bondoukou (Bonduku).

Anglo-French delimitation treaty was signed in 1893 to delimit the western border of Ghana with Cote d'Ivoire, but the ground partition exercise was not carried out until 1899 probably on account of the controversial treaties compounded by Samory's invasion and its resultant instability in Gyaman. On the 14th of June, 1898, another convention was signed in Paris between France and Britain for the delimitation of the French possession of Cote d'Ivoire, Sudan and Benin and the British colonies of the Gold Coast, Lagos, as well as other British possessions to the West of the Niger. The Convention at the same time spelt out in clear terms the spheres of influence of the two colonial powers. This Convention placed the western border of the Gold Coast with Cote d'Ivoire on the latitude nine degrees north (9⁰N) at the Black Volta bend to latitude eleven degrees (11⁰ N).¹⁷ The Convention came into force in 1899, and divided the traditional Gyaman Kingdom between the British and French spheres. Tordoff reports that following the partition of the Kingdom by the Anglo-French delimitation treaty, the Gyamanhene was located in the French section of the border, while some of his provincial chiefdoms were located in the British section.¹⁸Henceforth, the two colonial powers established their administrative structures in their spheres and governed the people separately. Today, Gyaman people do not live together as they did in the pre-colonial days; they astride the western border of Ghana with Cote d'Ivoire.



¹⁷ ANCI, Abidjan, IEE 10 (5), Convention Signe a Paris le 14 Juin, 1898 entre la France et la Grande Bretagne

¹⁸ William Tordoff, *Ashanti under the Prempehs 1888-1935*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 65.

Asante's defeat by the British in the Sagrenti War 1874 dwindled Asante's power. It lost its vassal states to the south of the Pra River. These vassals included: -Akyem, Denkyira, Kwahu, Sefwi, Aowin, Wasa, the Ga and the Fante states. Also, Asante's vassal states to the north and the north-west took advantage of the weakened center to declare their independence. These states included Gonja, Dagbon, Mo, Wenchi, Tachiman, and Gyaman.¹⁹ Mensa Bonsu, the King of Asante (1874-1896) who succeeded the deposed Kofi Karikari wanted to restore Asante to its previous dignity. He launched a program to modernize the Asante army. In this regard, he recruited numerous Hausa into service and by 1879 there were close to four hundred Hausa soldiers to fight for Asante.²⁰ In 1878, Mensa Bonsu sent to tell Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman that the British Government had given Gyaman back to him.²¹ The news took Kwaku Agyeman by surprise, so he sent an envoy to Cape Coast to enquire if that was true. The Governor sent emissary to Bondoukou to deny Mensa Bonsu's claim.²² Additionally, he charged the envoy to sign a treaty of protection with the Gyaman if they wanted it. Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman was disposed to accept the offer, but pressure from such influential chiefs as Kwaku Koosono also called Papi, the paramount chief of the Benkum province at his court compelled him to decline it.²³ Others who shared his position were Basarko, the paramount chief of the Fumasa (Foumassa) province as well as Kokobo who was intriguing with Asante to have Kwaku Agyeman deposed in his favor.²⁴

II. THE FRENCH PROTECTORATE TREATY WITH GYAMAN

In 1687, a French mission established itself at Assinie near Ghana's western border. From 1843 onwards, Louis Edouard Bouet-Willaumez, a French Admiral signed treaties with the African states of Grand Bassam, Dabou and Assinie areas to enable him use and control the area as a permanent trading post.²⁵ The Franco-Prussian War, 1871 that culminated in German's annexation of Alsace Lorraine shuttered the French Government's colonial ambition. It withdrew military garrisons it had stationed in the West African trading posts, and put merchants there. In 1878, the French Government motivated Authur Verdier, a shipper from Marseille who was accredited for the establishment of Cote d'Ivoire to take control of the trading post. The French explored the interior of Cote d'Ivoire in 1886 to establish effective occupation there, and the decree of 10th of March, 1893 established the French colony of Cote d'Ivoire.²⁶

¹⁹ Nana James Kwaku Bruhum, "The Northern Territories of the Gold Coast under British Colonial Rule 1897-1956," (PhD Thesis, Department of History, University of Toronto, 1997), 47.

²⁰ Ivor Wilks, "Asante Policy towards the Hausa Trade in the Nineteenth Century", in Claude Meillassoux, ed., *The Development of Indigenous Trade and Market in West Africa*, (Oxford University Press, 1971), 125-141.

²¹ Ward, *History*, 288.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Julien. *Les Africains*, 263.

²⁵ Une Equipe d'enseignants Africains, *Histoire Geographie 3eme*, (Paris: Edition Hatier), 32.

²⁶ Guy Cangah et Simon Pierre Ekanza, *La Cote d'Ivoire par Les Textes de Laube de la Colonisation a Nos Jours*, (Dakar: Nouvelles Editions Africaines, 1978), 122.

The British began to feel the pressure of the French and possibly the German from 1884 onwards; consequently, the British took a quick action which resulted in the offer of protection to Sefwi and Kwahu around 1888. For fear that the French would forestall them to the North and West, and the Germans to the East as well, the British discarded its policy of non-interference beyond the Pra River as contained in the Treaty of Fomena. They rather took to granting protection to the states of the north-west Asante and metropolitan Asante itself. In 1888, Treich Laplene, a French explorer concluded protection treaties with the kingdoms of Sefwi (Sanwi), Bettie, Indenie and Yaakase, and the Anyi Bini province of the Gyaman Kingdom, as well.²⁷ Akbar relates that in November, 1888, Laplene proceeded to Bondoukou and concluded a treaty with Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman.²⁸ The content of the treaty was captured in a series of articles shown below:

Article Premier

‘Le roi de l’Abron et du Bondoukou declare placer son pays sous l’amitie et la protection de la France.

Article 2

Le Gouverneur du Senegal reconnait Adjimin comme roi de l’Abron et du Bondoukou et lui promet amitie et protection.

Article 3

Le commerce se fera librement entre les sujets Francais du pays d’Assinie, de Grand Bassam de l’Indenie, de Battie et les subjects de l’Abron et du Bondoukou

Article 4:

Le roi d’Abron et du Bondoukou s’engage a preserver de tout pillage les caravanes qui viendraient chez lui et a laisser libre l’acces de son pays.

Article 5

Le gouvernement Francais s’engage a faire ouvrir et entretenir une route entre le pays de l’Abron et celui d’Assinie.

Article 6:

Les gens du pays de l’Abron et du Bondoukou sont libres neanmoins d’aller commencer en pays autre que ceux de territoire francais.

Article 7.

Les contestations qui pourraient s’elever entre les gens du pays de l’Abron et ceux des pays voisins seront portees devant les autorites Francaises qui judgeront en aucune circonstances, les operations ne pourront etre suspendues par ordres de chefs indigenes

Article 8

Une rent annuelle don’t le chiffre ne sera pas inferieur a trois milles francs, sera payee au rois de l’Abron et du Bondoukou comme present d’amite et pour l’entretien des routes dans son pays.

Article 9:

²⁷ Julien, *Les Africains*, 273.

²⁸ Akbar, ‘‘Dyula Intellectualism,’’ 43.

Le roi de l'Abron s'engage a ne conclure aucune convention avec les autres nations sans le consentement prealable de la France.

Article 10:

Le present traite servira de base aux relations entre le Gouvernement Francais et le pays de l'Abron et du Bondoukou Fait et signe en triple expeditions au village de zaranou ou Amanvi.²⁹

Translation:

Article 1:

The King of the Abron (Gyaman) and of Bondoukou declares putting his country under the friendship and protection of France.

Article 2:

The Governor of Senegal recognizes Adjimin (Agyeman) as king of the Abron (Gyaman) and Bondoukou and promises him friendship and protection.

Article 3:

Trade will be freely carried out between French subjects of Assinie (Assini), Grand Bassam, Indinie, Bettie and the Abron (Gyaman) and Bondoukou subjects.

Article 4:

The King of the Abron (Gyaman) and Bondoukou commits himself to safeguarding caravans that will come to his place from robbery and give them free access to his country.

Article 5:

The French government also commits itself to opening and maintaining a trade route between the Abron country and the Assinie country.

Article 6:

Nevertheless, the people of the Abron country and Bondoukou are free to go and trade in any country apart from the French territory.

Article 7:

Any complication that might arise between the people of the Abron (Gyaman) country and those of the neighboring countries will be sent to the French authorities for adjudication. In any case, trade activities will not be suspended by the indigenous chiefs.

Article 8:

An annual tribute, the sum of which will not be less than three thousand francs will be paid to the king of the Abron (Gyaman) and Bondoukou as a gift of friendship and maintenance of routes in his country.

Article 9:

The King of the Abron (Gyaman) commits himself not to conclude any pact with any other nation without prior consent of France.

Article 10:

The present treaty will serve as the basis of relationship between the French Government and the Abron (Gyaman). Prepared and signed in triplicate at the village of Zarano or Amanvi.

The pact document quoted supra had a component of protection as contained in Article 1; however, more emphasis was laid on trade than it was on military protection. If it were a true protection treaty, why didn't the French establish military and police defense posts to maintain security, law and order in accordance with the 'principle of effective occupation' as stipulated in the Berlin

²⁹ Akbar, "Dyula Intellectualism," 43-44.

Conference Act? Besides, as we will see later, when Samory Toure invaded Gyaman in 1895, the French turned down Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman's request for the former's military intervention. Why did a colonial power that had signed a protection pact with the Gyaman refuse them military support and protection? What then was the essence of the pact if it were indeed signed for the purpose of protection? The French might have capitalized on linguistic deficiency of the Gyamanhene and his Councilors to insert a protection clause in the treaty whose main subject was trade just to forestall any other European power particularly the British from further advance to the north-west. Deceit like this was not an uncommon disposition of the European colonizers. A case in point was the dual-text treaty the Italians made with Menelik II, the King of Shoa.³⁰ One text was in the Amharic language, whereas the other was written in the Italian language. It was the Article XVII of the treaty which triggered off controversy. In the Article, linguistic operation made the meaning entirely different in material logic in the same article. The Amharic version which Menelik understood stated that Menelik, the King could avail himself of the services of the Italian authorities for all communications he might wish to have with other powers. However, the Italian text in which Menelik was linguistically deficient made this clause obligatory other than wish or voluntary. On the basis of this clause, the Italians declared Ethiopia their protectorate and worked towards its recognition as such by other European powers. Menelik refused to accept this interpretation and out-rightly denounced the entire treaty. This controversy triggered off the Battle of Adowa in which the Italians were decisively defeated.³¹

III. THE BRITISH PROTECTION TREATY WITH GYAMAN

In the early days of 1888, Kofi Dabbie, a royal of Gyaman went to Cape Coast and announced to the Governor that Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman had requested British protection. Governor Brandford Griffith dispatched an emissary led by Inspector Lethbridge of the Gold Coast Police. Lethbridge accompanied by Richard Austin Freeman, an Assistant Colonial Surgeon and Anglo-German Boundary Commissioner of the Gold Coast went to Gyaman for the purpose of signing a treaty of protection with the Gyamanhene.³² The envoy reached Bondoukou in December, 1888. Accusing the envoy of intruding his country, Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman denied knowledge of their invitation and told the Mission to release Kofi Dabbie to him for decapitation for according to the Gyamanhene beheading was the reward for a subversive demeanor. Lethbridge refused to release Kofi Dabbie and explained to Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman that they had understood that the Government of Agyeman was well disposed to the English; therefore, they hoped before leaving, a treaty of friendship between the two countries would be established. In this regard,

³⁰ M.B. Akpan et al, "Liberia, Ethiopia, 1880-1914 the Survival of Two African States", in Boahen, ed. *General History*, 123.

³¹ Ibid.

³² W.E.F., Ward, "Britain and Ashanti 1874-1896", *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, vol. xv, no.2 (1974), 131-164.

Agyeman asked the emissary to stay for a while, so that he talked the matter over with his chiefs. Henceforth, the envoy retreated to their quarters and stayed till January, 1889 when Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman invited them to a meeting. Agyeman sat in state flanked by his chiefs and some Wangara Muslims. He then showed the British envoy a copy of the treaty he had signed with the French.³³ The Gyamanhene explained further to them that though he had signed a treaty with the French and accepted their flag, the treaty he was referring to was a trade treaty meant to help him have access to the trade route that linked his country to Krinjabo near half Assinie in the southern part of modern Ghana.³⁴

The diversion of Gyaman's trade through Assinie, Krinjabo to Cape Coast was occasioned by Asante's incursions against the British which threatened trade. On this occasion, such influential and powerful chiefs on King Agyeman's Council as Papi, paramount chief of the Akyidom province; Kokobo, the paramount chief of the Sapli province who had earlier turned down the British protection in 1879 now agreed to put Gyaman under the British. A protection treaty was then signed between Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman and his Councilors who represented Gyaman on one hand and Lethbridge and his team who represented the British Government on another hand. Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman was presented with a Union Jack and was informed that the British Government had declared his Kingdom a protectorate. A British flag was hoisted at Bondoukou in a colorful ceremony to mark and seal the pact. But the British Foreign Office accepted the French claim and would not ratify the treaty that Lethbridge signed with the Gyaman. For this reason, the British did not establish police and military posts to protect lives and property as well as maintaining law and order in accordance with the 'principle of effective occupation' enshrined in the Berlin Conference Act. Later, the two colonial powers partitioned Gyaman between each other. This happened because none of the two powers found it possible to claim the whole of Gyaman.³⁵ Tordoff reports that by the Agreement of the 12 of July, 1893, signed between the two colonial powers in Paris the boundary was drawn leaving Bondoukou, the capital of Gyaman to the French.³⁶ But the boundary was delimited and beaconed in 1903 and 1904.³⁷ One section of Gyaman that fell to the British was labeled British Gyaman, while the other section that fell to the French was christened French Gyaman.

IV. SAMORY TOURE'S INVASION OF GYAMAN

Samory Toure³⁸ (1828-1900) was a Muslim cleric, military strategist, founder and leader of the Wassalou Empire whose capital was called Kankan. This was an Islamic empire located in the present day northern and southern regions of Guinea. Ambitious to extend his empire, he moved

³³ Austin Richard Freeman, *Travel and Life in Ashanti and Jaman*, (Whitehall: Archibald Constable and Co., 1898),205.

³⁴ Freeman, *Travel*, 206.

³⁵ PRAAD, Accra, MFA 4/7, Confidential Report from Lord Knutsford, Colonial Secretary to Acting Governor Hodgson of the Gold Coast on the Assinie Boundary, Gyaman and Neighbouring Territories.

³⁶ Tordff, *Ashanti*, 65.

³⁷ PRAAD, Kumasi, ARG 1/2/11/3 British Gyaman.

³⁸ Also spelt Samori Toure or Almamy Samore Latifa Toure.

from the Senegambia area, fought across the Comoe River and eventually attacked Kong, Bouna and Gyaman. The *Sofa*, Samory's army, on a military expedition invaded Gyaman in 1895. Available evidence reveals that Samory's invasion was occasioned by economic considerations. He wanted to use and control the trade routes that passed through Gyaman to the Europeans port at the coast.³⁹ Gyaman's military contingent which included some Djula Muslim warriors under the command of Karamako Baba Ali took the offensive against the *Sofa*. Samory won positions west of Bondoukou and later in June, 1895, captured Sanlo, Sangué and Yaakase in the Agni area. Barabo, Kouassibangou, Sogo and Marau, (Marahu). Amanvi, the seat of the Gyaman government fell to the *Sofa*. He garrisoned Sikasoko (now called Sampa) and Duadaso and opened communication with Kumasi. through Berekum⁴⁰ As a result of this, Gyamanhene Agyeman requested the assistance of his French "protectors", but the request was turned down. Helpless Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman fled to Dadease, a town located about thirty miles southwest of Bondoukou.⁴¹

Wilks reports that from his base in Bondoukou Samory thrust eastwards to such towns as Banda, Gbupe, Bole and Mengye.⁴² Imam Ibrahim Timitay, Gyamanhene Kwaku Agyeman's spiritual advisor, who was a Muslim leader at Bondoukou together with his followers fled to seek refuge at Gyapekrom, a town situated in the British controlled section of Gyaman.⁴³ Samory invaded Gyaman to control the trade route that passed through Bondoukou in Gyaman to Krinjabo near Half Assinie in Ghana. Another economic motive of his invasion was that he wanted to have access to Gyaman's gold.⁴⁴ After the flight of the Gyamanhene, Samory overtook Bondoukou and established a temporary government there. A request for French intervention yielded no positive results; therefore, the Gyaman had to explore other avenues. Kwame Afram, the chief of the Suma province who occupied the *Nifa Stool* of Gyaman went to Cape Coast and requested British military liberation. Accordingly, the Governor in Cape Coast dispatched a military detachment led by Lieutenant Henderson of the Gold Coast constabulary to confront Samory and by July, 1897, this detachment had occupied Bondoukou.⁴⁵ Another battalion of the British army that had ousted the *Sofa* from Bole, and Wa also came to Bondoukou under the leadership of Colonel H.P. Northcott. Lt. Henderson and Northcott launched a joint military confrontation against Samory and his *Sofa* and by September, 1897, Samory had suffered a decisive defeat.⁴⁶ He retreated back to Bouna in the northern part of Gyaman, while his two military commanders called Bakari and

³⁹ Akbar, "Dyula Intellectualism", 50.

⁴⁰ T.C. McCaskie, "Sakrobondi ne Aberewa: Sie Kwasi and the Witch-Finder in the Akan World", *Transactions of Historical Society in Ghana*, 'New Series, no.8(2004),82-135.

⁴¹ Ibid. 97.

⁴² Ivor Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 302.

⁴³ Akbar, "Samorian Occupation", 247.

⁴⁴ Samory's occupation of Bondoukou brought about political, religious and social change. Bondoukou's government was expanded to include the *Sofa*. Papi, the powerful Akyidomhene and other chiefs had no option but to succumb to the orders of Samory.

⁴⁵ ANCI, Abidjan, IEE40 (5), a letter from William Maxwell, the Governor of the Gold Coast submitted to the French Colonial Governor at Grand Bassam.

⁴⁶ Agyemang et al, "The Impact," 392.

Sanasi escaped to Dabakala.⁴⁷ In December, 1897, shortly after the British forces had succeeded in demolishing the *Sofa*, two French officers :- Clozel and Lieutenant Lamblin came to Bondoukou with twenty five soldiers to prepare for a permanent occupation in Gyaman. Lamblin held a public meeting in Bondoukou to which a few of the Gyaman chiefs attended. He told them of the demise of Samory and the French government's intention to establish a permanent stay in the town. Kwame Afram, the paramount chief of the Suma province; Barsako, of the Fumasa province and Kwaku Kosono alias Papi, the paramount chief of the Akyidom province protested against the French decision to occupy Gyaman because the French had earlier failed to rescue them from Samory's incursion. For this reason, the French arrested the three and shot them dead in Bondoukou. Why did the British evacuate after defeating Samory? This was because by a series of unexecuted paper agreements, London had ceded Bondoukou to the French. The last of these agreements took place at Paris in 1893.⁴⁸ It is reported that Northcott pursued Samory as far as Bouna where he met the French Captain Joseph Clozel and told him to occupy Bondoukou. Cote d'Ivoire was declared autonomous colony of France in 1893 during *la penetration pacifique*.⁴⁹ Before then, it was consecutively linked to Senegal (Goree and Saint-Louis) from 1854 to 1882, to Gabon from 1882 to 1889 and French Guinea from 1891 to 1893. It was finally integrated into the Federation of French West Africa, *Federation de l'Afrique Occidentale Francaise* when the Federation came into existence in 1895. In 1899, Odienne, Kong, and Bouna traditional kingdoms which were previously administered as an integral part of French Sudan were attached to Cote d'Ivoire.⁵⁰ The Federation of French West Africa was a regional grouping of states or colonies that were put under a regional administrative order by the decree of the 16th of June, 1894. The Federation had a government that was hierarchically organized at the top of which was the Governor General located in Senegal.⁵¹ He was responsible to the Minister in charge of colonies who resided in Paris. There was in each colony of the Federation a political head called the Lieutenant Governor who was responsible to the Governor General. The Lieutenant Governor executed policies as directed by the Governor General and submitted yearly reports on political, social and economic situation of the colony. The Lieutenant Governor was assisted by the Secretary General *Le Secretaire Generale*. The Secretary General coordinated all technical services in the colony and provisionally replaced the Lieutenant Governor in his absence caused by death, travelling or impeachment. The Administrative Advisor, *Le Conseil administration*, was a consultative advisor of the Lieutenant Governor. In Senegal, *Le Conseil administration* was referred to as Private Counselor, *Le Conseil Prive*. In the colony there was Administrative Advisor, *Le Conseil du Contentieux Administratif*, in charge of litigations. He was responsible for resolving

⁴⁷ ANCI, Abidjan, 1EE9(1), a letter from Clozel, a colonial administrator and Cercle Commander of Bondoukou and Indinnie to the Governor at Grand Bassam, 26th April, 1987.

⁴⁸ ANCI, Abidjan, 1EE 10(8), Treaty Series No.19, 1893. Arrangement between Great Britain and France fixing the boundary between the British and the French Possessions on the Gold Coast, signed at Paris, July, 12, 1893.

⁴⁹ Cangah et Ekanza, *La Cote d'Ivoire*, 74

⁵⁰ Seraphin, Nene Bi Boti, *Les Institutions Coloniales de l'Afrique Occidentale Francaise*, (Abidjan: Edition ABC, 2011.), 190.

⁵¹ Jean-Loup, Amselle and Emmanuel Sibeud, eds., *Maurice Delafosse Entre Orientalism et Ethnographie: L'itineraire d'un Africaniste 1870-1926*, (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1998), 65.

all internal and external administrative conflicts. This office was created in Senegal in 1828, and reorganized in the French West African colonies in 1881. There were two magistrates, who assisted the Administrative Advisor, *Conseil du Contentieux Administratif*. This style of political and administrative organization established in Senegal was replicated in all the colonies of French West Africa, *Afrique Occidentale Francaise, (AOF)*,

V. LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN A FRENCH COLONY

The local government administration was also labelled non-indigenous administration, *l'administration non indigene*, which was sub-divided into Districts, *Cercles*, and Sub-districts, *Sub-divisions*. The creation of the *Cercle* took into consideration ethnic and linguistic classifications of the area and it was at the *Cercle* level that the indigenous African population was effectively administered. The *Cercle* Commander, *Le Commandant du Cercle* was the political head and wielded executive, judicial, financial, technical and moral power. He headed the Civil Service and the Police Service in the *Cercle* and controlled all social and economic development projects. His powers earned him the title, 'King of the Forest' *Roi de Brouses*. Some of these administrators were ethnographers, linguists, and historians or people that were well-versed in the science of the humanities. The political head of the Sub-district, *le Chef du Sub-division*, was usually recruited from a bunch of former colonial officers. But from 1912 onwards, graduates of *l'Ecole Coloniale*, the colonial school founded in 1889 and renamed the National School of France Overseas, *Ecole Nationale de la France d'Outre-mer*, in 1939 held the positions. The *Cercle* was further divided into indigenous administrations, *l'Administration Indigene*, which consisted of colonial administrative areas, *Cantons*, headed by Area Chiefs, *Chefs de Cantons*. Below the Area Chiefs were, Village Heads, *Chefs des Villages* who administered the affairs of the villages that constituted the basic units of the geo-political structure. An Area, *Canton* was made up of several villages. A village that housed the headquarters of the *Canton* was designated *Cheferie du Canton*.

VI. THE DISTRICT, *CERCLE* OF BONDOUKOU

Part of the Gyaman Kingdom that fell to the French together with the Koulango Kingdom of Bouna that lied north of French Gyaman constituted a colonial administrative district labeled *Cercle du Bondoukou* of which headquarters, *Chef lieu du Cercle* was located at Bondoukou.⁵²The area covered by the kingdom of Bouna was administered as a Sub-district of the Bondoukou District, and was designated *Sub-division de Bouna*. The area that French Gyaman covered was also labeled *Sub-division de Bondoukou*. A *Cercle* Commander, *Commandant de Cercle* and his assistant, *adjouant* titled *Chef de Post* headed the *Cercle du Bondoukou*. These two officers resided in Bondoukou and were assisted by police guards and indigenous administrators. Another colonial officer was stationed at Bouna to run the affairs of the Bouna Sub-district and report to the *Commandant de Cercle* at Bondoukou. The *Commandant de Cercle* played a dual role. He was a

⁵² Cangah et Kanzah, *La Cote d'Ivoire*, 125.

political head of the entire Bondoukou district and at the same time the head of the Bondoukou sub-districts.⁵³ Benquey was the first Commandant of the Cercle of Bondoukou. He stayed from 1898 to 1906.⁵⁴ The government established telegram and postal offices as well as schools in Bondoukou. A military and police force as well as a district court were also established there.

VII. FRENCH GYAMAN OF THE BONDOUKOU SUB-DISTRICT

The Bondoukou sub-district, *Sub-division de Bondoukou* covered only the French section of Gyaman. Here, the French fashioned the indigenous administration, *l'administration indigene*, described above to conform to the existing traditional political structure. They transformed into *Cantons*, four of the five pre-colonial provincial states of Gyaman and created additional *Cantons*.⁵⁵ The French appointed *Chefs de Cantons* to head all the *Cantons* in accordance with colonial administrative prescriptions.⁵⁶ Village heads were also rebranded *Chefs des Villages*. The *Chef de Canton* coordinated the affairs of the village heads in his province on behalf of the colonial government. At the village level, *Le Chef du Village*, and his Council of Elders assumed the status of colonial agents charged to carry out such duties as collection of head tax *l'impots de capitation*, and organization of force labour for public works code-named *corvee* or *prestation*. By 1945, French Gyaman whose population was 81,000 had been segmented into eleven colonial provinces, *Cantons*.⁵⁷

What role did the Gyamanhene play in the local government administration? The Gyamanhene retained his kingship status by name because the colonizers assigned him the same responsibility of a village chief in his village of residence. His judicial powers were taken away from him and his pre-colonial power to extract tributes from his subjects was also abolished. Through these measures, the colonizers impoverished the Gyaman traditional government.⁵⁸ But, the village chiefs who collected head taxes from their subjects were paid monthly stipends. A head count was conducted in every village to ascertain the number of taxable persons usually those above the age of eighteen. The projected amount of money was calculated as a product of the number of taxable persons in the village and the tax amount per head. A village chief, *Chef du Village* who failed to obtain the required amount of money suffered drastic punishment that ranged from flogging in public, paying the difference to imprisonment. A Grade One Tribunal *Le Tribunal du Premier*

⁵³ Akbar, "Djula Intellectualism", 65.

⁵⁴ Ivor Wilks, "The Northern Factor in Ashanti History, Begho and Mande", *The Journal of Africa History* 2, no.1 (1961), 25-34, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/179581> (accessed 27th April, 2022).

⁵⁵ They turned Akyidom, Ahenefie, Fumassa (Foumassa), Pinango provincial chiefdoms into Cantons. The Gyamanhene retained his dual status as the head of the Ahenefie province, *House of Royals* and a King.

⁵⁶ The additional provinces were: Bondoukou Ville, Barabo, Anyi Bona, Anyi Bini. All the Anyi chiefdoms were part of the Pinango province but were put under the Sienjihene for administrative purpose. See for details in the *Haute Commissariat de l'Afrique Occidentale Francaise Service de la Statistique Generale, Cote d'Ivoire, Population en 1949-1950 Par Cantons & Groupes Ethniques, CEPED, Paris*.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Information provided by the Gyamanhene Nana Kwasi Adinkra Agyeman in Abidjan on 17th February, 2023. The Cercle administrative system was observed till 1960, when Cote d'Ivoire became independent. A switch to the current local government system started in 1960.

Degree, was located at Bondoukou to try both civil and criminal cases. In suits where the offence involved theft or deceit the punishment was one year imprisonment. Appeal from the tribunal went to the Cercle Commander's court.⁵⁹

VIII. COLONIAL ECONOMY IN FRENCH GYAMAN

Cash crop agriculture, taxation and exploitation of natural resources were fundamental features of the colonial economy in French Gyaman. Cash crop agriculture supplemented traditional agriculture characterized by food crop production, collection of cola, and other edible fruits which grew wild in the forest. The French introduced such food crops as, maize, manioc, and rice. Clozel, who was the Cercle Commander, *Commandant de Cercle*, in the 1910s reports that farmers produced such cash crops as: cocoa, coffee and cotton.⁶⁰ The first two thrived in the forested areas particularly in the Tanda, Asuofri, Gomere, Transua and the Agni regions, while cotton was grown in such savanna areas as Bondoukou, Barabo, Sandegui and Tambi in the north.⁶¹ The French also introduced cashew which thrived in the savanna portion of Gyaman in such places as Barabo, Sandegue and Tambi. By 1925, the northern part of Gyaman was producing 50 tons of cotton annually. This motivated the Government to extend credit facilities to farmers to expand their farms.⁶² Such expatriate commercial firms as *Societe Centrale de l'Afrique Occidentale* (SCOA) and *Compagnie Francais de l'Afrique Occidentale*, (CFAO) monopolized the purchase of cash crops. They had their warehouses in Bondoukou where the produce was stored for onward transportation to Abidjan. It was reported that by 1921, cotton was being sold to the French traders at between 1-15 Francs per kilogram.⁶³ Rubber which grew wild in the forest was also tapped for its juice and sold to the French for manufacturing lorry tyres and insulation of telephone wires. Oil palm trees also grew wild in the forest and its fruits were collected for sale to expatriate companies. Oil collected from the palm fruits was used to manufacture soap and to lubricate motor engines.⁶⁴ Colonial agriculture produced a new class of rich people in addition to the pre-colonial chiefly class who monopolized the political economy. Wealthy cash crop farmers emerged to challenge the ruling aristocrats in terms of riches. Commoners who hitherto had low image in society engaged in the harvest of rubber juice to become rich over-night. This new class of wealth men could use wealth to influence political decisions. Some of them used their wealth to purchase political positions and ruled as chiefs even though they were by tradition and custom not entitled to stools.

⁵⁹ ANCI, Abidjan 4e Trimestre 1925, Rapports sur la justice indigene, tribunal du premier degre au matiere civil et commercial.

⁶⁰ ANCI, Abidjan, 1EE 40 (4), Rapport d'ensemble 1917-1919, Rapport de Cercle de Bondoukou.

⁶¹ ANCI, Abidjan, 1EE 40 (5), 3e Trimestre 1924, Rapport sur la situation economique et commercial.

⁶² ANCI, Abidjan, 1EE.40 (5), 4e Trimestre-Rapport sur la situation agricole et zootechnique.

⁶³ ANCI, Abidjan, 2e Trimestre, 1921, Rapport sur la situation economique et commercial.

⁶⁴ Information obtained from, Nana Takyi, Chef du Village de Bini Kobenan, Cote d'Ivoire, on 13th January, 2023.

IX. THE HEAD TAX, L'IMPOT DE CAPITATION

The head tax or the capitation levy, *l'impot de capitation* introduced in the colony in 1901 was also instituted in the *Cercle de Bondoukou* and village chiefs were instrumental in the collection of the taxes. Between 1901 and 1930, five percent (5%) of the total amount collected was given to the chiefs as stipends. It was later in 1930, when a fixed salaries were given to the chiefs. By 1916, the number of the taxable population in French Gyaman in all its 15 *Cantons* that composed of 533 towns was 45,024.⁶⁵

X. INTRODUCTION OF PAPER AND COIN CURRENCIES

The French also introduced coin and paper currency called the French Francs as a new medium of exchange to replace cowries and gold dust that were used during the precolonial period. The new type of currency, simplified and facilitated exchange of goods and services.

XI. COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

The Government established state owned supermarkets where such European products as cotton cloth, soap, sandals, shirts, cutlasses were sold to the local Africans. Additionally, the French colonial government built an open space mass market at Bondoukou.⁶⁶ By 1942, supermarkets had been established at Tagbane, Kounfao, Yezimala, Yaokro, Kyeedjo, Paradi, Asuofry.⁶⁷ Natives from remote villages went and bought goods from these hypermarkets and resold them to their village customers.



Figure 1: A French colonial supermarket at Tagbane established in 1942: Source: Field work.

⁶⁵ ANCI, Abidjan, 2.EE.7(12), Liste nominative des representants de la sub-division de Bondoukou, 1916.

⁶⁶ ANCI, Abidjan, 1.EE 40(5), 4e Trimestre 1925, Rapport sur les travaux execute, construction d'un marche a Bondoukou.

⁶⁷ Information obtained from Nana George Adou Kobenan, Chef de Quartier Ngory Kouadio Taoua (Tawa) at Tagbane on 23rd February, 2023.

XII. WAGE WORKERS

French colonial rule raised wage workers most of whom were pupils of primary schools. Some were employed as teachers and office clerks. Others were employed in such sectors as forestry, mines, topography, post and telecommunication.⁶⁸ The indigenes were also employed as security guards to man the security posts which were established at Bondoukou. The recruits were called *Guardes de Cercle*, district guards. Traditions named Samba Soro, a famous *Guard de Cercle* at Bondoukou.⁶⁹

XIII. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN FRENCH GYAMAN

The French colonial rule brought about social change in Gyaman. Schools were built to offer the Africans numeracy and literacy education. The Government was directly responsible in the provision of educational facilities and by 1942, *ecoles primaires*, primary schools had been established in such major towns as Asuofri (Asuofry), Bondoukou, Tanda, Tabgane, Kyeedjo, Yezimala, Kounfao, Parady, Yaokro. Graduants of primary schools had secondary education at College Modern de Bingerville, Cours Normale de Dabou and Ecole Technique d'Abidjan. The Roman Catholic mission was the only Christian mission that operated in French Gyaman. The Church complemented the colonial government's effort in the provision of formal education and by 1942, it had established two primary schools at Tankesse and Tanda.⁷⁰



Figure2: Ecole Primaire (Primary School) built at Tagbane, French Gyaman in 1942: Source: Field work

⁶⁸ ANCI, Abidjan, Affaire Politique, Instruction relative a l'administration des Cercles 1912-1915.

⁶⁹ ANCI, Abidjan, 4 EE 17(13), Cercle de Bondoukou, correspondances echange avec le gouverneur de la Cote d'Ivoire au sujet de gardes de Cercles.

⁷⁰ ANCI, Abidjan, Journal Officiel de la Cote d'Ivoire, 15 Septembre, 1950, 617-618.

XIV. HEALTH CARE DELIVERY

In 1942, the government established dispensaries in the towns where primary schools were situated to provide healthcare delivery to the people in general and the pupils in particular. Besides, a hospital was built in Bondoukou to take care of surgical cases and major ailments.

XV. POST AND TELE-COMMUNICATION SYSTEM AND MOTOR ROAD CONSTRUCTION

Bondoukou had its first postal agency in 1906. The Agency offered post and telecommunication services mainly to facilitate communication between European colonial officers. By the second quarter of 1924, roads had been built to link Bondoukou and Agnibilekro. Further extension was made from Bondoukou to Abengourou and Bouake.⁷¹ These roads were built partly to open up the country side and mainly to link cash crop producing areas to facilitate evacuation of cash crops from the country side to the urban centers where the warehouses of the expatriate buying firms had been located. The Cercle Commander, *Commandant de Cercle* indicated in his last quarter report of 1924 that the Bondoukou-Agnibilekro road was the only motorable road in the Bondoukou Sub-district.

La Sub-division de Bondoukou n'a pas de veseau routier. Une seul et unique route carrossable, Bondoukou-Agnibilekro que sera remise en etat en quelque jour des la fin de la saison de pluies.⁷²

In the above quote, the Cercle Commander at Bondoukou bemoaned the deplorable condition of the roads in the district.

XVI. MODERN BUILDING STYLE

Modern cement blocks houses and bricks houses replaced pre-colonial thatched and mud-mortar houses. A considerable number of those who engaged in plantation agriculture became rich and could afford putting up storey buildings, which were leased out to expatriate commercial firms.

Figure 3: Pre-colonial house at Bini Kobenan, in French Gyaman, Source: Field Work

⁷¹ ANCI, Abidjan 1EE.40(5)4e Trimestre 1925, Rapport sur les voie de communication.

⁷² ANCI, Abidjan 1EE 40(5) 2e Trimestre 1924, Rapport sur les voies de communication existantantes a ameriorer a creer Sub-division de Bondoukou.



XVII. RELIGION

In the field of religion, it was the Catholic Church which monopolized evangelism in French Gyaman to dwindle the activities of the traditional Africa religion. The Protestants concentrated their activities only in such coastal areas as Abidjan and Dabou. M.Platt, an English protestant was reported to have come to evangelize there and taken some boys with him to be trained as Christian evangelists.⁷³ Adherents to the new faith often clashed with the believers of the African traditional religion. This situation generated animosity among families and townsfolks. The Catholic missionaries provided social services as bait to attract converts.

XVIII. CONCLUSION

In this work, I made an attempt to discuss the French colonial rule and how its impact was found in political, social and economic transformation of French Gyaman. In the narrative we found out that French colonialism led to cultural and social as well as economic change which found expression in the introduction of western education, modern health delivery system, and modern infrastructural development which became a springboard of modern development agenda. Introduction of cocoa, cola, cashew and cotton plantations changed the hitherto communal society to a capitalist one as ordinary people engaged in plantation agriculture and became rich to compete in wealth with the ruling class. The cocoa industry created jobs because the indigenes were employed as purchasing clerks who were deployed to the rural areas to purchase cocoa, coffee,

⁷³ ANCI, Abidjan, 1EE 117(4 a 5), 2e Trimestre, Rapport sur la situation Politique.

cotton, cashew and cola. Without such social and economic transformation there would not have been any optimism that Africa and for that matter Gyaman would have developed if it had not been colonized at all. Consequently, using Gyaman as a case study one can conclude that European colonialism was not absolutely disastrous to Africa as some African development scholars, statesmen, nationalist portray it. In French Gyaman, the imprint of political, social and economic transformation the French colonizers bequeath to Gyaman are still noticeable and are pivotal in the people's development.

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