



## Research Article

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## The Contribution of English Language Newspapers to Anglo-Saxon Historiography in Cameroon 1961-2019

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**Abstract:** History is constructed from several sources. The History of Anglophone Cameroon has been developed with the contribution of English language newspapers. Unfortunately, many people attempt to write the history of former British Southern Cameroons with a lot of emotions but do not cite their sources. A scholarly approach to accurately craft the Anglo-Saxon history in Cameroon needs leverage on historiography. This historical writing is at times initiated by Journalists. Their newspapers contain verified information and are primary source materials for historical writing. Journalists like historiographers are reputed for treating facts with objectivity, fairness and balance. There is a nexus between Journalism and History and our research findings confirm the aphorism that: "news is the first rough draft of history." We also found out that; a couple of authors of Cameroon History have used newspapers to construct chapters of their publications. On this score therefore, we submit that Journalists and historians are both historiographers; with the former concentrating on current issues and the latter interested in past events. The contribution of English language newspapers to Anglo-Saxon historiography is thus the main thrust of this article. The methodology employed to sustain this argument is deductive and multidisciplinary using qualitative data gathered from newspapers, archival holdings and some published works on Cameroon History.

**Keywords:** Newspapers, Journalism, Anglo-Saxon, and Historiography.

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## INTRODUCTION

The history of Post-colonial Cameroon has been constructed thanks to the contribution of English language newspapers. There are many old newspapers in the archives containing historical facts to feed researchers of history. These papers are available at the National Archives Buea and some media houses. Archives remain factories and laboratories of historians.<sup>1</sup> Historians have thus depended on these archival holdings to construct the Anglo-Saxon History of Cameroon. In the following paragraphs we will review the Anglophone Press in Cameroon to identify aspects of Anglo-Saxon history. We will then discuss the experiences of some prominent English language newspapers in Cameroon in the light of projecting Anglo-Saxonism. Finally, we will establish the contribution of these newspapers to historiography. It is important we beginning with conceptualization.

### Historiography

Historiography is the craft of writing history or benefit of such writings considered together. It is the collection of historical evidence, the editing of historical thought and imagination. It is the philosophy of history and the history of historical writing.<sup>2</sup> The Media in Cameroon has developed its own historiography. Mass Media history is a whole course treated in Journalism institutions of higher learning. So before we delve into newspapers contribution to Cameroons Anglo-Saxon Historiography, it is important to underscore the meaning of Anglo-Saxon in the context of Cameroon.

### Anglo-Saxon

The term Anglo-Saxon originated in Europe from some Germanic tribes in what was known then as the Roman world between AD 300 and 700.<sup>3</sup> This was because its indigenous Britannic (Celtic) population had been under Roman rule, sandwiched between the pagan barbarian North and the Christian Roman South. It was the last Province of Britannia which became a melting port of diverse influences.<sup>4</sup> However in Cameroon, the term is used roughly to refer to anything

<sup>1</sup> Alexandra Walsham, "The Social History of the Archive Record-keeping in Early Modern Europe", Trinity College Cambridge, <https://academic.oup.com/past/article/230/suppl/11/9/288428> [accessed on 19 September 2022].

<sup>2</sup> Victor Bong Amaazee, *Historiography and Historical Method* (Bamenda: Patron Publishing House, 2001), 12.

<sup>3</sup> John Blair, *The Anglo – Saxon Age: A very Short Introduction* (London: Oxford University Press, 2000), 13-14.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 13-14.

pertaining to the British. That is its democratic nature, freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, human right freedom, indirect rule, the Common Law jurisdiction and Anglo-Saxon Educational system. The English jurisdiction, West of the Mungo, operated differently from the rest of the country until 20<sup>th</sup> May 1972, when Cameroonians opted for a Unitary State. These facts have been documented on some newspapers.

### Newspapers

A newspaper is a publication containing news and information and advertising usually printed on low-cost paper called newsprint. It could be produced, daily or weekly.<sup>5</sup>

### Journalism

Journalism is the collection, preparation, and distribution of news and related commentary and feature materials through print and electronic media. Better still, Journalism is the activity of gathering, assessing, creating and presenting news information. It is also the product of these activities.<sup>6</sup> It is important hence to look at the history of the Cameroonian Press.

### The Evolution of the Anglo-Saxon Press in Cameroon

The history of the Anglophone Press in Cameroon revolves around press laws. This is so because the political evolution of the country affected the behaviour and conduct of the Press. A media guru Fru Awason, argues that the modern Cameroon Nation-State is an interesting construct or experiment, that of forging a nation with conflicting identities.<sup>7</sup> These two foreign cultures the British and French were (are) unique. Anglophone Cameroonians cherished their linguistic and cultural affinities. They considered/consider their heritage important and made contributions directly or indirectly to preserve it. This passion to conserve the Anglo-Saxon heritage soon metamorphosed to something profound called nationalism. V.G. Fanzo hence posits that, there is Francophone and Anglophone Nationalisms.<sup>8</sup>

It is interesting to note that even after independence in 1960 for French Cameroon and 1961 for English Cameroon, press laws were still governed by imperialist powers that were Britain and France. The Pressmen in Francophone Cameroon were regulated by different laws from those that operated in Anglophone Cameroon. In the Anglophone jurisdiction, the origin of press law could be traced as far back as 1662 with the Licensing Act in Britain.<sup>9</sup> But the law which affected the practice of Journalism in the area was the Nigerian Newspaper Ordinance No. 10 of 1903, modeled after the Sierra Leonean Press Law of 1857.<sup>10</sup> The 1903 Law was further amended by the Newspaper Ordinance No. 40, of 1917, the Newspaper Ordinance No. 26, of 1941 and the Eastern Nigerian Law of 1955. By the time the Nigerian Newspaper Ordinance was enacted, Southern Cameroons was operating as a semi-autonomous region.

A newspaper like *Cameroons Champion* owned by Motomby-Woleta covered the life of British Southern Cameroons and later West Cameroon. However, it was only after unification in 1961 that the West Cameroon Newspaper Ordinance was passed to regulate the establishment of newspapers. With reunification, the practice of screening and censorship provided for in the 1959 French Cameroon Law was extended to Anglophone Cameroon and by the instructions of the then Minister of Territorial Administration.<sup>11</sup> This was not an easy pill to swallow. The peak of this protest was in mid-1966. The refusal of the 1959 Law in West Cameroon was due to the fact that it was considered unconstitutional and was a serious embarrassment of the Federal Government which unfortunately, adopted it hastily as Law No. 66LF/13 December 21, 1966 by the Federal Assembly. The first press law was revised five times notably: by Decree No. 69/LF/13 of November 1969, Decree No.73/6 of December 1963, Decree No.76/27 of December 14, 1976, Decree No. 80/18 of July 14, 1980 and Decree No. 81/244 of June 198.<sup>12</sup> Generally mass media operated in two distinct eras: The media before 1990 and the Post 1990 era. During the period 1960 to 1990 the media in Cameroon functioned under a peculiar context. It closely controlled government to consolidate State power.<sup>13</sup> However, the private did not function like that reasons why there was rigorous censorship.

### Post 1990 Mass Media Context in Cameroon

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<sup>5</sup> Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com>

<sup>6</sup> American Press Institute, <https://www.americanpressinstitute.org>

<sup>7</sup> Nicodemus Fru Awason, "Anglo- Saxonism and Gallicism in Nation Building in Africa: The Case of Bilingual Cameroon and the Senegambia Confederation in Historical and Contemporary perspective", *Afrika Zamani* nos 11 and 12, 2003- 2004. 102. Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa and Association of African Historians 2006 (ISSN 0850-3079).

<sup>8</sup> Verkijika G. Fanzo, "Anglophone and Francophone Nationalisms in Cameroon" *The Round Table* (1999), 350 (281-296).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Monono, " *The Right to Inform,*" 47.

<sup>13</sup> Francis B Nyamnjoh, Francis Wete and Tangie Fonchingong: "Media and Civil Society in Cameroon" <http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/africanjournals> African e Project Michigan State University Libraries.

It was an eventful era with political developments across Cameroon and beyond. Pressured by the trend of events, President Biya signed the famous 1990 Liberty Laws. This Law No. 90/052 of 19 December, 1990 laid the ground work for the deregulation and regulation of the media in Cameroon.<sup>14</sup> This Law liberated the Press and a good number of Private Newspapers saw the light of day. Some included; *The Post, The Herald, Eden, The Guardian Post, The Median, The Star, The Sun, The Rambler* just to name a few. This Law was hailed as landmark in some quarters but greeted with cautious optimism.<sup>15</sup> The numbers of newspapers have increased as Cameroon now boasts of about 600 newspapers most of which emerged as a consequence of the 1990 Liberty Laws. It is worthy of note that some of these papers were/are of English expression. The Private English language newspapers have been facing real difficulties as expressed during the creation of the Cameroon Anglophone Newspaper Publishers Association on November 23, 2012 in Buea.<sup>16</sup> They identified many problems and deemed it necessary to bring together Anglophone Publishers, to look for common grounds to get adverts like their Francophone counterparts and to create a network to circulate their papers gainfully.<sup>17</sup> Over the years, Newspapers of English expression have been battling with some serious challenges. Specific cases can only be cited in the course of narrating their specific historical experiences.

### **Cameroons Champion**

This newspaper was first published in November 1960 by Motomby-Woleta. He established a modern printing and publishing business company in Southern Cameroons known as Woleta Printing and Publishing House. (WPPW)<sup>18</sup> The paper covered West Cameroon politics and other issues.

In fact Motomby-Woleta followed the making of the 1961 reunification constitution in the caucus rooms of Lancaster House in London, in the plenary hall of NA Court Hall in Bamenda, in the primary school hall in Foumban, in the parliament in Buea, on campaign soapboxes throughout the territory of Southern Cameroons and above all in the Press. He discussed the constitution with all and sundry: the British Secretary for colonies, President Ahidjo ... members of the general public who were the Dear Readers of his newspaper the *Cameroons Champion*.<sup>19</sup>

Due to several challenges including but not limited to the demise of the founder Motony-Woleta, the paper disappeared from the stands in 1965.

### **Cameroon Times**

*Cameroon Times* newspaper started in 1960 and was widely distributed as an independent newspaper in Cameroon. It was an English private paper with headquarters in Victoria. It was the mouth piece of English-speaking Cameroonians.<sup>20</sup> Jerome Gwellem was its First editor who said amongst other things that the duty of his paper like any other press organ was to inform, educate and entertain people. According to Gwellem, *Cameroon Times* covered many criminal and misdemeanor trials in most English speaking Communities. This singular act placed the Common Law practice on the spotlight, hence giving attention to stories of Anglo-Saxon interest.<sup>21</sup>

### **Cameroon Outlook**

This paper was established in 1969 by Tataw Obenson and published by Fako Publications. Their print run was 20,000 copies.<sup>22</sup> Copies of the paper were sold across West and East Cameroons. The price of the paper was 60FRS. *Cameroon Outlook* was one of the newspapers that was short-lived but reported on significant stories especially on Cameroons reunification in 1972. Another important paper was *Cameroon Tribune*.

### **Cameroon Tribune**

*Cameroon Tribune* was born in 1974 after government bought over *La Presse du Cameroun* from Breteuil Group. The paper became an official platform for Government's communication. The government wanted a Press that will inform and educate the masses on what government was doing or intended doing as a way to make the people civil and governable. The French edition carried the information "*grand quotidien nationale*" which means national daily. Over 70% of its shares are owned by the government. The English version started with 12 pages. It was produced by Anglo-Saxon trained Journalists. It emerged in 1974 same like the French version to take care of the English language readers of the former

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<sup>14</sup> Henry Muluh Zuyingong, "Broadcast Regulations and Deregulation in Cameroon 1960-2012: Implication for Radio Journalism Practice", (PhD Thesis University of Buea, 2013),1.

<sup>15</sup> Monono, "The Right to Inform" 1992 47.

<sup>16</sup> Isidore Abah, "Cameroon Anglophone Newspaper Publishers," Cameroonpostline.com, Nov.26, 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Churchill Ewumbue- Monono, *Peter Motomby- Woleta and Cameroon's Reunification Constitution* (Buea: CEREDDA, 2013), 181-182.

<sup>19</sup> Monono, *Peter Motomby Woleta*, 2013, 32-33.

<sup>20</sup> Rene Philombe, "The Cameroon Press Index on Censorship"1/84, 25.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> *Cameroon Outlook*, No. 37 Friday 15, 1983.

West Cameroon. It was a weekly and a fair attempt at a freer and modern newspaper.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, other private papers began.

### **Cameroon Post**

The story of *Cameroon Post* like others has been crucial. The Editor-in-Chief of *Cameroon Post* was Paddy Mbawa. *Cameroon Post* was critical of government given that it was a private and independent newspaper. The newspaper started in the 1980s and met its demise with the rebirth of multi-party politics in Cameroon. Internal squabbles and external pressure made the paper to run into difficulties. As a consequence, the Editor-in-Chief Paddy Mbawa was sentenced, to two years imprisonment on 16 August 1995.<sup>24</sup> The reason for his incarceration was not clear but it was only a pure demonstration of a hostile political climate where freedom of speech could not be guaranteed.<sup>25</sup> *Cameroon Post* eventually collapsed and *The Herald* Newspapers started.

### **The Herald Newspaper**

*The Herald* newspaper hit the stands in July 1992 at the dawn of multiparty politics in Cameroon. The Publisher also doubled as Editor in the person of Boniface Forbin. The context was unique; it marked the wind of change and the 1990 Liberty Laws. Forbin took advantage of the context to hold government to task especially on corruption. The cankerworm had eaten deep into the fabric of the nation and efforts to combat the disease on the part of government were seen by *The Herald* as some window dressing.<sup>26</sup> The Herald perceived that “Media Freedom was better in Saddam Hussein’s Iraq than in Biya’ Cameroon”.<sup>27</sup> *The Herald* hereafter decided to inform the world that doing journalism business in Cameroon was a tempestuous exertion; as Journalists were being persecuted and newspapers closed.<sup>28</sup>

Secondly, the Publisher began a series of editorials deemed critical of Cameroon’s leading opposition Party the Social Democratic Front (SDF) in 1997. Dr. Forbin titled some of those editorials “SDF is going and concluded the last of the series as SDF Gone”.<sup>29</sup> The party militants did no longer patronize the paper and Forbin’s detractors accused him of complicity with the Yaounde regime.<sup>30</sup> But a family source revealed that he was advised but he was obstinate “it is the same stubbornness that pushed *The Herald* into its premature demise. He dug the paper’s grave himself because he would not listen to anyone”.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Post**

*The Post* newspaper was born in 1997 by Francis Wache from the ashes of *Cameroon Post*.<sup>32</sup> After existing for over two decades, *The Post* had to float a new product namely; *The Post Magazine*. The median edition which was published during the last quarter of 2019 by Francis Wache did not conceal its objective. The Magazine was out to put Anglo-Saxon history on the spotlight. To put it in the words of Francis Wache:

We are proud to be Anglophones. This magazine is for Anglophones, by Anglophones and with Anglophones. It is our fervent hope that The Post Magazine will do to the Anglophones in Cameroon what Ebony magazine did to African Americas in the United States of America. But, then, we can only accomplish this task if Anglophones adopt this magazine as theirs... interestingly we are launching this magazine at a time when the fate of Anglophones hangs in the balance. We decided to be on the right side of history.<sup>33</sup>

Besides, *The Post*, other newspapers saw the light of day with even greater ambitions. A case in point is *The Guardian Post* newspaper.

### **The Guardian Post Newspaper**

*The Guardian Post* Newspaper was born on August 30<sup>th</sup> 2001. Its Publisher/ Editor was/is Ngah Christian. He attested that the paper started with a capital of 150.000 FRS to print the first copies.<sup>34</sup> The paper grew steadily as a weekly, later it became a bi-weekly and finally a daily in 2016.<sup>35</sup> The paper for about two decades of existence could boast of over 10.000 subscribers both at home and abroad. The paper became the only daily newspaper of English expression with a staff

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<sup>23</sup>Bourdon-Higbee, Helen Catherine, “The Cameroonian news Media”, Masters Dissertation, University of Montana 1975, 48.

<sup>24</sup> Reporters without Borders “Journalist Paddy Mbawa sentenced and remains in Prison” <https://ifex.org>, 25 August 1995.

<sup>25</sup> The reason for Paddy sentencing was because of a defamation charge brought against him by Jean Forchive, the Chief of Police in Cameroon. Despite appeals made to get a bail out, Paddy remained imprisoned at the headquarters of the criminal investigation Police unit Douala.

<sup>26</sup> Cameroon Concord News, Dr. Boniface Forbin: Exist of Journalistic Icon” <https://www.cameroonconcordnews.com> 16 April 2017.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> “Francis Wache laid to rest in Buea” <https://www.journalducameroun.com> published on 20.01.2020.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, back cover page.

<sup>34</sup> *The Guardian Post Magazine*, Editorial: “Nobody saw us coming” N0. 005 September 2021, 3.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

of 48 paid regularly by 25<sup>th</sup> of every month.<sup>36</sup> As testimony of a success story, the newspaper organ has its own building and printing press in its headquarters in Yaounde. This paper has tried to stay focused by reporting news using the Anglo-Saxon style and acting as the mouthpiece for Anglophones.<sup>37</sup> The credible stories published on this paper and others have been cited by historians in their publications. It is therefore important at this point to establish the relationship between Journalism and historical writing.

### **The Nexus between Journalism and Historiography**

Mass media has excelled in preserving the Anglo-Saxon heritage thanks to the numerous newspaper publications over the years and preserved in their repositories and archives. Researchers have been making use of these archival institutions to collect evidence for their historical publications. When news is published on a newspaper, it does not end there. The newspaper ends up being archived; for what passes for news today becomes history tomorrow. That is why, news is said to be the first rough draft of history. Journalists therefore, contribute to historiography.<sup>38</sup> Newspapers are credible primary source materials for the construction of history. The fact that newspapers are written primary sources even makes them more reliable because they are not subjected to amnesia which is one of the weaknesses of some other primary sources.

The fact that newspaper editions are numbered and are dated makes them citable in academic works and publications. Although newspapers are written primarily to inform the masses on what is going on in the society, they act as references. The National Archives Buea keeps copies of newspapers making the archival institution apt for consultation. Looking at the numerous publications in the archives and the historical facts they conserve, one can posit strongly that; Journalists are initiators of historical writing in modern times. This argument is sustained by Jack Shafer in his article titled “Journalism is the first rough draft of history”. He posits that, this phrase; “News is only the first rough draft of history” was developed by Alan Barth in 1943 as revealed by Barry Popik on March 8, 1953. Ten years after, Philip Graham used it in an address to the American Society for Public Administration on the Subject of the Press. This famous remark was reprinted in the spring edition of Public Administration, where he stated amongst other things that:

The inescapable hurry of the press inevitably means a certain degree of superficiality. It is neither within our power nor our province to be ultimately profound. We write 365 days a year the first rough draft of history and that is a very great task.<sup>39</sup>

Philip Graham credited for this statement, was one time President and publisher of *Washington Post*. Some have cited Benjamin C. Bradlee as the initiator of the idea, but Shafer argues that Bradlee only granted an interview to Graham with *American Heritage* in 1982.<sup>40</sup> Similar things have been said; Fred R. Shapiro the Editor of *Yale Book of Quotations* is credited with the phrase “The reporter is one who each twenty-four hours dictates a first draft of history.”<sup>41</sup> Be it as it may, no one can argue that the news disseminated on newspapers today does not become history tomorrow. On this score, we submit that the Journalist and historian are both historiographers; with the former handling current issues and the later interested in past events. The historian needs the write-ups of the Journalist for his and publications. The Journalist too sometimes goes back to history to throw light on current issues especially when doing historical documentaries.

### **The Contribution of Newspapers to Historiography**

Historical Journals have several articles just like published works on Cameroon history. The construction of the history of Pre-colonial Cameroon had little or no newspaper sources. However, the contemporary history of Cameroon has a lot of newspapers sources. Taking off time to dig through an avalanche of newspaper articles in the archives and repositories, one gets overwhelmed with historical facts published on these papers. In addition to the numerous newspapers earlier analysed, there are several other English language papers such as: *Chronicle, Eden, The Sun, The Star, Watchdog Tribune, The Voice, The Horizon, The Herald Tribune, News Watch, The Median, Cameroon Insider, Municipal Updates, Scoop, The Rambler, Cameroon Echoes, The Reporter* and a host of others.

All these newspapers occupy an important place in historical writing. In other words, they are very resourceful in historiography. These primary sources are even more reliable than some oral tradition which is characterized by amnesia.<sup>42</sup> Newspapers are written primarily to inform the masses on what is going on in the society; but it goes beyond that because people often come back to refer something on the newspaper. Others search for them for research purposes. That is why several Press organs have their repositories and archives where these newspapers are being preserved. It is therefore vital

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>38</sup> Historiography is the science of historical writing. it is the collection of historical sources,

<sup>39</sup> Jack Shafer, “Journalism is the first rough draft of history”, August 30, 2010 <https://slate.com>2010/08> [Accessed July 6, 2022].

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Other primary sources subject to amnesia or forgetfulness are oral traditions which suffer from mutation as it is transmitted from one mouth to the other.

to go through some interesting works on Cameroon history to elucidate the use of newspapers as reliable historical sources by some authors.

Victor Julius Ngoh, in his book, *The Untold Story of Cameroon's Reunification* makes use of newspapers. Examples include: *Cameroons Champion and Daily Times*. Looking at *Cameroons Champion* published on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1961, he cites this source three times, as captured in endnotes 102, 103 and 104.<sup>43</sup> *Cameroons Champion* covered the concluding statements of the British Commissioner J. O. Field at the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly in Buea in 1961. The paper reported that J. O. Field came to address the House of Assembly in Buea not as usual like the mouthpiece of his government, but in the exercise of his constitutional privilege. He went further to say that, "I leave behind with you my heartfelt good wishes for ... I am confident that whatever, problem may lie ahead, [you] will rise to them and overcome them".<sup>44</sup>

In another example Ngoh uses facts from *Daily Times* newspaper to advance the reasons for KNDP's settling for the option of seceding from the Federation of Nigeria. He underscores the fact that UPC sympathisers were in Southern Cameroons busy selling the reunification agenda. For the KNDP, reunification "would be accomplished by independent sections rather than dependent ones under British or French."<sup>45</sup> Ngoh makes use of newspapers in almost all of his publications. In his recent publication titled, *Cameroon 1884-Present (2018) The History of a People*, he makes use of several newspaper sources especially in chapter Eleven of the book which is dealing with the Anglophone Problem. This is how he introduces the chapter:

The historiography of the Anglophone Problem has drawn a lot of ink from Cameroonian historians, lawyers, politicians, and scholars from other related human and social sciences discipline. This is because an Anglophone in the Cameroonian context is not necessarily a Cameroonian who speaks and writes English or who is imbibed with Anglo-Saxon culture.<sup>46</sup>

In chapter eleven of this book alone, he makes use of several newspapers, some include: *Eden* No. 1032, Monday, 11 September 2017, 3. *The Rambler*, newspaper No. 0038, of Thursday, 26 January 2017, *The Post* newspaper No. 01788 of Friday, January 13, 2017. The newspapers brought out six points why the Anglophone problem exists.<sup>47</sup> These facts helped him to deepen his analysis which unarguably enriched his work.

Anthony Ndi, also makes use of some newspapers in his book titled, *The Golden Age of Southern Cameroons: Vital Lessons for Cameroon*. Some of the newspapers used include but not limited to: *Cameroon Times*, *Cameroon Star*, *The Post*, *Eden* etc. He gleaned the following historical facts from *Cameroon Times* of February 1, 1963. "By 1960, some 25,000 immigrants from French Cameroon, crossed over to British Southern Cameroons where they campaigned and supported Southern Cameroons reunification".<sup>48</sup> The paper advanced some factors responsible for the mass exodus by French speaking Cameroonians across the Mungo to British Southern Cameroons. Some factors highlighted by Ndi centered on the French colonial policy of assimilation with its corollaries: the *indigenat*, *Corvee*. Also, the disturbing *laissez-passer* and the UPC guerrilla war caused many people to fear for the lives and those of their children; reasons why they escaped.<sup>49</sup>

To further expatiate on how newspapers have been used to build history, Ndi further cites *The Post* newspaper No. 01631 of Monday 01 June 2015, where he gleaned the declaration of the paper on the issue of the Common Law that was being under looked in Cameroon as follows: "it had evidence of a systematic trend to wipe off the civil law system and proof of a conspiracy to subjugate the Common Law."<sup>50</sup> Another newspaper utilized in his book is *Eden*. In *Eden* No. 914 of Monday, 20 July 2015, Ndi gathered that Cameroon derailed when she abandoned the decisions arrived at in Foumban in 1961. This is how that newspaper states it:

The Cameroon bicultural project could and should be put on its rails and all that is required is the will to accept the reality of the facts of history agreed upon at Foumban in 1961, no matter how imperfect it was, demands that the Cameroonian train returns to its rails and retakes off from there.<sup>51</sup>

Other historians have also exploited mass media publications to strengthen their books. Joseph Ebune in his book titled; *The Growth of Political Parties in Southern Cameroons 1916-1960* makes use of a couple of English language

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<sup>43</sup> Victor Julius Ngoh, *The Untold Story of Cameroons Reunification 1955-1961* (Limbe: Presprint 2011), 105.

<sup>44</sup> Ngoh, *The Untold Story*, 2011, 70.

<sup>45</sup> *Daily Times*, 8 March 1955, 5 and Ngoh, *Untold Story*, 2011, 11.

<sup>46</sup> Victor Julius Ngoh *Cameroon 1884- Present (2018) The History of a People*. (Limbe: Design House, 2019), 380.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>48</sup> Anthony Ndi, *The Golden Age of Southern Cameroons: Vital Lessons for Cameroon*, (Bamenda: Spear Media Press, 2016), 55.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, 55.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 261.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 257.

newspapers amongst them *Cameroons Champion* and *Cameroon Tribune* as indicated on his Bibliography.<sup>52</sup> Lawrence Kihkishiy in his book, *The Reunification of the Cameroons: Requiem for a Nation*; uses newspapers to construct history and being a journalist himself, utilizes newspapers across the linguistic divide to build his book. He uses: *Le Jour* newspaper, No. 1790, *Vendredi* 17, Oct 2014 page six.<sup>53</sup> *Le Messenger*, *La Nouvelle Expression* etc.

Also, Joseph Nfi in his book titled: *Celebrating Reunification and the Eleventh Province*, makes use of newspaper sources. He gathered materials from the Catholic newspaper *L'Effort Camerounaise* especially that of March 23-29, 2000.<sup>54</sup> And from *Cameroons Champion* where he collected the following information: “the KNDP was shaky over unification until OK [One Kamerun] as the originators of the idea and generals in the battle came to its rescue and convinced the leaders of KNDP for unification”<sup>55</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Using newspapers to reconstruct history is a common practice across the world. We have established the fact that news is the first rough draft of history. The history of former British Southern Cameroons cannot be successfully written without the contribution of newspapers especially English language papers whose bastion remains Anglophone Cameroon or the North West and South West Regions. This article has underscored the fact that newspapers have contributed elaborately to historical writing. That is why all newspapers need to be jealously archived and not discarded after reading because of their contribution to historiography. However, historiographers do not rely only on newspapers as primary source materials. They also consult: manuscripts, letters, ordinances, decrees, minutes of meetings, reports and other documents. Despite the fact that newspapers are only a source, they remain a significant source of contemporary history.

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<sup>52</sup> Ebune, *The Growth of Political Parties*, 1982,242.

<sup>53</sup> Lawrence Kihkishiy, *The Reunification of the Cameroons: Requiem for a nation* (Yaounde: Nyaa Publications, 2017),27.

<sup>54</sup> Nfi, *Celebrating Reunification*, 2013,112.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 123.

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