

civilizing mission were formulated in the *grammar of security*. Not surprisingly, during the Scramble for Africa, ‘protection treaties’ secured territories as “protectorates,” whilst the German ‘Schutztruppe’ subjugated the “Schutzgebiet Togoland.”³⁶ ‘Pacification campaigns’ were a linguistic form of de-securitisation of colonial violence. These terms “obscured responsibilities that would come with sovereignty from one state over another.”³⁷

5.2.1 Drawing Borders & Conquest of the Hinterland

The first years of German rule were mainly confined to the coastal region.³⁸ Bracketed between the British-controlled coastal strips to the west and French-controlled coastal strips to the east, the German colonial officials found themselves in a race with France and Britain to negotiate the course of the hinterland border northwards. This European race to penetrate the West African hinterland, that is, to draw the border in a north-south direction, perpendicular to the coast, cut for the most part through the population belts which tended to run parallel to the coast, that is, in an east-west direction.

Photo 1: Schutztruppe in German Togoland



Source: Bildarchiv der Deutschen Kolonialgesellschaft, Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main, N° 037–0601-35 (no date).

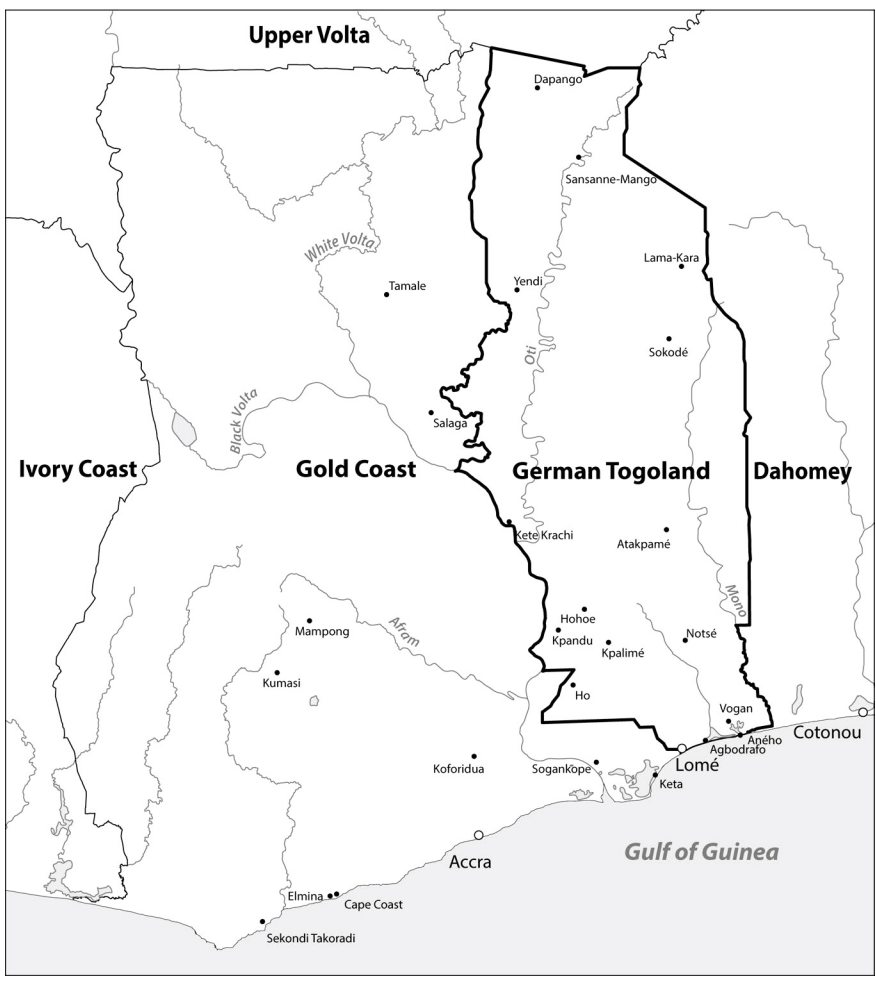
36 Wilde, *International territorial administration*, p. 300.

37 Wilde, *International territorial administration*, p. 300.

38 The German colonial central administration of Togo was initially located in Aného and only later in Lomé.

It was not until a decade after the signing of the protection treaty that the German colonial rulers extended their sphere of influence also factually northwards with a series of ‘pacification’, that is, punitive campaigns. In order to quickly enforce the colonial order, Bismarck ordered the establishment of a *Polizeitruppe* for Togoland just one year after the signing of the treaty of protection. The *Polizeitruppe* consisted mainly of African mercenaries from neighbouring territories and to some extend of ‘ransomed’ slaves who had to work off their purchase price at which the Germans acquired them. Since the ‘*Schutzgebiet*’ did not have its own protection force, the police force was also used for military tasks and securing the territory against colonial competitors. An expeditionary company, the so-called ‘*Schutztruppe*,’ was stationed in Lomé to be used in the event of uprisings.

Map 5: German Togoland (1885–1915)



Source: Own creation.

Acting under the maxim of exercising control through the maximum threat of violence, the Germans concealed their numerical inferiority through a policy of selective terror. Enabling them to establish a monopoly of power, massacres and burning villages were considered the best means of achieving maximum intimidation with minimum use of resources.³⁹ Between 1894 and 1900 alone, the *Schutztruppe* was deployed on 35 campaigns and 50 smaller skirmishes. Uprisings, mainly local in nature, such as the Tové-revolt in March 1895, were soon put down. In 1896, Governor Otto Gleim used a trifle to justify an assault of the Togo-Village.⁴⁰ In 1896, the Germans defeated a 7000 men strong army of the Dagomba and soon destroyed their capital Yendi. This was followed by a punitive campaign against the Bassari. In 1897 an attack by the Konkomba defeated 23 mercenaries of the *Schutztruppe*. Commander von Massow responded with a punitive campaign, destroying 50 villages. Three other punitive campaigns were conducted against the Kabré. However, unlike in German East Africa and South-West Africa, no major anti-colonial uprisings took place.

5.2.2 Exploitation & Modernization

The German maxim was that colonies must be profitable. Yet, the colonial project was supposed to be economically affordable. The colonial administration imposed heavy taxation, which drove Africans into production for export. Those who could not raise enough money or goods had to pay ‘muscle tax.’ Since the German Empire, established under the trusteeship principles of the Berlin Conference, that slavery was no longer acceptable for ‘civilisation’ at the end of the 19th century, German colonial officials resorted to forced labour to realize these modernisation projects. In accordance with colonial logic, this form of exploitation also fulfilled the function of ‘educating Africans for labour’. The Germans used force against those who did not comply. Togoland was soon known as the land of the 25 lashes, famous for the saying ‘And one for Kaiser!’ for the final additional lash. One of Lomé’s neighbourhoods was dubbed ‘Moabit,’ after the famous prison in Berlin’s district of the same name. Sebald notes that “Twelve prisons but only four schools were built by the German Administration. In Western Togo, which today is part of Ghana, the Germans built not even one school but four prisons.”⁴¹

The Germans were primarily interested in colonially exploiting coveted agricultural goods such as peanuts, cocoa, copra, and coffee – but in particular: cotton.⁴² Large cotton plantations were established along the coast and the German administration even arranged for an expedition of Afro-American cotton experts from the south of the United

39 Trotha, *Koloniale Herrschaft*, 42.

40 The Togo village was located on the northern shore of the coastal lagoon, Lake Togo, and could be reached by pirogues today as it was then. The name “Togo,” which loosely translated means “behind the waters” in Ewe, was later to give its name to the entire area.

41 Sebald as cited in Kofi Amenyo, “Deutschland Uber Alles – What If Germany Had Not Lost Its Colonies in Africa?,” *GhanaWeb*, 06 March 2017; Michael Weisfeld, writer, *Sonntagsspaziergang*, “Togo,” aired November 17, 2013, on Deutschlandfunk, available from <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/togo-wie-der-niederrhein-mit-palmen-100.html>.

42 Sebald, *Die deutsche Kolonie Togo 1884 – 1914*, pp. 93–98.