

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 Über 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.

States.⁴³ To ensure that the goods could be transported quickly to the coast, in the early 1900s, the German colonial administration initiated large economic and infrastructural development projects. Africans were forced to build roads, bridges, and several railway lines named after their purpose: In 1904 a 350-meter-long iron pier with railway tracks was built in Lomé connecting the “Coconut Railway” (Lomé-Aného) and “Cocoa Railway” (Lomé-Kpalimé), which opened in 1905 and 1907 respectively, while in 1913, the 167km-long “Cotton Railway” (Lomé-Atakpamé) was opened. In 1907, a telegraph link from Lomé to Atakpamé went into operation. Hospitals in Lomé and Kpalimé were opened. One of the most outstanding and yet short-lived construction projects was the transcontinental radio station in Kamina, which, due to its size, was able to establish a connection to Nauen near Berlin, 5,000 km away, and which, due to its location, was important as a telecommunication point for the German Empire’s overseas communications with its colonial territories of German Kamerun and German Southwest Africa.

Soon the myth of the “Musterkolonie” (model colony) developed, since it was the only colony that allegedly had a balanced budget.⁴⁴ German Togoland remained a minimal state and neither became a full-scale plantation nor a settler colony. During the entire German colonial period, the number of Europeans never rose above 500. It remained a modest trading colony whose foreign trade in the colonial economic peak of the “protectorate” reached just 0.1% of the value of the total foreign trade of the German Reich.⁴⁵

As to the societal effects of the German modernization campaign, Keese holds that there is no proof for a strong feeling of Ewe unity under the coming German rule.⁴⁶ Amenumey and Lawrance hold that “German rule had exceptional importance for the consolidation of Ewe identity,”⁴⁷ especially the missionary efforts, laying the basis for the resistance during the French and British mandate and trusteeship period: the Bremen Missionary Society, united the majority of the native society in a Protestant church. German missionaries established schools and conducted ethnological research on the Ewe language and culture. Diedrich Westermann, a pastor of the Bremen Missionary Society, standardized grammar, introducing the first Ewe language script and Ewe-Bible.⁴⁸ It was precisely under missionary efforts such as by Jakob Spieth that the Ewe were intensively exposed to German Protestant ideals of the *Volk*.⁴⁹

43 Andrew Zimmerman, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German empire, and the globalization of the new South, America in the world* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/alltitles/docDetail.action?docID=10640072>; Habermas, *Skandal in Togo*.

44 Already in 1969 Amenumey pointed out that the “model colony” was nothing more than colonial propaganda; D. E. K. Amenumey, “The Pre-1947 Background to the Ewe Unification Question,” *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 10 (1969), available from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41406350>.

45 Trotha, *Koloniale Herrschaft*, p. viii.

46 Keese, *Ethnicity and the Colonial State*, p. 246.

47 Lawrance, *Locality, Mobility, and “Nation”*, p. 123; Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement*.

48 It should be noted that the Anlo dialect was used to standardize the Ewe language and Bible, that is, an Ewe dialect spoken in the British Gold Coast outside of German Togoland.

49 Andreas Jakob Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme: Material zur Kunde des Ewe-Volkes in Deutsch-Togo* (Berlin: Reimer, 1906), <https://archive.org/stream/dieewestmmematoospie#page/n9/mode/2up>; Skinner, *The Fruits of Freedom in British Togoland*, p. 21.