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GERALDO DE LIMA: A REAPPRAISAL

D. E. K. AMENUMEY

Now that African historiography is gradually moving away from the old concentration on European activities in Africa and is becoming Afro-centric, perhaps it is time to take a fresh look at some of the indigenous personalities of African history. Geraldo de Lima the nineteenth century Ewe trader is one of the personalities that needs a fresh appraisal.

Geraldo de Lima is one of the few nineteenth century Ewe people on whom there is any substantial documentary information. One is therefore able to write a fairly reliable account of his career. He featured very prominently in the history of the Gold Coast after 1850. Thanks largely to the strength of his personality his name has passed into legend. For about two decades de Lima played an impressive role. Not only did he stand out prominently among the traders operating along the coast, but he was also active in the political sphere. From 1864 to 1884 he was intimately involved in politics in Anlo and he provided the occasion, as distinct from the cause, of Anlo's political entanglements with the neighbouring states and with the British Government on the Gold Coast. As one who had tried to thwart the extension of British influence and authority along the Ewe coast as well as being a former slave trader, de Lima enjoyed little sympathy from the officials of the Gold Coast government. This attitude is reflected in the 'histories' of the Gold Coast written by former Gold Coast Officials ¹.

Not much is known about de Lima's early days. He appears to have started from rather humble origins. Adzoviehlo Atiogbe, as he was originally called, was born at Agoue (in modern Dahomey) about 1804 ². It is claimed by his descendants, that when he came of age he operated as an independent trader around Whydah and Agoue. This claim is rather doubtful. What is certain is that in the early 1850's he entered the service of a Brazilian slave dealer Cosar Cequeira Geraldo de Lima who plied the traffic from his base at Vodza in Anlo. He was one in the long line of Brazilians who had established slave bases along the Ewe coast in the first half of the nineteenth century ³. This Lima had come to the Ewe coast earlier and after serving an apprenticeship in the

¹ Ellis, A. B., *A History of the Gold Coast of West Africa* (London 1893), pp. 237-241. Claridge, W. W., *A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti* (London 1916. Vol 1 pp. 548-550, Vol. II pp. 204-206, 278-81, 571) Ward, W. E. F. later followed these authors in his *History of the Gold Coast*, London 1948.

² This is the date provided by his grandson, chief Geraldo. A medical report on him in 1892 however claimed that he was then 80 years old.

³ Amenumey, D. E. K., *The Ewe People and the coming of European Rule 1850-1914* Unpublished Thesis, London, 1964, p. 49; also Reindorf, C. C., *The History of the Gold Coast and Asante* (1951), pp. 146-151.

service of Goncalves Baeta, found his feet and started trading in slaves on his own. His business soon expanded.

The slave trade had long been proscribed by Denmark, the only European nation that had any influence in the area, but as long as trans-atlantic markets existed the trade went on. Besides, the local rulers did not appear to object to it ⁴.

The Ewe coast and the territory east of the Volta in general was known for its slave trade. All the principal Ewe towns on the coast functioned as slave markets. The most important of these were Atoko, Keta, Blekusu, Adina and further east Little Popo and Agoue. The slaves were usually obtained from the interior—from Krepi and beyond where slaves were exchanged for salt from the coast. The slave trade (and later on legitimate trade in palm oil) was fed by a network of trade-routes that linked various parts of the Ewe territory with one another and with the neighbouring countries. The coastal towns were linked by a route along the beach and by the lagoon system that stretched from one end of the coast to the other, with only a few interruptions. Besides these, trade routes linked Anlo with Krepi in the interior and beyond. The main route from Keta northwards up to Salaga and Kebou went from Sadame on the Keta lagoon into Adaklu at Toda and thence through Waya to Peki, Ho, Kpando, Nkonya and Buem to Salaga. A branch of this route led from Kpeve and Ho via Abutia across the Volta to the west bank to join routes leading to Accra and Akuse. Another branch led from Kpeve to Krepi and Anum and again across the Volta to Akim country or lower down to Akwamu. Further east a route led from Begida and later Lome to Agome-Palime, Kpando, Kratchi, Yendi, Sansanne-Mangu etc. Another led from the same point at the coast to Nuatja and Atakpame. A third one led from Anecho to Atakpame and from Atakpame the big caravan route led to Blita, Sokode, Bassari, Mangu etc. From Kratchi, Salaga and Atakpame the routes leading from the Ewe coastal towns became part of the great long distance trade routes. Kratchi, Salaga and Atakpame were important salt-slave centres. The slaves obtained from these markets were supplemented by the slaves captured in the numerous inter tribal wars. Lima and his company depended on these sources for their slave supply.

De Lima built a factory at Vodza where the slaves were housed before shipment. He traded with the Anlo, obtaining slaves which they acquired inland. He maintained agents throughout Anlo at points along the Keta lagoon and the River Volta. Atiogbe, one of these agents, was particularly energetic in managing his master's affairs in the Volta region.

⁴ *Ibid.*

In 1862 de Lima died. The bulk of his wealth lay in London and Bahia but he had considerable sums of money at Vodza and Ada. These Atiogbe appropriated, together with his stocks, wife and name.⁵ To judge from the keen mind that he possessed it would appear that Atiogbe decided to assume his late master's name in order to facilitate trade relations particularly in Brazil where the name already carried some prestige in trade circles. It is from this time that Atiogbe's—henceforth Geraldo de Lima's—personality and influence began to assume bigger dimensions.

With the assets he “inherited” de Lima continued the slave trade and increased its volume considerably. He also broke into the palm-oil trade. Apart from the fact that he inherited a viable concern and that he was an industrious man, the conditions at this time were rather auspicious for enterprising small men—Africans who sought to trade on their own. The introduction of steam communication between Europe and West Africa in 1852 cut the freight charges. More important it meant that traders no longer needed to own their own ships but had the shipping lines to carry their cargo for them.⁶ The way was thus open for small merchants and local African merchants to carry on their own import and export trade and generally compete with the big establishments.⁷

With his remarkable business acumen, Lima expanded his trading activities. Slaves were purchased from the country on the banks of the Volta and taken to Agoue and other stations along the coast. By 1864 however, Lima had given up the slave trade and was concentrating on oil-palm. The high prices obtainable for palm-oil in Europe—about £43 a ton made it profitable for former slave dealers like Lima to turn to oil-palm. Besides, from about this time there ceased to be any overseas market for slaves. Once he broke into the palm-oil trade, Lima began to corner a sizeable volume of it. There is little information on the actual organisation of his trade. We do know however that he carried on a flourishing trade in many towns along the banks of the Volta in cotton materials, tobacco, guns and gun-powder and, above all, liquor. He extended his connexions to Kpong, the oil-palm emporium. He employed a number of agents at out-stations like Grand Popo but generally his wives and children managed his trading posts.

He built a big ‘factory’—a much bigger one than the one built by the original Lima at Vodza. It was a two storeyed mansion. The rooms on the ground floor were used as a warehouse. On the top-floor—the living quarters—was a number of large and spacious rooms sumptuously furnished with every conceivable item of European luxury. Right up to the end of the 19th century, even though it had been once bombarded

⁵ C.O. 96/64 No. 1143 of 8-1-1864.

⁶ Mcphee, A., *The Economic Revolution in British West Africa*, London 1962 p. 72.

⁷ Wolfson F., “A Price Agreement on the Gold Coast. The Krobo oil. Boycott 1858-1866” in *The Economic History Review* 2nd series Vol. 6. No. 1 1953 p. 70.

and was in a state of ruin, it still made quite an imposing impression along the Keta coast and testified to Lima's former grandeur.⁸

Lima's interests as a trader led him into a clash with those of the British government. In many ways the story of Lima is very similar to that of his contemporary brother trader Jaja of Opobo.⁹ By virtue of acquiring the Danish 'possessions' on the West African coast in 1850, the British government on the Gold Coast had tried to exercise jurisdiction east of the Volta but had to withdraw in 1860 because of the difficulties it encountered there. Despite this withdrawal, it however persisted in trying to exercise influence there. Lima tried to prevent this. As has been shown, until 1864, he had prosecuted the slave trade which was proscribed by Britain. Even when he changed to legitimate trade, he still sought to prevent the advent of Britain into his trade preserve, because he did not want to have to pay customs dues to the government. It was complained in government circles that he was instigating trouble at Keta the commercial capital of Anlo by spreading a rumour that the British were coming down to burn the Anlo country.¹⁰ In 1865 the governor of the Gold Coast had put a price of £100 on his head but this proved ineffective.

In 1864 Lima's trade activities led him into a misunderstanding which ultimately led to an Anlo-Ada war. The government of the Gold Coast entered the scales on the side of Ada. The reputation of Anlo and Lima have suffered considerably thanks to the way this episode has generally been recorded. As a corollary Lima has been credited with a much greater political influence than he wielded. It has usually been declared that Lima exercised a baneful influence over Anlo and engineered her into waging a gratuitous war on Ada.¹¹ In order to put the episode in its proper perspective, it is necessary to review the economic and political background.

By this time Lima had become very successful. It appears that he was doing more trade than the European merchants with whom he competed for oil from the Volta area. The actual volume of his trade is not known but the degree of his success can be gauged from the envy displayed towards him by his trade rivals. The trade competition between Lima and the European merchants based at Accra and westwards was superimposed on the inveterate Anlo-Ada commercial rivalry. Anlo had lately taken to acting as middlemen for the palm-oil trade. A fierce competition developed between Anlo on the one hand and Ada and Accra on the other. This rivalry was accentuated by the Krobo fine of 1858 and

⁸ Hartter, G. "Eine Bausteine zur Geschichte der Evhe-Stamme" in *Beitrage zur Kolonialpolitik und Kolonialwirtschaft* Vol. 3. 1901-1902 p. 492.

⁹ Cf Dike, K. O., *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1885* Oxford 1950 Cap X. Both of them were parvenus who became successful traders. Both sought to prevent the extension of British influence into their spheres of operation and both were crushed by Britain or British interests.

¹⁰ C.O. 96/64 No. 1143 of 6-1-64.

¹¹ Ellis and Claridge, *op cit.* Ellis, pp. 237-241. Claridge, vol. I pp. 548-550.

the tactics adopted by the Krobos in 1859–64 to beat it.¹² The Krobo producers resented the monopoly that was created by farming the collection of the fine to Messrs F.A. Swanzy and Messrs Forster and Smith who were authorised to buy up all the oil produced from Krobo at a price below the current market price. To get round this government-sponsored monopoly, instead of sending produce by road to Prampram where the monopolist firms maintained agents, they sent it by river to the seaboard beyond British control where traders like Lima paid higher prices. Because of the competitive prices paid here a regular oil trade was attracted to the area east of the Volta. From 1861 the quantity of oil exported began to rise but the merchants west of the Volta hardly received any of it.

One result of the diversion of the oil trade to the Volta area was the fierce competition that followed between the middlemen states of Anlo, Ada and Accra. Anlo was successful in diverting all produce from Accra and the Prampram area to her base in Mafi on the Volta and thence to Anlo ports. The success enjoyed by Anlo and Lima was a loss to the monopolist merchants and the Ada and Accra middlemen. This was the real reason why a petty misunderstanding between Lima and a debtor escalated into a war in 1865–66 with the merchants successfully soliciting government aid. The merchants exposed their real motive for denouncing Lima and Anlo when they implored the government to destroy all the coastal Anlo towns and to station troops along the Volta¹³. The Gold Coast Government became involved in what was essentially a commercial quarrel because it was ignorant of the real issues (its seat was then at Cape Coast) and the merchants misrepresented the real issues at stake and got the government to fight their battle for them.

In April 1865, one of the elders in Ada—a debtor to Lima—failed to settle his debt and Lima, in accordance with the current practice, panyarred some quantity of oil belonging to Ada traders¹⁴. The Ada chiefs retaliated by breaking into Lima's house at Ada, looting and burning it. Lima fled to the Anlo villages on the other side of the Volta to procure help. A small conflict ensued in April 1865 in which a number of people were killed on either side. This merely served to renew and accentuate old animosities. Attempts to arrange peace between Anlo and Ada in May 1865 failed.

It is not clear how far Lima's persuasive tongue and distribution of arms and liquor were responsible for fanning the long-smouldering flames of Anlo-Ada antagonisms. It would appear that all parties—Lima, Anlo, Ada and the merchants—were to blame for the deteriora-

¹² Wolfson, *op cit* pp. 68–77 also Kimble, D., *A Political History of Ghana 1850–1928*. Oxford 1963 pp. 6, 187–188.

¹³ C.O. 96/71 No. 6585 of 20–6–1886.

¹⁴ Lima was quite an impulsive man and did not hesitate to take the law into his own hands. In April 1879 for example he imprisoned his clerk at Grand Popo for failing to meet his liabilities cf. C.O. 96/128 No. 19848 of 15–11–1879.

tion of the situation: Anlo took up Lima's quarrel and hostilities followed between Anlo and Ada¹⁵. Anlo warriors blockaded the banks of the Volta, took a base at Mafi where the Volta is narrowest and attacked Ada canoes on the river. Anlo got Akwamu to do the same on the upper reaches of the Volta. The use of the river by people other than themselves was stopped and trade west of it was ruined. For example the Peki were obliged to forsake their old trade routes leading across the Volta to Accra and down to Ada, to take the road to Keta instead¹⁶. As the area of the Volta flourished, the European and African merchants at Accra were embittered against Lima and Anlo whom they accused of disturbing both peace and trade.

In January 1866 seven of these merchants, headed by Irvine the agent for Messrs. Forster Smith (one of the Krobo fine monopoly firms who had been hit by the stoppage of trade) sent a petition, later backed by a deputation to the governor at Cape Coast praying for government action against Anlo¹⁷. They claimed that Anlo warriors had, on Lima's instigation, crossed the Volta, burnt Kpong the palm-oil emporium and other towns in the Gold Coast 'Protectorate' and were about to sack Ada. It was further stated that in one instance Anlo seized 8 canoe loads of oil and killed 38 people.

The real nature of the quarrel was deliberately suppressed and Anlo was represented as engaging in wanton spoliation of the 'Protectorate'.

As has already been shown, because of difficulties in administration, the government had withdrawn from east of the Volta in 1860 and had dissociated itself from affairs there. However, despite the directives not to interfere in inter-tribal affairs, the lurid picture of unprovoked Anlo depredation painted by the merchants and the Accra chiefs persuaded Ag. Governor Conran to send government forces to organise an expedition against Anlo. As he subsequently confessed, he did not appreciate then that it was a traders' quarrel and had viewed the whole episode in a different light owing to the fact that Anlo had burnt Kpong. As he later realised, trade had been interrupted for the simple reason that Anlo who occupy one bank of the Volta, had a quarrel with Ada on the other side¹⁸. It is noteworthy that on the 26th February 1866 the Anlo king informed Conran that he had no quarrel with the government and that he was fighting Ada because she had destroyed his people and confiscated Lima's property¹⁹. It should be appreciated that Anlo considered herself obliged to look after the interest of Lima whom she considered her guest—by virtue of his domicile in Anlo.

¹⁵ C.O. 96/67 No. 679 of 12-7-1865.

¹⁶ Norddeutsche Mission Gesellschaft File 80. statistik 1 1847-81. Un-numbered letter of the Committee to the Governor of the Gold Coast.

¹⁷ C.O. 96/70 No. 13451 of 10-3-1866.

¹⁸ C.O. 96/71 No. 6585 of 2-6-1866.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

The government organised an expedition against Anlo and in a series of battles—the most famous of which were at Adidome (March), Datsutagba and Wute-Gbedzi (April)—Anlo and her allies were heavily defeated. Lima personally fought in these battles but escaped unhurt. As part of the peace terms stipulated by Conran, Anlo was asked to surrender Lima and pay a fine of 1,000 dollars. Nothing came of it—matters reverted to the situation before 1864.

Lima had meanwhile resumed his trading activities as soon as active hostilities ceased. In November 1868, the governor-in-chief, Sir Arthur Kennedy, succeeded in arranging a treaty between Anlo and Ada. This guaranteed peace and friendship between the two peoples. It also provided that the Volta should be kept open for lawful trade by all and that all future quarrels should be submitted to the governor-in-chief for adjudication.²⁰ It was later reported that Lima and some other traders in Anlo had tried to dissuade the Anlo king from signing the treaty or entering any understanding with the government because once the government established authority there, duties would be imposed on imports.²¹ It was hypocritical of the government officials to object to Lima's attempt to prevent the government from getting a foothold in Anlo because the government was equally selfish and calculating in its motive. At precisely this time the Gold Coast Government was asking for an authorisation to occupy Keta precisely because of fiscal reasons. It was calculated that the amount of duty leviable there would be £5,000. The occupation of Keta would therefore be a valuable economic asset and go a long way towards enabling the government to become solvent.²² Lima therefore cannot be blamed for looking after his own interests. Even British merchants who demanded government protection as of right, did everything in their power to avoid the obligation to pay customs dues to the government.

In May, 1871, Kennedy visited Anlo again to arrange another peace between Anlo and Ada and this time to associate Accra with it. At the back of his mind was the idea that something must be done about Lima who had by this time become the personification of mischief in the government's eyes. To Kennedy, Lima was a person "whose career has been one of turbulence and defiance of the British government—bribing marauders and encouraging Ashanti war-men to attack and plunder unoffending and industrious natives. I believe him to have been the instigator of the attack and capture of the German missionaries now in captivity at Kumasi."²³

20. C.O. 96/77 No. 27 of 3–12–1868.

21. C.O. 96/79 No. 1824 of 15–1–1869.

22. C.O. 96/85 No. 850 of 28–12–1870. Since the abandonment of the Poll tax experiment in the early 1860's customs duties provided the sole revenue of the government besides a parliamentary grant of £4,000 p.a. It therefore tried everything possible to secure as much revenue from customs as possible. This is the explanation for the plan to control the coastline east of the Volta.

23. C.O. 96/88 No. 6368 of 2–6–1871.

Two fundamental points need to be stressed here. In the first place the allegation was unfounded. In the second place besides being unfounded, this allegation tended to credit Lima with more authority in Anlo than he actually possessed. Influence he undoubtedly possessed—but not to such an extent as to dictate major Anlo policies like the declaration of war. This was something that not even the Anlo king by himself could do.

This was however, something that government officials did not appreciate then. Convinced that Lima was behind the late hostilities between Anlo and her Volta neighbours; “On my arrival at Jellah Coffee, I (i.e. Kennedy) sent to invite this man to a conference in the hope of prevailing upon him to abandon his turbulent and mischievous courses and allow the Accras, Adas and Ahwoolahs to live together in peace”.²⁴ Lima declined the invitation and suspecting that force would be used against him he crossed the Keta lagoon to reside at Anyako where also he was beyond the military reach of the government and where also he had friendly relations with a number of the influential chiefs. Kennedy was able to ‘convince’ the Anlo people that it would be in their interest to expel Lima from Anlo and make it impossible for him to return once Kennedy had left. Under the terms of the treaty signed on 13th May 1871 a gun-boat bombarded Lima’s deserted residence at Vodza and Anlo promised to surrender him to the government any time he returned. Kennedy put a price of £200 on his head.

The episode is open to a number of interpretations which though superficially attractive are nonetheless not borne out by the facts. One is that Anlo or at any rate the King and some of the influential chiefs were beginning to have second thoughts about the price of harbouring Lima or else Kennedy put pressure on them to agree to his peace terms. There is a letter dated 10th May 1871 from Letsa-Gbagba the King of Anlo—imputing the cause of the 1865–66 war and the attendant disturbances to Lima and declaring that it was necessary that he should be expelled from the country; and calling on Kennedy to destroy his residence as a preliminary to achieving this end. The letter bears the marks of both the King of Anlo and the chief of Keta—chief Amegashie. There is a tradition in certain quarters of Anlo that the letter was forged by Lima’s enemies in Anlo—particularly chiefs Tamakloe and Akolatse who it is alleged being traders at Keta, were Lima’s competitors and therefore wanted him out of the way. There appears to be little doubt however about the genuineness of the document. It is witnessed by John Tay an elder of Dzelukofe, G. B. Williams—a Sierra Leonian trader at Keta and Rev. J. N. Hansen of the Bremen Mission.

A more satisfactory explanation is that Anlo appeared to have been torn between the need to grant continued hospitality to one who was essentially a guest amongst them and the need to satisfy the govern-

²⁴ *Ibid.*

ment's conditions of peace. The letter and the general conduct of Anlo provided the solution. Anlo's policy met both obligations. Anlo was willing to have Lima's residence destroyed to satisfy the government without actually surrendering him. The king made a gesture of sending people to fetch him from Anyako but nothing came of it. The entire episode appears to have been a clever piece of diplomacy which Kennedy did not see through. Rev. Hansen put his finger on the stratagem when he surmised that "As for me I am convinced that neither the elders on the coast nor the elders of Anyako are willing to deliver Geraldo de Lima but intend to joke upon the governor as they are accustomed to do with us".²⁵ Certainly nothing positive was done by Anlo to apprehend Lima or deport him. Exactly a month after the signing of the treaty, Lima began to repair his residence²⁶ and resumed his trade throughout Anlo.

From 1874 Lima, like all the traders trading in Anlo, had to contend with a factor they had hitherto avoided. This was the re-extension of British jurisdiction to Anlo in 1874 and the concomitant imposition of customs duties. For as long as the authority of the Gold Coast government was limited to the west of the Volta, the traders in Anlo had been spared the payment of customs duties. The prospect of paying these now did not appeal to them. To get round the need to pay duties the merchants went to establish their stores just beyond the frontier where goods were landed free of duty. When buying produce at Keta, the merchants made payment in the form of orders for the goods landed beyond the frontier. The local retail trader therefore had to smuggle the goods into the 'protectorate' to realise his payment.²⁷ Lima was particularly notorious for doing this. He proceeded to do a roaring business in what was essentially contraband trade. A. B. Ellis his arch-denouncer wrote: "Geraldo de Lima, who, now that there was no longer any market for slaves, had abandoned slave-dealing and engaged in the profitable business of supplying the Awunas with spirit tobacco, gun powder and muskets, was one of the chief offenders against the revenue laws and had stores on the north side of the (Keta) lagoon to which goods were regularly smuggled from Denu."²⁸

Lima's career remained relatively uneventful till late 1884 when he was involved in a clash with the government authorities again. Ellis wrote that in 1878 Lima was the cause of an outbreak of 'revolt' in Anlo against the government.²⁹ There is however no foundation for this claim. In fact the 'revolt' was a figment of Ellis' over-worked

²⁵ C.O. 96/88 No. 6368 of 2-6-1871. Enclosure Rev. Hansen to Rev. Bunder on 6-5-1871.

²⁶ C.O. 96/88 No. 7267 of 17-6-1871.

²⁷ C.O. 96/127 No. 711 of 18-12-1871.

²⁸ Ellis, *op cit*—pp. 359-60.

²⁹ Ellis, *op cit* pp. 358-59. As usual Claridge followed Ellis cf. Claridge, vol. II p. 204.

imagination.³⁰ It is nevertheless certain that Lima had not accommodated himself to the fact that the British government had come to stay. Together with disgruntled Anlo chiefs he sought to harass the government. Both commercially and politically it was in Lima's interest to cause the government to withdraw from the Anlo territory.

The immediate occasion for the clash in 1884 was rather unusual. Once more it is necessary to go into some amount of Anlo history to determine to what extent Lima actually initiated events and to what extent he merely exploited situations to suit his own purpose. In August 1884 the Anlo king Amedor Kpegla requested the District Commissioner at Keta, Capt. Williams to enter into negotiations with the Krepi chiefs to re-open the roads between Anlo and Krepi.³¹ The roads had been closed since the 1860's following the hostilities between the two peoples. In the middle of September, a meeting took place between the Anlo chiefs and the Ho delegates, attended by the D.C. Both parties swore oaths to make peace and reopen the roads. The D.C. followed this pledge up with a visit to Ho and Taviefe (Krepi) to secure the pledge of the chiefs there also. The roads between Keta and Ho became safe once more.

That this innocent and apparently beneficial transaction should have provided the occasion for a clash with the government appears strange, but it happened to arouse and accentuate local enmities which were to draw the government into their vortex. Chief Tenge of Anyako on the Keta lagoon felt slighted that the Ho delegates on their way to Keta did not call on him but rather went to another chief who was a client of chief Tamakloe of Whuti—then resident at Keta. There existed an enmity between chiefs Tenge and Tamakloe because the latter succeeded the former's father, chief Dzokoto, as the divisional chief of the Left Division of Anlo while the former had to content himself with the position of Anyako. It must be explained that the divisional chiefships of Anlo had not then become hereditary as they later became after the period of the serious Anlo Wars. All the same chief Tenge was acutely disappointed. The fact that he had not been called upon to play any part in the whole business of establishing peace and opening the roads aroused the old animosities.

It is claimed that he was against the idea of reopening the roads for another reason also—he feared that once the roads had become safe, the captives he had acquired during the 1868–71 war in Krepi might be tempted to escape back home. Chief Tenge kicked against the peace and organised a boycott of the Keta market which normally obtained its supply of provisions from across the lagoon and established a rival market at Sadame where he directed all supplies which would

³⁰ Amenumey, *op cit* pp. 102–105.

³¹ C.O. 879/22 Section 283 No. 1074 of 3–10–1884.

otherwise have gone to Keta. His idea was to starve Keta where chief Tamakloe was residing and which was also the seat of the government.

The point of all this is that the anti-government situation of 1884 arose entirely without any action on Lima's part. However to Lima, who had not given up the idea of making the government's position in Anlo untenable, the opportunity provided by Tenge's act of defiance of the government must have been very tempting indeed. He himself had an axe to grind against Tenge's enemies so he made common cause with him. He was displeased with the government for demolishing his residence and putting a price on his head. Above all he hated the government's measures against smuggling. It was claimed that he offered one demijohn of rum for every constabulary man killed or beaten on trying to stop his smuggling activities.³² He also detested chiefs Tamakloe and Akolatse—both residing at Keta for it was alleged that they had invited Kennedy to demolish his house.

The arrival of the Germans on the political scene on the Ewe coast also provided an added opportunity. In July 1884 Germany had declared a protectorate in Togo to the east of the Keta district. Lima, who as a trader had business relations with the German trader Randad lately appointed the provisional German Consul for Togo, arranged with him for the cession of the Anlo country behind the lagoon to Germany as a counterpoise to the coastal stretch which was under British jurisdiction. Obviously Tenge and Lima—both disgruntled with the Gold Coast government, chief Tamakloe and the Anlo king for siding with these people—wanted to exploit the opportunity provided by the appearance of Germany to put an international boundary between themselves and their hated political superiors on the coast.³³ It must be stressed that their action was therefore as much a revolt against the indigenous political system in Anlo as against the Gold Coast Government. In this day and age it is rather tempting to cast Lima as a freedom-fighter—organiser of protest movement against imperialism. It is clear however that Lima saw the extension of British rule to Anlo as essentially an economic move and that his own opposition was equally economically inspired. He was prepared to invite Germany in, irrespective of the political consequences as long as it helped contain the threat to his commercial interests.

News of Lima's activities reached the D.C. at Keta. It was even alleged that he had instigated some chiefs to intercept and attack the D.C. on his journey to Ho in the previous November. On the 7th January, 1885 he was lured to Vodza and arrested there. Ellis and Claridge do not point this out.³⁴ As he had been residing at Anyako it was necessary to lure him to the coast before he could be arrested.

³² C.O. 96/166 No. 12306 of 6-6-1885. Enclosure from the D.C. of Keta.

³³ C.O. 879/21 Section 280 No. 81 of 18-1-1885.

³⁴ Ellis, *op cit* p. 378, Claridge, *op cit* vol. 11 p. 278.

It was in this respect that the services of the “friendly chiefs” were required. As far as the physical arrest was concerned the D.C. and the constabulary men were then to do the job. The D.C. tried him on the 14th and committed him to trial at the Accra assizes.

The D.C. despatched him with an escort of 4 policemen by land to Accra, however not before Lima had succeeded in sending word to Anyako about his arrest and accusing chiefs Tamakloe and Akolatse of complicity in it. Tenge and his lieutenants mobilised their men and intercepted Lima’s escort on the 15th January and rescued him. On learning this the D.C. dashed to Whuti together with a force of 38 men of the constabulary and chiefs Tamakloe and Akolatse and their men. They recaptured Lima after some fighting. He was sent on to Accra where he was lodged in prison. Meanwhile fighting continued between Tenge’s army and the government party.³⁵ This was the Taleto war.

The government failed to obtain any direct evidence of Lima’s complicity in a ‘plot’ to attack Capt. Campbell—the D.C.—in November 1884 and the subsequent disturbance in Anlo. Nevertheless the government suspected that he had been at the bottom of these incidents. The governor got the Legislative Council to confer on him the power to detain Lima.³⁶ Under the provisions of ordinance 2 of 1885 he was confined to Elmina castle on the 29th May, 1885 as a political prisoner.³⁷

Requests from his son Samuel for his release were turned down. However, from the beginning of the year 1888, the government began to consider the possibility of his release. Unfortunately for Lima, it was feared that the internal political situation in Anlo was not auspicious for such a gesture. While on a visit to Keta in February, 1888 Governor Griffith made enquiries about the advisability of Lima’s release. He went back with the idea that it would be inopportune. Now that Lima’s arch-enemy chief Amegashie—who did not care much for Lima’s influence—had returned to Keta, if Lima was released the two would occasion a disturbance by the renewal of their former antagonism.³⁸ More important than this, the recrudescence of chief Tenge’s depredations against chief Tamakloe and revolt in 1888–1889 further delayed Lima’s release. In October 1888 in reply to an enquiry from the Colonial Office if Lima should be not released on promising to reside elsewhere than Keta, Griffith suggested that this would be inadvisable. Lima’s associates—chief Tenge and others “were lately threatening some loyal chiefs in the district in connection with the circumstances of his imprisonment”³⁹ Lima remained in detention till November 1893 when he was released on the strength

³⁵ C.O. 879/21 Section 280 No. 82 of 19–1–1885.

³⁶ C.O. 96/166 No. 12306 of 6–6–1885.

³⁷ C.O. 96/191 No. 10188 of 25–4–1888.

³⁸ C.O. 96/192 No. 10983 of 23–7–1888.

³⁹ C.O. 96/195 No. 22119 of 12–10–1888.

of a bond of £100 which chief James Ocloo of Keta entered into in his behalf. It is significant that the political situation in Anlo had a lot to do with the decision to release him at this time.

By this time the political situation had changed. The authority of the government had increased in Anlo, hence the government could now afford to be magnanimous. In 1885 when Lima was detained, the position of the government was extremely precarious. Anlo had been formally brought under British Rule in 1874 but the authority of the government there had been extremely limited. Also with Germany very active in the neighbourhood, it was touch and go for the government. It therefore considered its position threatened by Lima's activities.

By 1890 however revolt or armed defiance in Anlo had been successfully beaten. Also the threat of German machinations had died with the signing of the 1886 and 1890 Anglo-German Boundary Agreements. Besides, on the negative side the causes of friction between Anlo and the government which had constituted an inflammable material which people like Lima and Tenge threatened to fan, had begun to disappear.⁴⁰ On the whole the period after 1890 in Anlo-Government relations was characterised by a degree of Anlo submission unlike anything before. The influence and authority of the Government begun to extend even beyond Anlo proper to some of the neighbouring towns.⁴¹ On the whole after some 16 years of coexistence Anlo was becoming more and more amenable to the government's exercise of jurisdiction.

It was therefore no political risk to release Lima in 1893. It was to a different world altogether that he returned. In fact it is indicative of the changed situation and the confidence of the government in the loyalty of Anlo that it even permitted chief Tenge who had led the 1884-89 resistance to return to the country in 1899.⁴² Lima was already a very old man—very near 90 years when he returned to Vodza. Both commercially and politically he could not recapture his former *elan*. Times were completely changed. He appears to have engaged in some trading but it was on a very small scale indeed. There is a reference to the fact that he was fined in 1899 for contravening the spirits License ordinance.⁴³ This trading activity did not last long. The position of near monopoly in retail trade that he had enjoyed in Anlo up till 1884 was long gone. There was now a crop of African and German firms doing a thriving business there.

Lima's last days appeared to have been rather miserable and in complete contrast with the life he had led in his middle age. At the turn of the century Rev. Hartter commented on him thus "Now sits

⁴⁰ For details see Amenumey, *op cit* cap IV. The need to enforce certain regulations which appeared obnoxious to Anlo had been removed i.e. measures against smuggling and slave trading.

⁴¹ C.O. 879/36 Section 424 despatch on 27-1-1892.

⁴² C.O. 96/338 No. 6390 of 18-2-1899.

⁴³ G.N.A. Adm 126/28 Acc. Entry No. 6121 of 23-10-1890.

Lima old and blind in his former palace. His former wealth is gone. So also is his political power as well as his former prestige among the people. Alone and poor he has to spend his last days in his ruins."⁴⁴ In December 1904 Lima, already a blind man, tripped over a child playing on the steps of his house. He fell over the balusters and broke several ribs. He died of his injuries on the 12th of the month.⁴⁵

The judge from the impact of Lima's career and the almost panicky reaction it evinced from the government and the treatment hitherto accorded him in the 'histories' of the Gold Coast, it is difficult to realise that his active career was limited to exactly two decades., 1864 to 1884.

During these years he showed himself as a clever and alert man who was able to exploit situations to further his interests which were primarily commercial. Without doubt he built his commercial success on the foundations laid down by his former master but he improved on his foundation tremendously. He was a practical man—not given to idealism. He prosecuted the slave trade until the palm-oil trade proved a more profitable alternative. He tried to prevent the Gold Coast government from securing a foothold in Anlo primarily because he calculated that that event would damage his trade interests. The appropriation of his late master's stock and name and the alignment with chief Tenge show him as one who was sharp enough to seize opportunities when they presented themselves. However, in the attempt to cast him as the arch-enemy of the Gold Coast government who organised Anlo in a series of wars against the government and those in alliance with it, the influence of Lima has often been exaggerated. The supreme manifestation of this tendency was provided by Ag. Governor Simpson, who on the occasion of the joint Asante-Akwamu-Anlo attack on Krepi in 1868–71, wrote to warn Lima against engineering Anlo into joining the affray. In fact the decision by Anlo to enter the war had nothing whatsoever to do with Lima—Geraldo de Lima did not play the influential political role in Anlo that has usually been ascribed to him.

⁴⁴ Hartter, *op cit* p. 492.

⁴⁵ Claridge, *op cit* vol. II p. 571.