POVERTY AND WELFARE IN COLONIAL NIGERIA, 1900-1954

by

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the interface of poverty and development of state welfare initiatives colonial Nigeria. It attempts to unravel the transformation and the nature and character of poverty afflicting majority of Nigerians since the period immediately preceding colonialism and under colonial rule. It looks at the causes and manifestations of poverty as well as the nature of social welfare in pre-colonial Nigerian societies in relation to the new forms of poverty that British Colonial policies visited on the society. Poverty in the colonial period is shown to have been caused by changes in power relations and accompanying administrative and economic reorganization of the society which facilitated the diversion of labour, resources and surplus produce from family and household use to the colonial state, firms and their agents. This new form of poverty was manifested in the loss of family and household self-sufficiency and the inability to meet personal survival needs and obligations, making the majority unable to participate fully in the affairs of their communities. This dissertation looks at how the British Colonial State tried to achieve its objective of exploitation and deal with the problem of poverty in its various manifestations using indigenous institutions and practices and other non-indigenous strategies in the face of growing African resistance and declining productivity. It argues that over-aching strategy of development represented by the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 and subsequent amendments and community development were designed to co-opt the emergent civil society into acquiescence with the social system and contain further resistance, and as such could not provide welfare nor alleviate the problem of poverty.
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This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Mrs Lydia Ekorowiro Usuanlele (nee Aghedo), my children, Osariuyimen, Osamuedemen, Osayuware, Osazomwanogie and Izirowua and my wife, Ugiomotiti Mary-Theresa Alero Usuanlele (nee Obazee).

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Table of Contents

Abstract  i
Acknowledgements  ii
Dedication  v
Table of Contents  vi
List of Tables  vii

Chapter 1: Introduction  1

CHAPTER 2: Poverty and Welfare in Nigerian Society on the eve of the Establishment of Colonial Rule  7

CHAPTER 3: Colonial Reorganization, Social Dislocations, Exploitation and Transformation of Poverty, 1900-1939  43

CHAPTER 4: European Survival and Administrative Needs- Induced Social Services, 1900-1939  114

CHAPTER 5: The State, Poverty and Emergent Social Problems before WW II, 1900-1939  180

CHAPTER 6: Tinkering with Welfare and Development Before and During WW II  270

CHAPTER 7: Development Planning and the Retreat From Welfare in the Era of Nationalism, 1945-1954  348

Chapter 8: Conclusion  440

Bibliography  445

Appendix 1 - Tables  489

Appendix 2 – Maps  490
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Number of Schools and Children attending school in Nigeria (1937)</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Expenditure for Assisted schemes (in £) financed with both CDA and Nigerian funds</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Grants to 1938</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Register Unemployed and School leavers and Job placement by Lagos Juvenile Employment Exchange April and May 1944</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>School Attendance by region, in 1954</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>School Attendance by region, 1954-57</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Record of Registration and Placement of School leavers by Lagos Advisory Committee on Juvenile Employment and After-Care</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

There is no person in our rural areas as far as I know that does not know what he will eat tomorrow morning. Now there is poverty, yes. But there is no abject poverty. We had 42 percent (poverty rate) in 1992. And by 1996 we went up to 70 percent. We haven’t had a war. We haven’t had an epidemic. We haven’t had four years of drought. What took off as 42 percent in 1992 went up to 70 percent in 1996. We haven’t really changed our economy? If it was the time we moved from non-structural adjustment to structural adjustment, you could say this. And we have all been parroting this. Where did we get it? Where? How can you substantiate it? The Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) I know is working on poverty level figures. Don’t let us dramatize what does not need to be dramatized.


The central problem, the improvement of village life, is being tackled by the various educational agencies…. There are no uncared for children where the strength of African kinship is unimpaired. There are no problems of delinquency in the village where the authority of the chiefs and elder is respected and everyone draws his living from the land.


Growing up in Nigeria in the first and second decade of Nigeria’s independence, the bad behaviour of children in cities was often responded to with threats of being sent to “welfare”. Going to the “welfare” meant corporal punishment, manual labour, confinement and eating half- and badly cooked food. As I grew older, I came to see the fuller ramifications of “welfare” included occasional official raids to remove the destitute from city streets when distinguished foreigners were visiting. Only later was I to learn that welfare could also mean a better and happier state of being. In part, this study was prompted by my own wish to understand how the negative connotation of welfare in Nigeria arose.
Across six decades, from the writings of the colonial anthropologist Lucy Mair to the speeches of President Obasanjo and beyond, the reality of extreme rural poverty has been denied. What has also been denied is the need for state provided welfare where it is assumed that “everyone draws his living from the land” and there is “no one who does not know what they will eat tomorrow.” Such views are clung to despite the reality that the long-term poverty of rural communities has turned them into the incubators of the urban poor.¹ The assumption has remained that as long as the rural populace is able to eat and are provided with basic infrastructure for evacuation and marketing of their produce, all will be well. Urban social problems can be solved with token job placements, the controlled prices of basic necessities and some necessary applications of “welfare.”

Nigeria has been described as "a rich country of poor people"² because of the large population of Nigerians known to be living in poverty³ in spite of its enormous earnings from oil. This contradictory state of things in Nigeria, coupled with the International Monetary Fund inspired Structural Adjustment Programme induced riots of the 1980s and 1990s, has returned the issue of poverty and its alleviation to centre stage in Nigerian politics and scholarship. But it had not been absent for long. As early as 1975, during the oil boom, the Nigerian Economic Society made “Poverty in Nigeria” the theme of its 1975 annual conference and returned to the same theme, Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria, at its 1997 conference.

¹ The Federal Office of Statistics alludes to 57.8% poverty rate (as against World Bank 70%) with 64.1% incidence in the rural areas falling only by 5%. Louis Iba, “Nigeria’s poverty level drops to 57.8%” The Punch,(Nigeria- online www.punchng.com) 3 January 2005.

² This description has been credited to Ewah Otu Eleri, Director of the International Centre for Energy, Environment & Development. www.goethe.de/wix/fut/dos/ige/en2356327.htm

³ The population is variously put at either 57.8% (Nigerian Federal Office of Statistics) or 70% (World Bank).
However, this attention to poverty has not been matched either by an attempt to understand poverty in Nigeria from an historical perspective or by the study of the history of welfare. The present work seeks to address these gaps. The study of social welfare in Africa made a modest start in the colonial period with Lucy Mair’s *Welfare in British West Africa*, in which she proffered advice on how colonial governments should deal with Africa’s welfare problems which she viewed as mainly urban. Since then, there have been few major studies of social welfare (as opposed to “development”) in British colonial Africa with the important exception of Joanne Lewis’ *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya 1925-1952*. The history of social welfare in Nigeria is greatly understudied despite the fact that Nigeria was Britain’s most populous and culturally diverse colony in Africa and the first colony in British Africa to establish a Social Welfare Department. Moreover, despite the existence of social work as a discipline and profession in Nigerian universities and Nigeria, only the 2000 doctoral thesis of Alamveabee E. Idyorough, “The Development of Formal Social Welfare Services under the Colonial State in Northern Nigeria,” attempts an historical study. The few other works available concentrate either on enumerating the social services in Nigeria or on the evolution of social welfare in the UK and USA, often providing little more than an enumeration and description of relevant legislation and the activities of the Social Welfare Department. Perhaps this is the case because of the difficulties involved in researching and writing the history of welfare in colonial Nigeria.

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The colonial administration was little concerned with poverty and welfare until the mid-1930s and, even after, documentation about these issues is often buried in files and documents primarily concerned with other issues, particularly those concerned with what has come to be understood as “development.” As I discovered in the course of my research and writing, and as will become clear to the careful reader in the chapters that follow, polities in Nigeria were already undergoing social changes in the late 19th century when colonial intervention transformed the nature and extent of poverty in these societies. Some groups, particularly former slaves and women as well as communities with mineral and forest resources found themselves increasingly excluded from resources as state policies and merchant capital undermined social sanctions that had protected them in their communities. Colonial policies resulted in the diversion of labour and surplus produce from families and households to the colonial state, European trading firms and their local agents. This development made families unable to meet their subsistence needs and social obligations and they were forced into migrations to urban areas to access the dwindling opportunities. Despite the social breakdown before the 1930s, the colonial state left “welfare” to the indigenous communities, which were incapable of providing it. The social services and welfare policies that emerged before 1939 were miniscule and provided in piecemeal. Empire-wide riots and increasing African resistance on the eve of the Second World War made the colonial state to start toying with an ideology of development and stepping up its social welfare policies which culminated in the establishment of a social welfare department in 1942. The line between development and welfare was often blurred. But with a huge war debt and the need to

rebuild British economy, a local government system to co-opt civil society was introduced, while development ideology gradually displaced welfare as the late colonial and post-colonial response to poverty. It was development and not welfare that was to be the lasting legacy of colonial rule.

The thesis is divided into eight chapters including the introduction. Chapter two examines the changes in the organization of production activities and political administration, with special attention to poverty, in the polities and communities that were to make up colonial Nigeria in the nineteenth century. This chapter also provides a background to understanding and assessing how colonialism transformed the nature and extent of poverty in the society.

Chapter three examines the processes of establishment of colonial rule, the various influences at play in the reorganization of the society and economy. This is done through an analysis of the impact of various administrative policies that changed political and power relations, the control and access to productive forces and their transformative effects on the society, poverty and welfare before the Second World War.

The fourth chapter looks at the policies and circumstances that informed the provision and development of social services in colonial Nigeria and how these affected the provision of education and health in Nigeria. Chapter five examines the various social problems associated with poverty that emerged with colonial rule and colonial attitudes and policies towards these problems. It also looks at the effects of colonial policies on addressing these social problems before the Second World War and African responses to the situation.
Chapter six focuses on the Second World War and its impact on the social problems preceding and associated with the war. It looks at responses to Empire-wide political restiveness and how this influenced policies towards poverty and social welfare. Chapter Seven examines the reform measures adopted by the colonial state following the war and particularly the implementation of Colonial Development and Welfare Act, local government reform, and community development in relation to poverty and welfare before the devolution of power to nationalist politicians in Nigeria in 1954. Chapter eight is the conclusion.
CHAPTER TWO

POVERTY AND WELFARE IN NIGERIAN SOCIETIES ON THE EVE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COLONIAL RULE

Introduction

Hardly a day passes without the mass media presenting images of malnourished Africans as the global face of poverty. Since the Second World War, African governments, colonial and post-colonial, multilateral organizations, and “rich” countries have been involved in attempts to alleviate poverty in Africa. Arguably, one obstacle to these efforts is that, in contrast to Europe, North America, or South Asia, there has been relatively little understanding of the history of poverty in Africa. This is especially true for Nigeria.

Poly Hill’s *Population, Prosperity and Poverty: Rural Kano 1900 and 1970*, Bade Onimode’s *Imperialism and Underdevelopment in Nigeria: The Dialectics of Mass Poverty*, and John Iliffe’s *The African Poor* are pre-eminent among the studies that have focused on poverty in Nigeria during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. Poly Hill’s, *Population, Prosperity and Poverty: Rural Kano 1900 and 1970*, concentrates on a few villages in rural Kano, and while pioneering, is too restrictive in scope to be useful in understanding the phenomenon of poverty in pre-colonial Nigeria as a whole. Despite its title, Bade Onimode’s *Imperialism and Underdevelopment in Nigeria: The Dialectics of Mass Poverty* focuses mainly on the exploitative relations between Western imperialism and Nigeria in the colonial and post-independence period

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and devotes only a few pages to an examination of social conditions in pre-colonial Nigeria. Michael Watts’s important study, *Silent Violence: Food, Famine and Peasantry in Northern Nigeria*, also deals with famine induced hunger and poverty, but it is restricted largely to the some districts of the Sahel area leaving out a large area of both Northern Nigeria and Nigeria.  

John Iliffe’s *The African Poor*, stands out as the pioneering effort to understand the history of poverty in Africa. Apart from his ambitious coverage of most regions, religions and cultural areas of Africa, Iliffe dwells substantially on Nigeria in chapter three, while chapters four and six draw many of their examples from Nigeria. As a result, my study of poverty and welfare in Nigeria must necessarily start with an examination of Iliffe’s reconstruction of poverty in Africa.

A main thesis of Iliffe’s work is that there is “a remarkable continuity between the pre-colonial poor and those of the late twentieth century.” “Nothing,” he argues “illustrates the continuity of the African past more vividly than the study of poverty.”  

This claim is dependent on his understanding of poverty. For Iliffe, 

Poverty has inescapable connotation of physical want, especially in poor countries. Examination of the sources suggests that two levels of want have existed in Africa for several centuries. On the one level have been the very large numbers – perhaps most Africans at most times – obliged to struggle continuously to preserve themselves and their dependants from physical want. These will be called the poor. On another level have been smaller numbers who have permanently or temporarily failed in that struggle and have fallen into physical want. These will be called the very poor or destitute. Of course there was no sharp dividing line between them.  

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In setting out his understanding of poverty in Africa, Iliffe distinguishes between structural poverty “which is the long-term poverty of individuals due to their personal or social circumstances” and conjunctural poverty “which is the temporary poverty into which ordinarily self-sufficient people may be thrown by crisis” but which carries the potential of sliding into structural poverty. He further distinguishes “between the structural poverty characteristic of societies with relatively ample resources, especially land, and that characteristic of those societies where such resources are scarce.” In the latter, Iliffe maintains, the structurally poor are those who lack access to land; in the former they are those who:

… lack access to the labour needed to exploit land – both their own labour (perhaps because they are incapacitated, elderly, or young) and the labour of others (because they are bereft of family or other support). In land scarce societies the very poor continue to include such people but also include those among the able-bodied who lack access to land (or other resources) and are unable to sell their labour power at a price sufficient to meet their minimum needs.\(^\text{12}\)

Iliffe argues that while “the transition from land-rich to land-scarce poverty has taken place in other continents” and has been documented for Europe; his work is the first “to chart it in Africa.”

Iliffe argues “that the structural poor of pre-colonial Africa were mainly those lacking access to labour” and that,

Because poverty took this form, attempts to relate it to landholding systems, agricultural technology, or world religions have little relevance. Historical record of those-lacking labour in pre-colonial societies is uneven, partly because the vulnerability to misfortune varied with time and place, partly because mechanisms to prevent such unfortunates from falling into extreme poverty varied, and partly because the availability of sources is uneven. Yet the structural poor of this kind appear to have been numerous everywhere. They appear most frequently in folktales, which often identified a category of weak individuals – the

\(^{12}\) Ibid, 4.
old, the handicapped, and the very young – who lived in destitution but triumphed over the strong, usually by magical means.13

“By contrast,” Iliffe argues, “structural poverty resulting from land scarcity appeared only slowly in Africa” and that “in colonial Africa it was limited to certain areas of ruthless alienation or unusual population density.” Even where such circumstances prevailed, according to Iliffe, “land scarcity was slow to breed extreme poverty because many of the landless could sell their labour at wages which at least ensured subsistence.”

Conjunctural poverty in Africa, Iliffe argues, “has exhibited greater change.” Whereas in pre-colonial Africa, as in pre-17th century Europe, “the chief cause of conjunctural poverty was climatic and political insecurity which might culminate in mass famine mortality,” this was mitigated in Europe and ultimately in Africa - if only “unevenly and incompletely” by “broad increases in wealth, diversified sources of income, more effective government, better transport, wider markets, and improved hygiene and medicine.” Iliffe maintains that the result “was that epidemic starvation for all but the rich gave way to endemic undernutrition for the very poor. Conjunctural and structural poverty converged.”14

Turning his attention to the “means by which the poor survived” in pre-colonial Africa, Iliffe holds that the poor in Europe and Asia availed themselves of “four means of survival.” These were institutions created by the wider society, informal and individual charity, organization by the poor themselves, and their own efforts. While Iliffe states that all of these also existed in African to some degree, “the balance among them differed” as institutions and organizations were scarce. Thus, according to Iliffe, “the

13 Ibid, 5-6.
14 Ibid, 5-7
African poor sought their survival in two directions” – the family, and their own individual efforts.\textsuperscript{15}

In the remainder of this chapter and in the chapter that follows I will examine Iliffe’s claims by way of a discussion of the changing nature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century socio-economic and political organization of some of the societies that were to become Nigeria.

\textbf{Changes in Production Systems in the Nineteenth Century and Their Implications for Poverty in Pre-Colonial Nigerian Society}

Nigeria is located on the extreme east corner of the West African sub-region and stretches from the Atlantic Ocean in the south, across the mangrove, rainforest, and savanna vegetation zones, to where it touches the fringes of the Sahara desert. On the eve of establishment of colonial rule, what was to become Nigeria was comprised of a large number of polities of varying socio-political organization. These ranged from the “village democracies” of the Igbo, Ibibio and Anang of Eastern Nigeria, and, among others, the Tiv, Birom, and Eggon in Northern Nigeria, through the trading city-states of the Niger Delta, the small chiefdoms of Esan, Etsako, Anioma Igbo in the Midwest, the centralized monarchies of Benin and the Yoruba of Western Nigeria, to the Emirates and Sultanates of the Hausa and Kanuri of Northern Nigeria.

Between the mid-nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century, these various polities were brought together by British imperialism under a colonial state

\begin{footnote}
\textit{Ibid, 7-8}
\end{footnote}
system comprised of a Colony and Protectorates that were later amalgamated and came to be known as Nigeria. The individual components of this conglomeration of polities, which previously had co-existed in peace and conflict, had radically different modes of social organization. This diversity of social organization makes it difficult to generalize regarding social conditions in pre-colonial Nigeria, while their number makes comprehensive coverage near impossible. I intend to examine a number of the various polities of the Nigerian area in relation to the changes that were taking place in the nineteenth century in order to generalize on the issue of poverty and social responses to it.

Differences in size and political organization notwithstanding, an examination of the various Nigerian polities’ shows that they were largely pre-industrial, and that their productive activities centered mainly on agriculture which was dependent on land, basic farming tools, and manual labour. Important changes in agricultural production were underway in Nigeria in the nineteenth century. This was caused by the gradual abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the simultaneous growth in the export of vegetable oil and oil seeds. Most important was the growth in exports of oil from the fruit and the kernels of the oil palm tree. These had long been processed on a small scale for local use. Production and processing could be done with little capital and this boosted production.

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16 The territory was initially made up of Lagos Colony and Protectorate, and Oil Rivers or Niger Coast Protectorate and Royal Niger Company Territories before 1900. The Niger Coast Protectorate was transferred from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office and changed its name to Protectorate of Southern Nigeria 1900-1905 while the Royal Nigeria Company territory was transformed into the Protectorate of Northern 1900-1913. The Lagos Colony and Protectorate and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria were amalgamated into a single Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1906. The two Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria were amalgamated under a single administration in 1914 but maintained some separate departments until the 1930s.

for export from the 1850s on. A further impetus to export production came from the freed
slaves who returned from the new world with experience of plantation agriculture and the
promotion of plantation agriculture as an alternative to slave trading by Christian
missionaries who had started to penetrate the Nigerian interior.\(^\text{18}\) Paradoxically, the
abolition of the Atlantic slave trade increased the use of slave labour for the production of
agricultural exports in some areas. Calabar, which had formerly combined oil palm
export with the export slave trade, expanded oil palm production after the abolition of the
Atlantic slave trade and its merchants developed oil palm plantations in the Akpabuyo
and Odukpami areas of Calabar in south-eastern Nigeria.\(^\text{19}\)

Elsewhere, increasing urbanization arising from encouragement of sedentization
of Fulani pastoralists and other supporters of the Jihad in the Sokoto Caliphate,\(^\text{20}\) a related
increased demand for grain from the desert areas and trading settlements in the savanna
regions, and the development of new and larger settlements arising from civil wars in
Yoruba land,\(^\text{21}\) all increased commercial agricultural production. Increased acreages
were being farmed for commercial purposes by a relatively smaller number of individuals
around Lagos, near Abeokuta and Ibadan in Yoruba land, and in the oil palm producing
interior of the Niger-Delta. Commercial agriculture was taken up on the outskirts of the
Lagos colony and in the neighboring Abeokuta areas by returned freed slaves who
engaged in cotton production for export. In Ibadan, war chiefs established large farms for

production of both food and oil palm products, indigo for making dye for the local markets, and kola nuts.\textsuperscript{22}

In the absence of technological improvements, increased production required increased access to land and labour. For example, the grain trade on the desert edge contributed to increases in the sale of land in the Sokoto metropolitan area. Land around this city was in high demand because of its physical security and a ready market for grain from resident Azben and Tuareg merchants from the desert. Sokoto was also on the trade route westward to kolanut producing areas of Gonja in present day Ghana. Increased trade resulted in an accumulation of wealth in land and investment in commercial farming of grain and other agricultural raw materials in the Caliphate. Large plantations called \textit{gandu} in Hausa, also known as \textit{rumde} in Fulfude and \textit{tunga} in Nupe became common in parts of the Sokoto Caliphate. Some were established around cities like Zaria and Kano that provided ready markets for grain and agricultural raw materials such as the cotton and indigo needed for expanding craft industries. As well, the demand for shea butter for export to Europe and North Africa gave impetus to commercial farming in the Ilorin and Bida Emirates in central Nigeria where emergent war chiefs and office holders established large farms to produce both export shea butter and food to meet the demands of growing urban areas.\textsuperscript{23}

While these developments did not necessarily create landlessness or poverty, they could do so. In Northern Igbo land increases in the size of farms producing food to


supply the growing urban population of southern Igboland and the Niger delta area by
some, led to a depletion of communal land available for household farming for others.
This expropriation of communal lands by some family heads and the emergent
*ogonranya*- newly rich young men who owned a large number of slaves, combined with a
high population density to produce a fragmentation of family holdings and the creation of
extremely small parcels inadequate to meet family needs.24 Those who suffered this
fragmentation became involved in migrancy and wage labour to augment their income.
Another consequence of land shortage in some areas of Igbo land was the development of
a militarist social character. The Ezza of the Abakaliki area and the Obukpa of the
Nssuka area engaged in wars with neighboring land-rich communities in order to acquire
their land for large-scale food crop production, while the Ohafia Igbo developed
traditions of head-hunting and mercenary warfare that assisted the Aro slave trading
oligarchy in its annexation of land and enslavement of the conquered.25

As in northern Igbo land, the expansion of larger scale commercial agriculture
was marked in some areas by the advent of, or an increase in, wage labour. Lagos and
Abeokuta plantations, influenced by Christian missionaries, eschewed slave labour and
depended largely on wage labour, the high cost of and instability of which affected their
operations. Such wage laborers were drawn not only from the runaway slave populations
that gathered around Lagos and Mamu near Abeokuta, but also came from the
populations dislocated by the long wars in nineteenth century Yoruba land. The

24 Carolyne Brown, “*We were all Slaves*”, *African Miners, Culture, and Resistance at the Enugu
25 Nwando Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors and Kings: Female Power and Authority in Northern
Igboland 1900-1960*, Portsmouth, NH, Heinemann, 2005, 68-71; Simon Ottenberg, *Farmers and
Townspeople in a changing Nigeria: Abakiliki during Colonial Times(1905-1960)*, Ibadan, Spectrum Books
Limited, 2003, 13-16 and Chukwuma Azuonye “The Heroic Age of the Ohafia Igbo: Its Evolution and
dislocations and displacements caused by these wars left affected women enslaved, widowed and bereft of children. It was such women who sought refuge among the Christian missionarles on whose insufficiently contextualized reports Iliffe relies to illustrate the incidence of poverty among women in Yoruba land.26

Wage labor could be an indication of poverty, but often was not. The existence of a fraction of the free population who were supporting themselves through militarized labour is attested to by Mabogunje who claimed that there was a migration of youths to new settlements like Ibadan to seek military service for which they were paid with a share of the booty. When there were no wars, these youths sought work in the plantations.27 Complaints about labour shortages experienced by the plantations around Lagos, which were blamed on the involvement of men in the Ijaiye War of 1860-5,28 attest to the dependence of these plantations on wage labour. However, contrary to Iliffe’s claim, such involvement in wage labour did not necessarily indicate poverty.

In the Sahel-savanna areas on the fringes of the Sahara desert, ecological factors had facilitated a long tradition of seasonal migrations known as cirani (eating the dry season, eating other people’s food) in parts of Hausa land. But with the creation of Sokoto and Zamfara by the nineteenth century Jihad of Usman Ibn Fodiye, another form of seasonal migration, known as kwadago, developed in which the males sought waged agricultural labour in the Zamfara area that experienced earlier rains and whose people were engaged in commercial grain farming requiring more labour than was locally available.29 Not only could such temporary migration help mitigate the effects of short-

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28 Ibid.
29 Chafe, *op.cit*, 182.
term environmental problems or dislocation arising from war; it could also raise additional resources for productive investment or other uses. Again engagement in migration for wage labour was not, contra Iliffe, necessarily a sign of poverty.

In addition to the minority who engaged in wage labour, large farm owners depended mainly on the labour of slaves and pawns. The use of pawn and slave labour was widespread in most polities where class differentiation had occurred. Some fulltime traders, without time to engage in farming, purchased slaves to work on their farms. However, it was predominantly political office holders, members of titled associations, or military warlords, who were able to exploit their offices to acquire slaves as both tribute and booty, who held large numbers of agricultural slaves. These political office holders had the additional advantage of having access to the unpaid labour of their subjects and clients to work on their farms in the form of use (Edo), gaya (Hausa), owe (Yoruba) and so on. This enabled them to acquire wealth that could be used to acquire the land and labour necessary to further increase production.

Non-agricultural wage labour developed in the savanna where ecology and long-distance trade combined to facilitate its expansion. The caravan trade across the desert had by the nineteenth century expanded southward to the Nigerian coast and westward to Gonja in Asante kingdom area of present day Ghana. These created the need for porterage (dandoko), caravan guides and cooks among the Hausa. By the late nineteenth century there were people from the Sahel engaging in various tasks in Ibadan and Lagos whose presence had originated in this trade.30

Women, who were usually paid in kind, are reported to have dominated salt production in the Keana area of central Nigeria. \(^{31}\) Iliffe uses missionary sources to imply that women and girls who carried firewood exemplified poverty. \(^{32}\) However, given the prevailing gendered division of labour in which this task was nearly everywhere a women and children’s chore, this argument is doubtful. Iliffe also notes the existence of *karuwai*, Hausa women in transition between marriages, whose existence he rightly attributes to early marriage and family intolerance of single women in the Islamized savanna. \(^{33}\) Again, however, the use of the existence of such women as evidence of poverty is weak as such women are known to have supplemented the gifts they received from lovers and suitors with trading both before and during marriage.

The growth of Kano and other cities in Hausa land in the nineteenth century transformed various pre-existing services into full time occupations. These included mud block makers, builders, barbers, and even those whom Iliffe identified as the “most lowly of all”- the calabash menders. \(^{34}\) That some became full time providers of such services does not necessarily betoken poverty. In societies and polities outside the savanna, there was less full time specialization. However, musicianship in Yoruba land and herbalism, divining, and canoe paddling in the riverine swamp areas were among those occupations that came to practiced on a full time basis. Most service providers continued to farm with the assistance of family, and possibly pawn or slave labour.


\(^{33}\) Ibid, 34 and 40.

As a result of these developments, an increasing disparity in wealth had developed by the nineteenth century and was greatly enhanced, especially in the coastal areas and established trade centers in the hinterland, by the injection of European merchant capital. Merchant capital also became an increasingly important factor in conflicts and realignments in the internal politics of many polities. These conflicts particularly in Yorubaland further contributed to the ongoing social stratification as former freeborn peasants, crafts workers and traders sought protection from powerful warlords who exacted their labour in return. Thus did the former free-born become impoverished and dependent as a consequence of the nineteenth century politico-economic transformation. Furthermore, the increased demand for labour occasioned by the “legitimate trade” increased the demand for slaves. This led to incessant raids of communities by freebooters and heightened insecurity for farmers. The loss to households of labour and security were not easily recouped and could easily lead to their impoverishment.

**Representations of Poverty and the Likely Extent of its Incidence in the Polities of Pre-colonial Nigeria on the Eve of Colonial Rule**

Iliffe gives only perfunctory consideration to indigenous conceptions and representations of poverty, reproducing a few African proverbs and phrases derived largely from written sources of uncertain reliability. Even for the Igbo and Yoruba, to whom he devotes a chapter, he sparingly employs indigenous categories for the

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36 One such example is his statement that “In several African languages the common word for the poor-Umpahawi in Chewa language of modern Malawi for example implies lack of kin and friend” and he fails to show the several languages he used to substantiate the assertion. See Iliffe, *The African Poor*, 7.
representation of poverty. Any understanding of wealth and poverty in the societies under consideration must consider the value systems of those societies. These value systems were not static, but in great flux during the second half of the nineteenth century. They affected how people viewed the acquisition and accumulation of material wealth and the resulting social differentiation and changing the political organization of the peoples in question.

Material wealth in luxury items, property in exchangeable agricultural and craft goods, in slaves, in access to the labour of pawns and other dependants, and in large amounts of money differentiated the rich from other members of their communities. But the lack of these did not necessarily indicate poverty. People existed in these societies who, though lacking in material riches, were able to meet the needs of their families and earn respect by the way they conducted their lives. Moreover, the growth of material wealth did not completely obliterate pre-existing social values which were slower to change.

Poverty was represented in different ways in the various polities and societies that were to come to make up Nigeria. Among the Yoruba, poverty was largely represented by the lack of the learned skills necessary for earning a living. This is well represented in Yoruba oral traditions that depicted the nadir of poverty as earning a living through such unskilled work as the gathering of dead wood branches for sale as firewood.37 Among the Igbo, poverty was represented by the lack of farmland. According to Uchendu, “to remind an Igbo that he is ori mgbe ahia loro ‘one who eats only what the market holds’ is

to humiliate him.\textsuperscript{38} This statement implied that the person not only owned no farmland but also had no family from which to inherit land. The absence of both family and land was evidence of lack of ties to the community. For other communities, poverty was depicted through reference to what was consumed as the staple food. Among the Edo, whose staple food crop was the yam, the eating of mashed plantain as a substitute was viewed with derision as a sign of poverty as expressed in the saying, \textit{obo omwan o ze, a ma ghi ri ema oghede}, meaning that “it is one’s handiwork (labour) that ensures that one does not eat mashed plantain.”\textsuperscript{39} Food type was also used as an indication of poverty among the Hausa whose nineteenth century poems depicted the dependence on wild roots and plants as staple foods as a manifestation of poverty.\textsuperscript{40} Poverty was also represented as hunger as was underlined by the Edo saying, \textit{ohanmwen gha la rin, use rie}, that translates as “when hunger is vanquished, poverty disappears.” The issue of hunger was taken so seriously that among the Edo the deliberate destruction of growing farm crops was equated with, and treated as, attempted murder.

In some communities, the greatest manifestation of poverty was the pawning of one’s self or wife. A resort to such pawning was an indication of the lack of family support or community goodwill Among the Edo this practice was deemed shameful and demeaning, while the pawning of one’s wife was frowned upon among the Yoruba, and any form of pawning was derided among the Nupe.\textsuperscript{41} Among the largely Islamized

\textsuperscript{38}Quoted in Adiele Afigbo, “Economic Foundations of Pre-Colonial Igbo Society” I.A. Akinjogbin and S. O. Osoba (ed.) \textit{Topics on Nigerian Economic and Social History}, 2.
\textsuperscript{39} Emwinma Ogie, \textit{Edo Culture: Modern Essays, Vol.1}, Lagos, Department of African Languages, University of Lagos, 1974, 41.
Hausa and Kanuri in the savanna areas, Islam discouraged interest on loans and since pawning was considered as interest on loan, pawning as means of raising money was little practiced.\footnote{The rich used their slaves as pledge to obtain loans. Margaret Smith, \textit{Baba of Karo: A Woman of Muslim Hausa}, New York, Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1964, 105.} Instead the poor begged. In these societies Islam stipulated conditions under which people could beg for alms,\footnote{Begging was permissible only on three conditions namely indebtedness until debt is fully paid, damage of property by natural disaster and really poor and needy with three witnesses to attest to need. Arnakim Yulvadi “Managing Debts: An Islamic Way” \url{http://islamic-world.net/economics/managing_debts.htm}} and enjoined its adherents to “treat not the orphan harshly … and repulse not the beggar.”\footnote{“The Glorious Morning Light” Sura 93:10, \textit{The Holy Quran} (translated Abdullah Yusuf Ali) Distributed by Canada Dawah Centre, Mississauga, ON, Canada, 2007, 433.} This injunction was taken advantage of by some who took up begging as a primary means of earning an income. Although it is not clear if this was the case in the nineteenth century, Cohen has shown that begging among the Hausa in the colonial and post-colonial period was an organized and lucrative profession.\footnote{Abnen Cohen, \textit{Custom and Politics in Urban Africa: A study of Hausa Migrants in Yoruba towns}, London, Routledge, 2003, 40-45.} Also begging was ingrained in the Islamic educational system that encouraged pupils and teachers to practice asceticism and depend on charity for their upkeep. Such begging was not necessarily an indication of poverty.

Iliffe uses the lack of access to labour as one criterion for poverty. Though such a lack of access could be critical to the production of sufficient food for the family or household, the lack of ownership or direct control of the labour of others did not necessarily mean a lack of access to its use. Reciprocal communal labour, age-grade group assistance, apprenticeship and child fostering, made it possible for many to enter into various arrangements to enhance their productivity. An arguably better indicator and cause of poverty, and one only tangentially touched on by Iliffe, was social ostracism that
made access to such labour resources impossible. In such cases poverty was the result of
the lack of goodwill in the community and can be defined as the inability to participate in
community affairs.

Poverty as manifested by hunger was more common in the Sahel which was
susceptible to ecological problems, and in northern Igbo land where increasing land
fragmentation caused food shortages. In both areas, itinerant or migrant wage labour was
adopted to cope with these problems. In other communities, such as the Edo of the
rainforest, which neither underwent large-scale civil conflicts nor suffered from
ecological or demographic problems, it was observed by Northcote Thomas in the 1900s
that, “as a rule, malnutrition is rare; but occasionally, as is in the Ora country, there is a
lack of food owing to sheer laziness.”46 What Thomas failed to realize was that there was
widespread insecurity in the Ora area and a large influx of population of rubber gatherers
and timber prospectors following the establishment of British rule that put pressure on
food supplies.47 Previously, the lack of food had been an abnormality.

In general, much of Iliffe’s evidence for ubiquitous poverty is open to question.
Poverty certainly existed in pre-colonial Nigeria, but it was not as widespread as Iliffe
seems to believe. However, where it did exist, measures and institutions also existed to
mitigate its effects.

47 National Archives, Ibadan, BD 13/2, Political and Administrative reports relating to Benin Affairs 1900-
1911.
Aspects of Social Welfare Practices in Pre-Colonial Nigeria

Iliffe minimizes the role of the state and non-state agencies in preventing poverty and providing welfare. Iliffe’s neglect of the role of the state might be due to the relative absence of bureaucratic institutions charged solely with social welfare. One general attribute of the pre-modern state in Africa was the concentration of political power at the centre, while the lineage, clan, and community regulated social life. It was not unusual for the central authority in the capital of a polity to allow a large measure of autonomy to the provincial or rural communities as long as they continued to pay taxes, tribute, and sent levies as evidence of loyalty.

As a consequence, an individual’s relationship with the state was in most cases mediated by the family or household, lineage, clan, or community. In the Benin Kingdom the odionwere, the oldest male/village head, presided over village meetings of heads of families in his capacity as the representative of the Oba and acted on the Oba’s behalf with little reference to the capital except on issues of capital punishment, defense and relations with foreigners. Among the Igbo and the Yoruba, the lineage/kin group was also the unit of mediation with the state and the basis of political solidarity and conflict in the polity with little reference to central authority. Fadipe made the point clearly in 1939 that here, “the extended-family must be considered the smallest unit of the state”. The importance of the family as a unit of the polity was clearly demonstrated amongst the segmented and decentralized Igbo amongst whom Northcote Thomas found in 1912 that “each sept had its head, and there was sometimes a recognized head of a quarter or even
of a town.” Such family representation in village administration does not seem to have obtained in the Muslim Emirates, but the family still remained the unit for the performance of some civic responsibilities. For instance, an annual tax was levied on heads of families in Katsina and in most other Emirates and the family was the basis for the organization of communal labour for the state. It is in this light that the family, as a subunit of the lineage, can be seen as an extension of the state in pre-colonial Nigerian polities. That the family constituted the basis of allocation of communal land in some communities and polities further validates the view of the family as an extension of the state in pre-colonial Nigeria. Iliffe is correct in his stressing of the importance of the family, but in failing to understand the organic linkage of the family and the state in pre-colonial Africa he misunderstands the unity of the former and the latter.

A major institution used by the state in promoting social welfare in Islam is zakat, a compulsory tax of a tenth of the income or harvest of a Muslim sanctioned by the Koran to help cater for the needy, wayfarers, and descendants of the Prophet. But, according to Holger Weiss, since the reign of the first four Caliphs zakat has not been practiced in the Muslim world as prescribed. Historians of the Sokoto Caliphate are not agreed on the state of Islamic practices in the Caliphate after the death of the early nineteenth century Jihad leaders. While some take a romantic view, asserting the Caliphate’s strict adherence to Islamic principles before colonial rule, others argue that

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after the death of the Jihad leaders, their successors cared more for worldly riches than the welfare of the Muslim poor. Iliffe argues that there was little state promotion of religiously sanctioned welfare like zakat and wafq (charitable endowments) in the Islamic states of Sokoto and Borno. Iliffe notes the existence of zakat in the Sokoto Caliphate, but maintains that its major use was for the provision of the royal household. According to Weiss, Sokoto was no exception to the non-adherence to the prescribed practice of zakat. Weiss has found little record of the distribution of zakat to the poor. However, instances of famine relief given to some communities in Kano under Emirs Abdullahi in 1855 and 1878 and Bello in 1892-3 may have been derived from zakat.

If the expenditure of zakat in the Caliphate is mired in controversy, grain reserves, possibly arising from zakat, collected by the Sarkin Noma, the chief farmer who was in charge of communal labour mobilized for agricultural production on officials’ village farms, seem to have existed at least in most villages. It has been claimed that these grain reserves were distributed to those in need during periods of crisis. However, this

56 Iliffe, op.cit., 42
57 Iliffe, op.cit., 45.

claim has also been challenged by more recent studies, particularly in the case of metropolitan Sokoto area, which allege that successors to the jihad leaders sold such reserves in the desert-side trade for high returns. This may indicate that there was no uniform policy in the Caliphate or that policies may have changed over time.

Both *waqf* and *zakat* are known to have existed in Borno. Mai Idris Alooma (1569-1600) is recorded to have bought a hostel in Cairo for Borno pilgrims and students and *mahrams*, letters of exemption from state obligations or access to properties and charity as reward for religious duties, are also known to have been instituted. *Zakat* was collected in the 19th century on behalf of the *Shehus*, the rulers of Borno, who were said to,

… expend a large portion of the revenue on the maintenance of the military; alms to wayfarers (e.g. pilgrims), the Ulama, (Scholars) the Misakin, orphans and other needy persons: as well as in offering hospitality to guests like merchants and the itinerant “sheriff” of North Africa, seeking gifts on the basis of their claims of direct descent from the Prophet.

All these uses fall within the Koranic prescriptions for the use of *zakat*. Benisheikh maintains that the Borno “government incurred no expenditure on public works” and that public welfare work including the construction of “*Jami* (inns for itinerant beggars like the blind) and the like were, at least outside the capital, always carried out through communal efforts” rather than through state efforts. Benisheikh’s distinction between

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the state and community public welfare works is questionable as such works outside the
capital can be viewed as local level state activity.

In addition to the zakat and wafq, sadaka, alms giving sanctioned by the Koran,
tended to be widely practiced by rulers. A number of the heads of Muslim states were
renowned for their generosity towards the poor. Sultan Aliyu Baba of Sokoto (1842-
1859) is remembered as “beloved by the people, beneficent to them… No one could talk
him into action against a poor wretch,” while Emir Mohammed Bello 1882-1893 was
also reported to be pious and generous.67 The classification by Iliffe of sadaka as
personal rather than official charity is problematic because of the difficulty in
differentiating between the state and personal revenue of officeholders. For example, the
funds expended on sadaka might well have been derived from the collection of zakat. In
general, the informality and non-bureaucratization of the disbursement of charity
confounds attempts to establish the level of state involvement in social welfare in the pre-
colonial Muslim societies in Nigeria.

In the non-Islamized societies of pre-colonial Nigeria where indigenous religious
practices and worldviews prevailed, misfortunes, including poverty, often were not
viewed as chance occurrences but believed to be caused by personal failings or spiritual
forces.68 The ancestors of particular families were key figures in such belief systems and
the family was the mediator between the individual and these ancestors. The ancestors
punished the family for not assisting the individual member and vice versa. This made

traditions, London, Oxford University Press, 1966, 403 and Adamu Fika, The Kano Civil War and British
68 Ogbu Kalu, “Poverty and its Alleviation in Colonial Nigeria” Adebayo Oyebade (ed.) The Foundations of
Nigeria: Essays in honor of Toyin Falola. 4 Trenton, NJ, Africa World Press, 2002, 433 and Olusegun
Oladipo, “Rethinking Yoruba Worldview and Ideals of life” in Olusegun Oladipo, (ed.) The third way in
the family and kin group, in addition to being a unit of the state and the basis of political mediation/representation in the community, critical to the life of the individual and the first to be called upon for assistance when misfortune befell an individual member.

Rather than the absence of the state institutions argued by Iliffe, it was this critical role of the family in religious life that accounted for its involvement in social welfare. Only when family efforts were inadequate were wider community resources, as an organ of the state, called upon for assistance.

The involvement of the state in non-Muslim polities took various forms. Some states, like Benin, were involved in social welfare without establishing specialized institutions. Iliffe notes the role of the state in Benin, but misrepresents it. The daily procession of people holding “whips” and carrying food to Benin City, reported by early European visitors, is misinterpreted by Iliffe as a practice of distributing food to the poor.69 This was no royal charity, as Iliffe claims, but the daily procession of the Izagban N’Oka guild that brought the food needed by the royal palace from the royal farms at Ugbekun and Oka.70 However the Benin state did play a role in social welfare entailing, among other activities, the prerogative of royal care for one or two of the children of every multiple birth in the kingdom. Likewise, dwarfs and people with physical disabilities were taken into the service in the royal palace and given functions suited to their abilities in exchange for their upkeep.71 A similar practice existed in old Oyo where Johnson reported that “dwarfs, albinos, hunchbacks and any other in whose persons

71 Henry Ling Roth, Great Benin: Its Customs, Art and Horrors, Halifax, F.King & Sons Ltd, 1903, 74.
appear any signs of *lusus naturae* ... being considered unnatural were the king’s peculiar property."\(^72\)

Another aspect of state involvement was that of ensuring the welfare and prosperity of the whole community. This was expected to be undertaken by the heads of polities whose authority was partly derived from their supposed spiritual or religious powers to intercede on behalf of the community with a Supreme Being, and other gods or deities. A major function of the Alafin in Oyo was the performance of rituals that ensured prosperity through a favourable climate for agricultural production and the warding off of epidemics and pestilence. His failure in this regard could force the Oyo-mesi (king makers) to sentence him to commit suicide.\(^73\) A similar fate could befall the Aku Uka of the Jukun of the central Nigeria area, but not the Oba of Benin although he had similar functions. In cases of epidemic outbreak, the royal palace was obliged to provide medicine men to ward off the epidemic.\(^74\) Similar ritual means were used to address climatic problems that could affect agricultural production.\(^75\)

In the Emirates of Northern Nigeria, climatic problems of drought were similarly tackled with prayers by the *Ulama* who were generously paid by the Emirs for this service. Some scholars have described this as a “prayer economy.”\(^76\) The efficacy or otherwise of such actions notwithstanding, they demonstrate the seriousness with which


\(^{74}\) During a small pox epidemic in the early Colonial period, Oba Eweka II (1914-133) sent medicine men to the communities to perform the necessary rituals to ward off the epidemic, but the medicine men were detained by the British Officers and prohibited from performing their ritual assignment. See National Archives, Ibadan, File BP 370/1916 Small Pox: Reported outbreak

\(^{75}\) There existed different rituals for excessive rains and sunshine which affected agricultural production.

\(^{76}\) Weiss, Obligatory Alms giving, *op. cit.*, 55-6.
states took the social welfare of their subjects. Further evidence of such concern is provided by the Owa of Ijesha, who is reported to have gauged the prosperity of his subjects by counting the number of nursing mothers on market days.\(^{77}\)

Other structures linked to the state were involved in performing social welfare. In Benin, the organization of wards, villages, and towns revolved around three tiered age grades (elders, seniors, and juniors) known as *otu*, which were used by the ward or village community to care for the welfare needs of its individual members. An indisposed person or the victim of some mishap was supported through communal contributions of food, medicine, and labour for the person’s farm or repairs of his house. In the village communities of Benin the building of an individual member’s house was the responsibility of the village community while the individual provided food and drink for the working group.\(^{78}\) Johnson noted that, among the Oyo Yoruba, building as a profession was “almost unknown, [because] houses as a rule are built by men clubbing together.”\(^{79}\) In eastern Yoruba land, where age grade organizations were arms of the state, these performed various duties communally for their individual members.\(^{80}\) Such age grades also featured prominently in the socio-political organization of the Igbo and functioned as extra-family sources of individual welfare.

Lineages formed an effective arm of state administration and performed welfare functions among some Yoruba and Igbo. Among the Yoruba of Ibadan, the lineage

\(^{79}\) Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas*, 123.
formed the basis of access to land as well as settlement in the community.\textsuperscript{81} Among the Igbo of Nnobi area, Amaduime attributes welfare functions to the lineage that assisted its members who suffered misfortune or had become ogbenye.\textsuperscript{82} Ogbenye, a term used to refer to the poor among the Igbo, is, according to Ogbunwezeh, derived from the phrase “Onye Ogbe na enye ihe” meaning “someone [to whom] the whole neighbourhood (lineage members live in same neighborhood) gives” or “someone who subsists on the charity of the whole community.” He added that the ogbenye’s neighbors or lineage even went to the length of contributing money to enable him to marry.\textsuperscript{83}

Professional associations also performed welfare functions. Though their purpose was the administration and protection of practitioners of crafts, trades or services, they were often strongly linked to the state. State patronage in Benin and Bida ensured the profitability of their craftsmen\textsuperscript{84} and in some places some craft associations were granted monopoly rights. Associations in Bida provided credit to their members and helped insure them against impoverishment. Some associations organized savings through esusu (Yoruba) or adashi (Hausa) from which contributing members who suffered misfortune could draw assistance in form of loans.

Another possible resource that could be accessed by those in need was the assistance of the wealthy. The social and religious ethics of many communities frowned

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on miserliness and selfishness while celebrating generosity and gift giving. Islam enjoined alms giving, while in non-Muslim societies prevailing ethics encouraged helping of those in need. Evidence is provided by various proverbs and songs used to shame the selfish. Kanu Uku, who noted these practices among his Aro-Igbo, claimed that,

\[\ldots\text{a man might earn respect by his ability to make a good bargain and to grow wealthy, but if his generosity did not correspond to his wealth his prestige [would] suffer(s). Generosity manifested itself most commonly in the habits of the people. It was unheard of for anyone to sit down to a meal alone, or for a meal to be shared by only members of one family\ldots}\]

This was typical of the prevailing attitude that it was more blessed to give than to receive…

Fadipe noted a similar attitude existing among the Yoruba:

Habitual stinginess is recognized as an almost fatal weakness, and it is met with strong social disapproval especially in the case of the well-to-do. Hospitality is expected from men of position and from one older than oneself. This is why stinginess is a fatal disqualification for candidates to the throne or other subordinate positions in state, or even in the headship of families or compounds.

Selfishness was also deplored among the Edo and their history recalls that Oba Ahenkpaye was deposed in the late seventeenth century for this vice.

Although the generosity of the rich was a cherished virtue, it was recognized that the rich could also exploit their generosity to further enrich themselves. The rich gave loans to those desperately in need who provided labour of their dependents or themselves as security. Such pawning was one of the last resorts for those in need. In spite of the moral odium associated with it in some societies, it assisted the needy in gaining access

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to resources. But it was also used as an institution for the training and correction of children and youths who were feared to be drifting towards laziness and delinquency. In the early part of the twentieth century Francis Adeyanju of Itapa Ekiti claimed that he was given out as a pawn for the loan of ten shillings, out of which eight shillings were paid and a debt of two shillings left unpaid, for nine years, six months and seventeen days “so that I could be trained to be hardworking.” Pawning was mostly resorted to by people who had children or other dependents whose labour could be temporarily dispensed with. Where these were absent, the last resort was self-pawning, viewed in some societies as the nadir of poverty, from which it was difficult to extricate oneself.

The example of the pawning of Francis Adeyanju raises the issues of youthful laziness, delinquency and crime that were not only capable of causing future poverty for the individual but of bringing stigma to his or her family. One response to these problems was the indigenous education system that, though largely informal, was used to teach the virtues of hard work, morality and the values of the community and to prepare children for membership and participation in its affairs. In theory, the whole community was involved in the education and upbringing of children and youths and no child was excluded. In the impartation of specialized skills and knowledge pertaining to crafts and divination services that involved some form of formal training, apprenticeship and initiation fees often were required. Such specialized skills were acquired either at the directive of parents or the child’s volition and their cost of acquisition was generally easily affordable.

Various means were used for handling children who drifted away from societal norms and values to check their descent into delinquency and criminality. Such children could be sent to live with more distant relations or other community members,\(^91\) who might be less constrained by affection than parents in enforcing discipline. In Muslim polities such children could be sent to live with mallams (teachers of Islamic knowledge) who might reside distant from the home. In Benin, children were in some cases sent to the Oba’s or Ogie’s palaces to imbibe strict discipline, provide services\(^92\) and where they might gain access to political patronage.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, in both war ravaged Yoruba land and in areas where trade induced agricultural production expansion, insecurity arising from wars and slave raids placed great pressure on the societies affected. In Yoruba land the family, lineage and the state became increasingly inadequate sources of security and welfare and people began to turn to warlords and other powerful persons to provide them with protection and welfare.\(^93\) The treatment of slaves became less humane with decreasing prospects of manumission as they were overworked in the new plantations, denied access to land in land short areas, and increasingly used for ritual sacrifices.\(^94\) Such deteriorating conditions led to slave revolts, especially in the coastal areas, and


\(^{92}\) National Archives, Ibadan File BP 122/1932 The Igban Custom-see Resident, Benin Province to Secretary, Southern Provinces, 24 September 1932


flight to the colonial enclave of Lagos. Some of these runaways and others made destitute by warfare were able to find security in the new economy that was developing and avail themselves of the social welfare that came with European Christian missionaries.

Additional social welfare practices and institutions began to be established with the coming of returnee freed slaves following abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the arrival of Christian missionaries, and gradual colonization of the coastal areas. The attempts to attract European armed support by adversaries in the wars in Yoruba land and the attempts of trading houses in the Niger delta area to expand their share of the trade with Europeans combined to facilitate the advance of Christian missionaries. The latter used the provision of rudimentary formal education and amateur medical services to attract potential converts. They directed these services at the most vulnerable, particularly the destitute and slaves\textsuperscript{95} who, on occasion, missionaries bought for purposes of conversion\textsuperscript{96} and to demonstrate their achievements to their European supporters. Gradually, schools, in particular, became a greater source of attraction as literacy became an advantage in trade with and employment by Europeans. However, such new opportunities were restricted to a few areas and most continued to depend on indigenous forms of welfare provision.

Indigenous social welfare services and institutions did not exist uniformly among all Nigerian peoples in pre-colonial times, but where they did it usually took some serious personal breach of societal or cultural norms for one to suffer the social exclusion that might lead to unmitigated poverty. Thus, the causes of poverty must be sought not only in

the material relations of production, but also in culture. As Kalu has stated, “the point of loss of access to land and labour as well as attitude towards categories of people who suffered these losses was embedded in social norms and worldview.”  

Religion, Culture and Social Exclusion

John Peel and Ogbu Kalu have criticized Iliffe’s use of sources with regard to the Yoruba and the Igbo respectively. Iliffe’s equation of certain religious practices of the Yoruba with indigenous practices of begging, charity and asceticism arising from poverty, has been shown by Peel as an uncritical reproduction of European Christian missionary-inspired misinterpretation of these practices. Kalu has shown Iliffe’s lack of both historical and cultural understanding of the Igbo who constituted a major aspect of Iliffe’s study of poverty in pre-colonial Africa.

As already indicated, the peoples inhabiting what would become Nigeria had a variety of spiritual and religious practices in the late nineteenth century, including Christianity and Islam. However, the pre-existing and dominant religions in the large areas outside the Sahel-savanna belt were indigenous African forms of belief and practice. Many of these were characterized by belief in a Supreme Being, with other deities, ancestors, spirits, and the like simultaneously at play in human affairs. It was commonly believed that such lesser spirit-beings could be manipulated or appeased to serve one’s end of gaining divine favour or forgiveness for evil acts. Indigenous religions also included beliefs in predestination and reincarnation, which played their own role in shaping individual and social practices.

In general, indigenous religions did not valorize poverty, as did some tendencies in Christianity and Islam. Rather, they emphasized ritual sacrifice to extirpate sins, redress misfortune or achieve desired objectives. It was this aspect of sacrifice that at times prescribed begging as expiation or public prayer to which other adherents would respond with gifts. Christian missionaries misconstrued such practices among the Yoruba as begging resulting from poverty. Iliffe, uncritically accepting these misrepresentations, reproduces them as evidence of poverty.98

Poverty, in indigenous belief systems, often was viewed as punishment for one’s actions in present or past existences. Thus it was believed that poverty could be removed through the propitiation and appeasement of the appropriate spiritual agency. Wealth could also be viewed as an outcome of religious practice. In Benin, wealth was associated with Olokun, the sea god and divinity of prosperity, who worshippers sought to propitiate to help them achieve prosperity measured in children and material riches.99 Among the Yoruba, there existed rituals believed to make people rich or to sustain their riches.100 The Igbinokpabi oracle or “Long Juju” of the Aro Igbo was even converted from a justice dispensing deity into an avenue of self-enrichment through the transformation of sacrificial victims into slaves for export.101

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Indigenous religions and culture contained practices that created social exclusion. The form of such social exclusion very much depended on the status and circumstance of the individual concerned. For instance, indigenous African religions were ambivalent towards slavery. Slavery was practiced in most communities and polities and while some societies socially integrated slaves, others did not. Although a few slaves held political offices in some polities and exploited their positions to expropriate the labour and surplus of free peasants\textsuperscript{102} and accumulate wealth, these were exceptional cases that were open to only a lucky few. In general, slaves could only have access to use of land through their masters, while the ownership and use of produce from such land depended on the particular relations between master and slave. Instances of the sharing of the proceeds of slave labour with a master as rent payment for land were known in Calabar and Yola, while obligatory gifts are known to have been given by slaves to their masters during festivals and ceremonies in Zaria Emirate.\textsuperscript{103} Such practices helped to keep slaves in poverty and make their self-manumission, where this was possible, more difficult.

In land short Igboland, and especially in the densely populated northern Igboland, an extreme form of slave social exclusion was practiced through the institution of \textit{osu/ohu}. These were slaves whose owners offered them to priests as a ritual sacrifice or free individuals who sought this status as a refuge from punishment for violating social taboos. They became part of an excluded hereditary caste\textsuperscript{104} of ritual slaves whom society owed no social obligation and were subjected to exploitation by the priests.

\textsuperscript{102} Chafe, \textit{State and Economy in the Sokoto Caliphate}, 174.
\textsuperscript{104} Their persons were sacred and taboo and contact with free members of the society was restricted or controlled. Sylvia Leith-Ross, “Notes on the Osu System among the Ibo of Owerri Province, Nigeria” \textit{Africa: Journal of the Institute of African Languages and Culture}, Vol. X, No 2, 1937 and Carolyn Brown
The violation of the taboos and the occurrences of events that were believed to cause spiritual harm was a basis of social exclusion in many communities. In some, certain natural occurring, but odiously regarded oddities, were considered to be caused by the sins of individuals or their families. In some cases, it was believed that these sins could be expiated by customary practices that either eliminated the oddity or the medium deemed to have brought the oddity into being. Among the Efik, Ibibio, Igbo, Ijaw, and other groups in the Niger delta, such odiously regarded oddities included infants from multiple births and babies born with teeth. Some of the Yoruba also abhorred multiple births. Such infants were killed or abandoned to die, while their parents might be banished. In some Yoruba groups infants whose mothers died during childbirth also were abandoned as they were believed to be carriers of ill-fortune and responsible for the deaths of their mothers.  

105 Suspected witches, murderers, and habitual thieves, when spared the death penalty for crimes that could not be expiated by purification rituals or restitution, were often banished or denied all forms of social contact and security. Among the Rukuba of plateau area of central Nigeria and Esan of Benin Kingdom, such convicts were sold into slavery.  

106 In the Sokoto Caliphate, residues of pre-Islamic indigenous religious beliefs and practices persisted among the Hausa, Nupe and others. According to


Baba of Karo, among the Hausa, people who were believed to practice witchcraft were ostracized and socially excluded.107

In many communities social exclusion was also the fate of those suffering from such socially deemed loathsome diseases as leprosy, epilepsy and insanity. In some cases, both they and their family members were denied marriage because of a belief in the hereditary nature of these maladies. This had the consequence of loss of access to labour and increased the odds of already vulnerable victims of such diseases falling into poverty.

The existence of unmarried adult males in some Igbo communities in the early twentieth century has been cited by Iliffe as evidence of poverty and poor they may have been. However, their poverty and unwed state may well have been the result of the social exclusion attendant upon disease or spiritually based ostracism rather than material causes. Such victims of social exclusion provided potential converts for the European Christian missionaries who, in ministering to them, established the beginnings of social welfare services in the orphanages and schools they established in the late nineteenth century.

CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes that while many people in pre-colonial Nigeria were vulnerable to poverty, Iliffe’s claim, in so far as it pertains to the peoples of pre-colonial Nigeria, that “most Africans at most times” were poor is at least open to question. Moreover, the evidence suggests that much of what Iliffe characterizes as the structural poverty was the result of breaches of societal norms and values as well as religio-cultural induced social exclusion of people who suffered from dreaded diseases and taboos or

107 Smith, Baba of Karo, 155.
were enslaved. These conditions often led to loss of the ability of those affected to access social resources to mitigate their condition. Such resources were not solely embodied in the family, at least not the family in any simple sense, as Iliffe seems to claim. Rather, these were lodged in a continuum of social rights and obligations in which no clear-cut separation existed between family, clan, lineage, occupational organizations, and larger political formations, including states. The possibility of exclusion from these social networks, particularly at moments of ecological or political crisis, was also crucial to the creation of what Iliffe calls conjunctural poverty. The characterization of societies, including those of pre-colonial Nigeria, as land-rich and labour poor – or their opposites - while important, only takes the understanding of poverty so far. Access to land and labour are social phenomena and need to be understood as such.

By the late 19th century, changes in the relations between the societies of pre-colonial Nigeria and the world capitalist economy began to transform their social organization of production, the nature of poverty, and the existence and extent of the social resources available to mitigate it. These changes will be examined in the following chapter.
CHAPTER THREE

COLONIAL RE-ORGANIZATION, SOCIAL DISLOCATIONS, EXPLOITATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF POVERTY 1900-1939.

Unfortunately the British Government’s policy can rarely countenance any project unless it is likely to ‘pay,’ and so help European trade and revenue. The principal aim seems to be to produce as much material wealth as possible, and a more numerous and healthier population to carry on the good work.


Poverty, more pronounced and more obvious than when I first came to Nigeria, with an increase of affluence to the few. A life of comfort and well-being is impossible for the many.

Walter R. Miller, *Have We Failed in Nigeria?* 1947, 23

Introduction

The colonization of the polities that came to constitute Nigeria was undertaken by various British imperial agencies in a piecemeal manner through various means between 1851 and the early 1900s. This process gradually transformed the political, social and economic life of these polities and changed the social situation of their peoples. Iliffe is of the view that the colonial impact on poverty was one in which “continuity predominated. With rare exceptions, colonial Africa remained rich in land. Its very poor continued to be chiefly those who lacked labour and family support.”

In this chapter I argue that certain colonial policies and measures, employed to preserve society from feared disintegration and to increase productivity and the export trade,

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108 This involved the signing of treaties whose enforcement provided the pretext for subsequent invasion and conquest. The establishment of colonial administration came after brief battles which were decided by the Maxim gun and characterized by violence and brutalities on the part of the British forces. Most of Yoruba land entered into treaties and escaped the wars while the violence and brutalities were more severe in the decentralized societies of Eastern Nigeria and the central areas of Northern Nigeria. Obaro Ikime, *The fall of Nigeria: The British Conquest*, Ibadan, Heinmnan Educational Books Limited, 1977.

changed the nature of poverty in Nigeria while constraining the ability of pre-colonial societies to ameliorate poverty. A new form of poverty spread increasingly over time because colonial policies undermined the local economy and destroyed the self-sufficiency of the household economy, which formerly provided for the welfare needs of individual members.

The evidence for transformations of poverty is difficult to adduce because the Europeans (official and unofficial) viewed Africans as in a state of primitivism and savagery, custom bound, contented with their poor lot, and characterized by poverty and could only be improved through the intervention of Europeans. Consequently, there was neither interest in documenting poverty nor attempts at minimizing it before the late 1930s. It was usually argued that the African “tribe”, “clan” and family catered for the destitute. It was feared that the exposure of Africans to European values would disintegrate African society and create social problems - particularly unemployment and individualism - that would generate political unrest and undermine the colonial project. Thus, for much of the colonial period, administrators struggled to reconcile what they saw as the necessary preservation of African societies from disintegration with the growing extraction of African surplus labour and produce which was the material rationale for colonial rule. These policies had the unexpected, yet in retrospect predictable, effects of changing power relations, dislocating the pre-colonial economy, impoverishing people

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and creating unemployment, but without recognition for the need of state provision of social welfare.

One important but neglected issue with regard to poverty in colonial Africa is the changed role of indigenous political systems under colonial rule. The establishment and functioning of colonial rule in Nigeria required the existence of a stable political order facilitating the realization of British objectives of exploitation at minimal cost to the British taxpayers. This entailed the creation of a political system acceptable to both the British and to the successors of those overthrown rulers whose co-operation was crucial to the colonial project. This new political order changed power relations between the indigenous rulers, who mediated colonial rule, and their subject peoples. These changes exacerbated poverty. In order to see the relation between indirect rule and poverty, it is necessary to briefly discuss the background to the development of indirect rule.

As already indicated, the colonization of different parts of what was to become Nigeria was achieved at different times and in different ways. As a result, the policies and measures employed initially varied until they converged with the gradual amalgamation of the various conquests into a unified colonial Nigeria. The different styles and timing of colonization affected, and were reflected in, the policies of the administrations of the initially autonomous colonial territories of Lagos Colony and its hinterland Protectorate and the two Protectorates of Southern Nigeria and Northern Nigeria.

Important external influences on the nature of colonial rule in Nigeria arose from British imperial experiences in the colonization and administration of non-European peoples in India, the West Indies and the Pacific. As well, the state of flux of British politics during the period before and during the First World War left a mark of
indeterminacy on administrative polices in colonial Africa. Policies tended to change with the overriding interests of the party in power in Britain and the influence of particular civil servants in the Colonial Office as well as those of “the man on the spot.” Though some differences in administrative policy in the Lagos Colony and two Protectorates of Nigeria continued after their amalgamation in 1914, the objective of preservation of the African “tribal communities”, while simultaneously increasing their productive capacities for British exploitation, remained the same.

European perceptions of Africa were not completely uniform, but by the later nineteenth century, prevailing views were largely informed by cultural relativism and pseudo-scientific racism. These ideas were manifested in various forms and activities by groups that had interests in Africa. Christian missionaries were not free of such views and perceptions. Most missionaries agreed that Africa was in a state of disorder, savagery and poverty caused by slavery and the slave trade, which could only be changed through trade and Christianity. Some Christian missions drew a distinction between Christianity and Christian civilization, with the latter being only attainable by Africans with the assistance of European missionaries who would take up the “white man’s burden” of improving African moral and material life.

Christian missions had different approaches to the social conditions of African people. The Roman Catholic Church, which had been involved with Africa south of the Sahara since the fifteenth century, continued its charity in the nineteenth century by

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developing educational and health services for African slaves, children and the poor.\textsuperscript{115}

The Christian Missionary Society (CMS) of England had from its inception in the eighteenth century adopted the “Bible and Plough” ideology propagated by Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton to promote agricultural production as substitute for slave trading.\textsuperscript{116}

According to Taylor, the Presbyterians in Calabar viewed “vocational training as a panacea for poverty.”\textsuperscript{117} Though the missions were not all in agreement on the issue of colonization, many saw it as required to end wars caused by desire to acquire slaves and to end the accompanying anarchy that obstructed the expansion of trade in Africa and its civilizing effects. The imperial administrator Lugard, arguing that colonialism could be both altruistic and self-serving, was to later rationalize a version of this view in his characterization of the “dual mandate” for a colonialism that benefited both Britain and Africa.\textsuperscript{118}

With colonization, the problem became one of finding the immediate and best way of establishing a form of colonial administration necessary for realizing the various objectives of officials and Christian missionary agencies. This problem was compounded by the instability of British politics. At the turn of the century, when the various colonial administrations were being established, Joseph Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, initiated a policy of “developing the undeveloped estate.”\textsuperscript{119} The major

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\textsuperscript{119} According to Chamberlain, Britain was in the tropics to “develop it as trustees of civilization for the commerce of the world” Quoted in Lugard, \textit{The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa}, 60.
\end{flushleft}
concern of Chamberlain was the creation of a more efficient system for the exploitation of the resources of British colonial Africa through investment of state capital in the development of infrastructure and the establishment of a concession system that would attract European capital investment and that would ultimately benefit production and employment in Britain. It was the task of the colonial officials to translate this vision into reality.

According to Lugard, colonial administrators “had no fixed regulations or Colonial Office experience of any kind behind them and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain had trusted the ‘man on the spot’.”\(^{120}\) These administrators had to establish workable systems of administration that would facilitate the realization of Chamberlain’s policy of “developing the undeveloped estates”.\(^{121}\)

In Lagos and its hinterland Protectorate Governor McCallum and his successor McGregor relied on the indigenous rulers for administration while struggling to eliminate their control of toll collection and systems of justice. In addition, the administration had to continuously contend with the local educated elite’s demands for adherence to the treaties entered into with Yoruba Obas as independent sovereigns. As a result, the Lagos


\(^{121}\) Prior to the establishment of colonial rule over most of Nigeria, George T. Goldie, of the Royal Niger Company, and Mary Kingsley had in the 1890s advocated administration of African colonial territories by experienced European merchants with the support of native rulers based on “native principles” in order to reduce waste of British taxpayers money and European lives. Captain (later Lord) Frederick Lugard had campaigned for administration through native chiefs known as indirect rule. But Joseph Chamberlain (Secretary of State for Colonies 1895-1903) wished to have combined administration through native rulers and crown colonies within his policy of “developing the (African) estates.” The result was the evolution of indirect rule system of administration. Their beginnings differed in the three territories. But there were other forces at work in both the triumph and modification of indirect rule system that had important consequences for social change in those affected African societies. For details see Mary Kingsley, *West African Studies*, 310, Anthony Nwabughuogu, “The role of propaganda in the development of indirect rule in Nigeria 1890-1929” *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 14, No 1, 1981, 69-71 and 79-83.
Colony administration had to negotiate new judicial agreements to establish courts of colonial jurisdiction in the hinterlands between 1904 and 1908. These paved the way for the establishment of Native Courts consisting of selected chiefs whose decisions were subject to the review and approval of British officers. These agreements “struck a decisive blow against the sovereignty of the Yoruba states.” Only Abeokuta continued to maintain its independence until 1914 when Lugard smashed it.

In the Sokoto Caliphate the authority of the Emirs was upheld and even extended to many formerly independent non-Muslim polities. In the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, a system of House Rule was implemented that bonded slaves and communities to their House Heads and Chiefs, who approved the former’s employment contracts and shared in their proceeds. These House Heads and Chiefs were constituted into Native Councils which also served as Native Courts. This House system, which had been unique to the Niger Delta trading states, was extended to Benin and elsewhere in Southern Nigeria. The maintenance and, at times, extension of the powers of indigenous rulers was introduced to provide order and stability to the administration and used as a means to preserve the communities from radical change. At the same time, these policies were also intended to ensure profitable operations for European merchant capital and generate revenue for the administration.

The administrative consolidation necessary for the realization of Chamberlain’s policy was soon frustrated by a combination of the Hut Tax War of 1898 in Sierra Leone,

123 House Rule was derived from a system of organization of most groups in the Niger Delta which were organized like corporations around a head, family members and integrated slaves who pooled resources together for purposes of trading with the Europeans. These houses also formed the basis of political representation in the communities which were in some cases City States. Tekena Tamuno, “Native House Rule of Southern Nigeria” *Nigeria Magazine*, No.93, June 1967.
protests by the Aborigines Protection Societies in Gold Coast and Lagos, and the Anglo-
Boer War. These developments became weapons which the opposing Liberal Party
deployed to criticize and defeat Chamberlain’s vision. Even before these events,
Chamberlain’s programme had met opposition from the Colonial Office which, fearing
that the Treasury would not approve funding of colonial capital projects, employed a
policy of financial self sufficiency towards the colonies124 thereby frustrating the
realization of Chamberlain’s programme.

The Liberal Party and its allies among the merchant capitalists had a different
vision for the colonies, one that was to leave the development of trade to the merchants
and colonized people with little or no state interference. The Colonial Office’s continued
adherence to a stringent policy of colonial financial self-sufficiency left colonial
administrators with the task of maintaining law and order in the colony and protectorates
without cost to the British tax payer. Colonization was to be funded by the colonized
themselves. This meant that administrators had to find means of expanding trade in order
to generate the direct and indirect tax revenue necessary to sustain their administration.125

Financial constraints, concomitant personnel shortages and the desire to preserve
the pre-colonial social order, all made the adoption of a policy of rule through pre-
existing rulers or their replacements expedient. Since British colonial objectives were
known to have been achieved in India and elsewhere through such a mode of
administration and were also being gradually achieved elsewhere in Africa through this
approach, it was subsequently adopted and came to be known as “indirect rule.”

124 John M. Carland, The Colonial Office and Nigeria, 1898-1914, Stanford, California, Hoover Institution
By the 1900s, the Lagos Colony and Protectorate and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria were buoyant enough to finance their administration and even subsidize the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria’s administration through indirect taxation of exports and imports. They had coastal ports which yielded larger custom duties that made direct taxation largely unnecessary in Lagos and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria.

The Protectorate of Northern Nigeria’s landlocked geographical location and its prohibition on imports of alcoholic beverages, an important source of revenue in the south, contributed to its financial insolvency and consequent dependence on grants-in-aid. Consequently, direct taxation was introduced early in the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria and came to form the basis of the Native Treasury. It was the existence of a Native Treasury which initially differentiated indirect rule in the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria from that in the Lagos Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. However, in other spheres of administration, both operated in similar ways with regard to the formulation and implementation of rules and laws, the establishment of courts and councils to settle disputes, and the mobilization of labor for officially sanctioned projects through the agency of indigenous rulers or, in decentralized societies, community “representatives”. It was this use of the indigenous rulers for administration by the colonial officials that was the essential aspect of indirect rule.

Under indirect rule actual power lay with the British officials who controlled and dictated to the indigenous ruler. According to Tibenerana, “It was the general policy of

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10. Only Benin as a conquered territory in Southern Nigeria was subjected to taxation where it was used to blackmail the communities to surrender. See National Archives, Ibadan, File CalProf. 8/2, II, Alfred Turner, Resident, Benin City Territories to Ralph Moor, Consul General, Niger Coast Protectorate, 01/04/1897.
British empire-builders in Africa to weaken the authority of the traditional rulers to achieve colonial control.”

However, it was the authority of traditional rulers in their relations with the British Officials and in some cases with former subordinate chiefs or councilors that was weakened and not their control over their subjects. In spite of the overriding power of European officials under indirect rule, the powers of the indigenous rulers over their subjects were greatly enhanced and made more authoritarian. According to Mamdani, under indirect rule “the authority of the chief thus fused in a single person all moments of power: judicial, legislative, executive, and administrative. This authority is like a clenched fist, necessary because the chief stood at the intersection of the market economy and the non-market one.”

However, contrary to Mamdani’s claim, chiefs had little real legislative or rule making power. Perham confirmed that “most native authorities are granted the power to make rules or bye-laws, but so far, except in Uganda, there has been little spontaneous development of this power” adding that “its absence is only partly due to the subordinate position of native societies: it also arises from the unfamiliarity of the African with the legislative process as we understand it.” While her observation was correct, the reasons she adduced for the chiefs’ failure to perform this function were not. In reality, British officials rarely allowed chiefs to exercise such powers. Henry Ward-Price, a former District Officer and Resident for over twenty years in Nigeria, attested that “It often

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128 Mahmood Mamdani, Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism Ibadan, PEFS, 2002, 23.
happens that chiefs are told that they must learn to manage their own affairs, but if they propose any measures of local administration which run counter to preconceived ideas of the white officer in local charge of them, they are almost invariably overruled.”

He further observed that,

The theory, held by some members of the ‘dominant race,’ that it is of no consequence what natives think or desire, because all they have to do is to obey our orders, does not conduce to administration of a high standard. The Nigerian Chiefs are, as a rule, too amenable; they rarely express their real views, if it would mean an argument with the Government. This results in a lack of healthy criticism by them of proposals emanating from higher authority.

In reality, chiefs mainly enforced rules or laws that British officials proposed in the pursuit of colonial objectives and rationalized as “custom.” In the Muslim Emirates of Northern Nigeria, Maliki law, favored by the Qadiriya sect of the Muslims ruling Northern Nigeria and purged of aspects unacceptable to British sensibilities was the counterpart of “customary law” in non-Muslim Nigeria.

A key aim of indirect rule was to exploit the ideological influence and power of indigenous rulers or chiefs over the colonized populace to ensure the legitimacy of the colonial administration. The indigenous rulers’ retention of office depended on unflinching loyalty and commitment to the colonial administration even at the expense of the rulers’ unpopularity with their subjects. This was reinforced by directives from Lugard to political officers to maintain the prestige of the chiefs whose position and authority were to be safeguarded at all cost. Thus indirect rule created a disconnection

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131 Ward-Price, Dark Subjects, 216-7.
133 “It is obviously desirable that Government should be called upon to as rarely as possible to intervene between the Chiefs and people, for if a native chief has lost prestige and influence to such a degree that he has to appeal to Government to enforce his orders, he becomes not merely useless but a source of weakness

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between the interests of indigenous rulers and those of their subjects in so far as the latter conflicted with colonial state interest. Consequently, indigenous rulers became ever more concerned with safeguarding their positions through authoritarian implementation of colonial directives with little regard to whether or not these compromised the welfare of their subjects. This resulted in a rift between state and society. Ekeh has characterized this situation, arguing that,

… the construction of the new colonial state avoided as much as possible controls imposed by societal constraints, including legislative processes. Consequently, the colonial state in Africa was in general separated from the values and morality of both the European societies from which these elements of state are imported, and on the African societies on which they are imposed.134

Indirect rule turned the indigenous rulers into tax collectors and suppliers of labor for the colonial state. Though developed out of expediency, indirect rule became the dogma of colonial administration. It was intended to minimize the destabilization of the pre-existing social order and prevent, or at least control, social change, while pursuing the colonial objectives of both state and merchant capital.

The colonial administration initially confirmed loyal rulers in office over large territories. This concentration of authority was widely practiced in the large centralized Emirates of Northern Nigeria and also in the Yoruba and Benin kingdoms. For instance the Alafin of Oyo’s authority was extended over a territory of about 14,831 square miles.135 This undermined the small polities and communities that had been formerly to the administration.” This does not of course mean that any community may by appealing to Government throw off its allegiance to its Chief, or that mere unpopularity, which may be due to the exercise of very necessary discipline, forms any ground for the deposition of a Chief.” Frederick J.D. Lugard, Political Memoranda: Revision of Instructions to Political Officers on Subjects Chiefly Political and Administrative, 1913-1918, Third Edition, London, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1970, Memo. No. IX, Part I, Section 6, 298-9.

independent. These were subordinated to the large polities despite the difficulties this created in establishing effective rule over dispersed communities and settlements. For instance, Benin Division, which occupied over 4000 square miles, had only four District and Native Courts before the 1920s. In most of the village communities of the Eastern Provinces, which had no pre-existing centralized systems of rule by chiefs, the administration grouped communities together for the purposes of establishing Native Councils and Courts. The Native Councils and Courts were run by handpicked people who were appointed as Warrant Chiefs.\textsuperscript{136}

The subordination of groups to new political authorities, along with changes in power relations, worsened the exploitation of such groups and created conflict. After the amalgamation of the Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914, Lugard extended the Emirate model of indirect rule to the South, resulting in rebellions in Kwale, Abeokuta, and Iseyin/Okeiho between 1914 and 1917.\textsuperscript{137} A further extension of the Emirate model by Governor Graeme Thompson resulted in a widespread crisis in Warri Province and the Aba Women’s War of 1929 in Owerri and Calabar Provinces. These rebellions spurred anthropological studies aimed at establishing the “clan” and “tribe” as the basis of indirect rule administration.\textsuperscript{138} Such studies reinforced the official view of Africans as people to be preserved within tribal enclaves under chiefs or councils of

\textsuperscript{136}The communities out of misunderstanding and /or distrust in some cases put forward their social misfits to British officers who appointed and imposed them on the communities as Warrant Chiefs who constituted the Native Councils and Native Courts. Adiele E. Afigbo, \textit{The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect rule in Southeastern Nigeria, 1891-1929}, New York, Humanities Press, 1972, 74-76 and 256.

\textsuperscript{137}The subsequent resignation of Lugard in 1919 was to gradually lead to reforms manifested in changes in sizes and ethnic composition of the administrative units. This was started by Clifford who insisted on removing pagans from under Muslim rulers and basing administration on autonomous tribal units. His attempt to modify the application of emirate model in the South and reform it in the North was resisted by officials in the Colonial Office. See Harry A.Gailey, \textit{Clifford: Imperial Proconsul}, London, Rex Collins Ltd, 1982, 134-9.

\textsuperscript{138}Donald Cameron experiments with the tribal model in Tanganyika were partly derived from his experience of working earlier in Nigeria with Governor Clifford who had been advocate of the model.
chiefs who had control over all the resources of the tribe or community. The result was the straitjacketing of the people in tribal units and reinforcement of authoritarianism among chiefs who could exclude people from access to community resources. The exclusion from access to communal resources and or opportunities consequently set the excluded on the path to impoverishment.

Indirect rule administration, particularly the Emirate model, centered on a defined territory with a British official giving directives to the indigenous ruler or chief who, as sole Native Authority, presided over a Native Court and Native Treasury. The Native Treasury or *Biet el Maal*, which was to become one of the pillars of indirect rule, was used to convert the large share of taxes formerly due to chiefs or Emirs into state revenue, with the chiefs placed on salaries. In the Muslim emirates, even the *Zakat* was initially viewed as a tax whose collection was grudgingly initially allowed, but only on the condition that it would be shared with the colonial state. *Zakat* was later merged with the secular tax taken by the state and its separate collection prohibited.\(^{139}\) The loss of *Zakat* in the Muslim Emirates and loss of control over expenditure by chiefs in non-Muslim areas robbed local rulers of the power to initiate and engage in welfare services not sanctioned by the colonial state.

With the increasing divergence of interest between the rulers and subjects, the ideological influence of the indigenous rulers as a major prop of indirect rule administration became tenuous and necessitated an increased use of coercion to maintain law and order. Chiefs or indigenous rulers were allowed to retain their pre-colonial guards and messengers known as *dogarai* (Hausa) and *iranse/akoda/olopa* (Yoruba) to

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perform police duties. The absence of such pre-colonial forces of coercion in the village group organizations of the Eastern Provinces led some Warrant Chiefs, such as Chief Onyeama Onwusi of Eke, to establish private armies of spies and enforcers like the Ogwumili group to terrorize the people of the area into submission to his will.\(^\text{140}\)

However, most Warrant Chiefs had to depend on government police. These chiefs’ guards or enforcers were later retrained and re-organized as the Native Authority Police.\(^\text{141}\) They became an instrument of terror especially in the collection of taxes. In addition to the police, the Native Authorities in both the Northern and Western Provinces maintained prisons, some of which had evolved from pre-colonial lockups, to incarcerate suspects and those convicted by the Native Courts. With control over these powers of coercion, chiefs were able to exercise control over land, labor and taxation in such a manner, as will be later shown, as to contribute to impoverishment.

**Land Tenure and Re-organization of Labor**

Iliffe identifies landlessness amongst the young and, in a few areas, pressure on resources as causes of poverty in colonial Africa.\(^\text{142}\) However, there were other ways in which land and poverty intersected in colonial Africa that are overlooked by Iliffe. These were especially manifested in the changes in land tenure systems, which although they left land relatively accessible in theory, left people impoverished in practice. Such a situation was the result of colonial state intervention in the control and use of land and

\(^\text{140}\) Carolyn A. Brown “We were all Slaves”: African Miners, Culture and Resistance at the Enugu Government Colliery, Portsmouth, NH, Heinemann, 2003, 75.


\(^\text{142}\) Iliffe, The African Poor, 149-8 and 162.
labor. Since control of land and labor was critical to production of basic necessities of life and wealth creation, loss of control over access to them could and did lead to poverty. The loss of control over and access to resources, especially land, partly occurred through the actions of chiefs whose powers were further enhanced by vesting the control over land in them. This policy was the outcome of the interplay of the ideas of colonial officialdom, African agitation, and merchant capital’s interest in labor and land resources.

Initially, Chamberlain had directed colonial administrations to proclaim “unused” or “waste” lands as Crown Land for government use.\textsuperscript{143} Attempts to implement this policy in the Lagos Colony and Protectorate in 1897 and 1901 were opposed by some European traders and the educated elite who mobilized the chiefs against this government policy. They accused the government of planning to deprive the people of their land and the chiefs of their private property.\textsuperscript{144} The participation of the chiefs in these protests and their insistence on adherence to previous treaty provisions that specified government non-interference with land holding forced the government to modify its stance on the land issue. Consequently, the Land and Native Rights Proclamation was amended in 1902 to recognize the chiefs as “trustees” of their respective communities’ land. As such, their approval had to be obtained by the Governor before any dealings with land could take place.\textsuperscript{145} This amendment failed to recognize private property rights in land in spite of the increasing development of private interest and trading in land especially in Lagos, Ibadan and Onitsha. It was thus that chiefs came to acquire the primacy of place in the

\textsuperscript{145} Egboh, \textit{Forestry Policy in Nigeria, 1897-1960}, 41.
administration of land that became a critical element in the implementation of indirect rule.

In the Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria, however, where the western educated elite was insignificant in number and influence, and conquest and pacification were ongoing, the Crown Land policy was implemented without opposition. In Southern Nigeria, the Crown Land policy based on “right of conquest” was imposed on those Benin City territories conquered between 1897 and 1906. This was followed by the Native Land Acquisition Proclamation No.1 of 1901 that regulated acquisition of land and leases by aliens and “native foreigners” all over the Protectorate. The Proclamation was aimed largely at European firms which were demanding monopoly concessions and leases over rubber and timber forests especially in the Niger and Benin territories where such leases were already being granted by local chiefs. Such actions were oblivious of the fact that private property in land had already developed in some of the settlements on the Niger such as Onitsha. The accompanying Forestry Proclamation imposed license fees on native owners of forest land for collection of rubber or timber. Though some Lagos newspapers and European merchants did protest these proclamations, there was little opposition from the chiefs and people in the Protectorate.

High Commissioner Ralph Moor went further in enforcing this “communal” tenure system by instituting a ”Communal Plantation System” which was enshrined as a

section in the Forestry Proclamation. This legalized the establishment of communal plantations in parts of Southern Nigeria where members of communities were forced to establish and operate such plantations, the products of which were sold by the administration, which shared the proceeds with the “community.” The objective was not only to generate revenue and replenish those forest resources being destroyed by overexploitation, but more importantly, to discourage the development of private plantations, which would invariably lead to the establishment of private property in land. This is attested by Moor’s argument that he did not want “undue interference with native ideas of ownership and control of land” which in his view were, and had to be, “communal.”

Though the source of Moor’s idea’s about “community” is not clear, it might have been influenced by communitarian ideas that were popular in Britain in the later nineteenth century. This idea of community was a reaction to industrial capitalism, rugged individualism, and consequent poverty and destitution created through expropriation of land as private property. The community was expected to be characterized by shared identities and interest which would promote justice and equity

149 Rule XIII of the Proclamation stated that “Natives in receipt of Royalties under rule 15 shall establish and maintain nurseries for rearing rubber plants, and plant out such plants in such a manner and at such time and places as the Forestry officer may from time to time direct, provided that such natives shall not be bound to expend greater amounts for the purposes aforesaid than the sums received by them as royalties.” See details in National Archives Ibadan, CSO 1/15 Vol.15, The Forestry Proclamation 1901, 505-7.
150 National Archives Ibadan, CSO 1/13 Vol.15, Despatch 173 Moor to Chamberlain 21/06/1901, 509b.
151 Sir Ralph Moor lost his father who was a gentleman and medical doctor at a young age. He had only home schooling before joining and serving in the Irish Constabulary. He later joined the Colonial Service during which he married a widow in violation of Victorian norms. He left service in 1903, became official adviser to the British Cotton Growing Association and committed suicide in 1909. Robert Home, City of Blood revisited: A new look at the Benin expedition of 1897, London, Rex Collins, 1982, 12-14.
based on the use of the customs or laws of the community, whose foundation was the existence of community ownership of all or some of the land. It was an attempt to promote capitalism without pauperism and individualism.

Under the influence of communitarian ideas, some colonial officials attempted to promote communal policies in the colonies. The communal plantations policy promoted by Moor, which lasted into the 1920s, can be understood as one such attempt to do so through its implementation of communal land tenure in the face of the different types of tenures co-existing in the Protectorate. Henry Galwey, the Acting Consul General to the Niger Coast Protectorate in 1898, viewed European merchants as being only interested in exploitation and not having any intention of investing in the development of the protectorate. 153 Both he and Moor feared that private expropriation of land by Africans and Europeans would create social problems of landlessness and vagrancy. 154 They had tried to preempt the problem of vagrancy through the Native House Rule, which remained in force until its repeal in 1914 155, and was meant to conserve the pre-existing social order by compelling people to live in their communities and thus pre-empt the emergence of the social problems of poverty and destitution.

Walter Egerton, who succeeded Moor and McGregor as Governor of Protectorate of Southern Nigeria after its amalgamation with Lagos Colony in 1906, tended to favor

153 National Archives, Ibadan, CSO 1/13 Vol. 9, Despatch 121 Galwey, Ag Consul General, Niger Coast Protectorate to Under Secretary of State, 28/07/1898.
155 One of its provisions stated that “any person wandering abroad and unable to prove that he had a means of subsistence, or that the lack of them was not the result of his own fault…could be arrested without warrant and imprisoned for one year…”Quoted by Frederick Lugard in Amalgamation Report Part II and cited in C. Onyeka Nwanunobi “Social Legislation in Nigeria 1874-1938 (Background, Development and Consequences)” Nigeria Magazine, No 137, 1981, 39.
the development of some forms of landlordism. In 1906, he eagerly reported that “The firms of Messrs. Alex Miller Brothers were induced by His Excellency to start a plantation at Sapele … (and) it is hoped that the other large firms on the coast will follow this lead and go in for Para (rubber) cultivation on an extensive scale.”\textsuperscript{156} Only a few firms followed this lead. Though with little success, some chiefs were induced to engage in plantation agriculture with free seedlings, free labor under the Master and Servants Ordinance and assistance from the Forestry Department.\textsuperscript{157} The land tenure situation remained unsettled in Southern Nigeria until developments in the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria caused the Colonial Office to fashion a policy that has become known to scholars as the “West African policy” or “peasant road.”\textsuperscript{158}

In the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, the need to maintain the loyalty of the ruling, largely Muslim, aristocracy influenced Lugard’s initial decision to proffer a landlordist/private property regime in the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. This entailed enforcing the aristocracy’s hold as masters over their yet to be freed slaves who were meant to be transformed into a wage laboring class to till their masters’ fields.\textsuperscript{159} Though this policy had the paradoxical intention of attempting to maintain the status quo through change, an increase in escapes and agitation among slaves endangered the social and political order. Moreover, Lugard’s views were not shared by his colleagues and successors who had different ideas about the question of labor and land. Fear existed among some colonial officials that the creation of a landlord class would inevitably result

\textsuperscript{156} Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Microfilm No 953 Reel 23 Annual Report of Protectorate of Southern Nigeria 1906, Egerton to Secretary of State, 19/09/1906, 24.
\textsuperscript{157} Uyilawa Usuanlele “State and Class in Benin Division, 1897-1915: A history of Colonial Domination and Class Formation” M.A. Thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1988, 246.
\textsuperscript{158} Anne Phillips, \textit{The Enigma of Colonialism: British Policy in West Africa}, 77.
in the emergence of landless class that would bring poverty and destitution to Northern Nigeria, problems that they attributed to landlordism in Europe. Some Colonial Office bureaucrats, particularly Charles Strachey, and some of their counterparts in the field, notably Charles Temple, became adherents of the ideas of state control of land expounded by the American radical thinker Henry George.\textsuperscript{160} Led by Sir Percy Girouard, the Governor of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria who succeeded Lugard, they used their positions to carry through a policy of nationalization of land in Northern Nigeria in order to entrench communal land tenure and thus discourage landlordism and landlessness.\textsuperscript{161} This nationalization policy was enacted as the Land and Native Rights Proclamation No 9 of 1910 of Northern Nigeria.

The communal land tenure system was further strengthened by the West African Land Committee Report of 1912-1913. Some influential members of the West African Land Committee (WALC) like the Labor Party Member of Parliament, Josiah Wedgwood, and the journalist, publicist, and protégé of Mary Kingsley, Edmund Morel, shared community ownership principles of communal land tenure. They have been shown to have been instrumental in infusing the committee and its report with what became the guiding principles on the land question in much of British colonial Africa.\textsuperscript{162} Though the Report was never officially released, it became a key reference point for land policy in

\textsuperscript{160} Henry George 1839-1897, an American socialist viewed the conflict in society (contrary to Marxist views of conflict between Capitalist and Workers) as one between capital and labour on the side against Landlords on the other. He accused Landlords of living on rent, which was unearned profit, arising from increased value of land resulting from state development of infrastructure. The high rents on land, he further argued, reduced the profit derivable from capital investment and discouraged generation of wealth needed to pay higher wages to labour. He advocated state control of land through high taxation that would render landlordism unprofitable and make land cheap and attractive to investors. Henry George, \textit{Progress and Poverty: An inquiry into the cause of Industrial Depressions and of increase of want with increase of Wealth-the Remedy} London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd, 1908, See especially Book V11.


British Colonial Africa and reinforced the Land and Native Rights Proclamation of Northern Nigeria. These policies, at least in theory, removed landlordism from the “indirect rule” administration started by Lugard in Northern Nigeria. Indirect rule thereafter rested on communal land tenure vested in the “native chiefs” who administered justice and ruled through “custom”\textsuperscript{163} while implementing colonial administration directives. The absence of a western educated elite and press in Northern Nigeria contributed to acquiescence to this development.

The First World War stalled the formal implementation of the recommendations of WALC, but news of the report generated criticism and protests from educated African proponents of private property as well as from some European interests in Southern Nigeria. In spite of this initial opposition, subsequent developments orchestrated by the same Lagos educated elite helped to universalize communal land tenure in Nigeria and gave indirect legal muscle to the principles behind the WALC report. Amodu Tijani, the Oluwa of Lagos, with the support of the educated elites and the early nationalist politician Herbert Macaulay, had appealed for compensation for land compulsorily acquired by the Government at Apapa, Lagos on the grounds that the land was his own private property. When he was denied compensation, he appealed to the Privy Council as the “head of the community” who held the land in trust for his subjects. This legal somersault played to the ideological whims of Richard Burdon, Viscount Haldane of Cloan, the neo-Hegelian Chief Justice of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council,\textsuperscript{163}

who viewed the community as the basis of law and development. Haldane shared the fears of the members of the WALK and Charles Temple that landlordism would create a landless proletariat and serious social problems and gave a landmark judgment in favor of Chief Oluwa as “trustee” of his community. This judgment provided an important legal precedent for the institutionalization of communal land tenure in Nigeria. Its effect was more far reaching because it also “forthrightly rejected the applicability of English law to Lagos and indeed to many other parts of the British Empire”.

The defense of “indigenous communal” land tenure by chiefs and the educated elites was self-serving. They were primarily interested in acquiring the land for themselves as all but private property and for its onward sale or lease to prospective “buyers” which they could effect as its trustees. The value of land had been enhanced by the popularization of production of agricultural raw materials crops for export. The result was the increasing commoditization of land. The “communal” land policies enhanced the powers of the chiefs, especially in the formerly centralized polities, and strengthened their hold and control over the people in their domains. The communal land tenure system, with chiefs as trustees, also enabled the colonial administration to acquire vast tracts of land to create forest reservations and make concession leases to European firms.

Though landlordism was not formally achieved, the chiefs wielded the powers equivalent to those of landlords. They traded in land and collected rents, sometimes at the expense of the educated elites and traders. This led to increasing agitation for recognition of private land holding by Nigerians especially with the introduction of a Land


Registration Ordinance in Lagos. Governors Lugard (during his second coming of 1914-1918), Hugh Clifford (1918-1925) and Graeme Thompson (1925-1930) variously requested the Colonial Office to accede to changes in land policy from leasehold and short-term rental to private freehold and long-term rental. However, the Colonial Office maintained its policy citing a lack of evidence that communal land tenure was having adverse effects on business and investment.¹⁶⁶ Thus the policy of communal land tenure remained in place, while private accumulation of land thrived, but without the benefits and protection that true ownership might have brought about in the form of secure land titles and their use as loan collateral or outright sale to raise capital. The problem of how to resolve the conflict between policy and reality persisted until the end of colonial rule and beyond.

In rural areas, chiefs exercised greatly enhanced powers over land because colonial policy gave them control over unused communal land. They exploited their relative wealth to establish plantations, lay claim over exploitable tree crops like oil palm on such lands, and to collect rents from migrants and strangers squatting on these lands. Where they were unable to directly deny the members of their communities access to land they coveted, they employed the courts, tax assessment, and labor recruitment to force the peasants to migrate to other rural areas particularly the urban centers.

If increased migration to urban centers was partly due to the difficulty of peasants getting free access to land inside their communities, it was also due to the difficulty they faced in gaining access to land outside their places of origin. As indirect rule was based on tribal identity and territoriality, chiefs regulated land transactions with “native

¹⁶⁶ National Archives, Kew, London File CO 583/158/13 Secretary of State to Governor, Nigeria 27/10/1928.
foreigners.” Where chiefs had little power over land in most urban centers of Southern Nigeria, particularly the densely populated Eastern Nigeria, African employees of the colonial administration, lawyers and traders were in the forefront of land speculation and exploited their knowledge and offices to acquire land. Such activities were to result in the multitude of land disputes that became an increasing source of concern for the colonial state. Yet despite land disputes and continued agitation the colonial state maintained its communal land policy. The only change was to allow the registration of title deeds in Lagos.

The absence of legally recognized private property created difficulty in using land to raise capital for investment and this resulted in limiting investments mainly to urban houses and cash crop agriculture. Rents from urban housing were limited by the low wages and salaries paid by the state and private firms. Cash crop production was largely at the mercy of the world market and colonial firms who attempted to dictate prices. Where plantation agriculture was developed very early in densely populated areas, the pseudo-privatization of the communal land policy and devotion of increasing areas of land to cash crop farming had the effects of fragmenting landholdings and reducing fallow periods. This had adverse consequences for agriculture including lower yields and the gradual impoverishment of the small peasant farmer. Thus the communal land policy tied people to land for production activities that yielded little benefit and incubated poverty.

Poverty was most rife in areas where land was expropriated as this either restricted access to land or rendered the inhabitants landless. Expropriation of land for commercial

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and privatization purposes was gradual and initially affected only land around the old and new urban centers and government projects. Remaining family and communal lands were either shared among members or sold, and in some instances people became landless within a generation. Land expropriation was also a threat to those whose lands were rich in minerals and sylvan wealth. Though the government declared its right to ownership of mineral wealth in the colony, its policies were not uniform. While compensation was paid in Southern Nigeria, for example, in the case of Enugu/Udi coalmines, land that was rich in minerals was taken in Northern Nigeria without compensation or arrangements for resettling the “former” landowners. Similar contradictory policies were pursued in the case of forestry in both regions.

It was colonial forestry that infringed most on access and use of land in Nigeria. The infringement was not uniform and was less in the Northern Provinces than in the Southern Provinces that were a source of exportable timber and thus a revenue earner for government. Though agricultural and environmental arguments were used to justify the creation of forest reserves in Nigeria, the revenue from tropical hard wood was largely responsible for their strict implementation by the government in the Southern Provinces. In spite of widespread opposition to forest reservation, the Forestry Ordinance Amendment of 1916, implemented under Governor Lugard, stipulated that 25% of all land was to be compulsorily reserved. As a strategy designed to weaken resistance to forest reservation in Southern Nigeria, Governor Clifford and the Forestry Department


\[\text{169 Brown, “We were all Slaves”: African Miners, Culture and Resistance at the Enugu Government Colliery, 101 and (Footnote 18), 131.} \]

\[\text{170 Lugard, Political Memoranda : Revision of Instructions to Political Officers on subjects chiefly Political and Administrative 1913-1918 Memo No XIII, Part I Para 9, 435.} \]
made the Native Authorities co-owners of the reserves who shared both costs and revenue. While some of chiefs in the Western Provinces acceded to it, this policy was continuously resisted in the densely populated Eastern Provinces until the 1930s.

Some divisions in the Western Provinces were cajoled into parting with more than 25% of their forestland. The five Yoruba Provinces had 1,882 out of their 30,454 square miles under reservation, while Benin Division had a total of 1,685 square miles of its 4000 square miles under reservation in the 1930s. In Benin, the colonial administration had promised the removal of forest regulations from unreserved forest and the vesting of control of forestry and its revenue in the Oba, but these agreements were only partially honored. Most of the unreserved lands were held under timber concession licenses and in tree crop plantations owned by the wealthy urban-based chiefs, traders and colonial administration employees. This left the majority peasant and migrant settler population with less land for farming. The enclaves that were carved out for peasant farmers were grossly inadequate and took little cognizance of the rotational bush fallowing techniques and the future land needs of a growing population. Resultant land shortages later forced some peasants into accepting participation in the Taungya farming. This was a scheme imported from Burma to enable farmers to cultivate exploited parts of the reservations for brief periods after which they had to replant the land with timber on behalf of the Forestry Department.

Land expropriation for forest reservation restricted farming and reduced farm sizes and the fallow periods with consequent soil nutrient depletion, low crop yield and food

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172 NAI BP 1217 Condensed Minutes of a Conference held at Forestry Headquarters, Ibadan 19th and 20th July 1944.
shortages. By 1938 the effects of forestry conservation as observed by a District Officer were that “… conservation not only checks but actually retards the economic progress of the agricultural population.” In spite of the impoverishment that forest reservation was causing, local rules such as the Permanent Tree Crop Order were further promulgated to prohibit cultivation of export cash crops and to compel affected peasants to grow only food. This restricted their earning capacities and consolidated their impoverishment. Thus the implementation of forest reservation policy had the effect of depriving the peasants of access to land, restricting its use by them, and constraining their earning capabilities with consequent widespread poverty in these areas.

In Jos Division in Nassarawa and later Plateau Province, Northern Nigeria, the growth of the tin mining industry commenced with the violent conquest of the territory to facilitate the seizure of land. Licenses to the tin bearing lands of the Jos Plateau area were issued to companies without consultation with, or knowledge by, the land’s owners. Initially, surface mining was confined to the valleys and riverbanks that constituted the most arable lands. This deprived the affected communities of arable land as well as water. The transition to underground mining saw the further spread of mining into the communal lands of the various groups. Gurum communities in Buji district had 28 of their 30 square miles acquired for mining with one of the licensees, Messrs Law and Rumbold and Company, acquiring 8.22 square miles and also licensed to divert the Gurum River to its mining field. This left these communities only two square miles for

174 NAI BP 999 Benin Native Authority Forest reserves, General correspondence -R.B. Kerr, District Officer, Benin Division to Resident, Benin Province, 19/7/1938.
habitation and farming. By 1915, 702 of the 1,434 square miles that made up Jos Division were covered by mining licenses.\(^{177}\) The areas covered by licenses continued to fluctuate as exploited areas were abandoned and new ones acquired. Mining licensees turned the indigenous populations into “temporary tenants” who could be evicted at will during mining. Vast areas of farmland were destroyed and forests were cleared. By 1931, Jos Division was described as treeless and dotted with wide and deep ponds left behind by mining.\(^{178}\)

The response to these environmental problems was the creation of forest reserves that covered 64 square miles by the late 1930s. The grassland that developed from forest clearance and annual firing attracted migrant pastoralists to settle in the area. Cattle in Jos Division numbered over 100,000 in 1938\(^{179}\) and they competed with humans for use of the decreased arable land area. In addition to the land already lost to mining and pastoralists, another three square miles of land was taken to establish Jos Township which serviced the mining community and colonial administration. An official report on the land situation in 1939 lamented that,

… on the plateau there is progressive deterioration of the soil, due partly to natural increase of population, partly to destruction of cultivable land by mining operations and partly to erosion. These causes combine to shorten the fallow period, while fairly intensive cattle grazing greatly reduce the regenerative effect of leaving land to rest.\(^{180}\)

Many of the indigenous groups who had lost their communal land began renting or leasing land to farm from neighboring groups. By the eve of WW II, land sales had

\(^{179}\) Dan’Azumi, Op. cit, 137 and 156.
\(^{180}\) NAI CSO 26/1 12601 Vol XIII E. S. Pembleton, Resident, Plateau Province Annual Report, 1939, 37.
become common in Jos Division.¹⁸¹ Loss of land rendered shifting cultivation impossible and turned the farmers towards “intensive” agriculture¹⁸² that mined the soil. The eventual outcome was poor yields leading to impoverishment and hunger. Some Berom men, their wives, and children became solely dependent on work in the mines and purchased all of their food.¹⁸³ Thus began the phenomenon of landlessness and the emergence of an unskilled labor class dependent on starvation wages that bred hunger and poverty.

The attempt to preserve African community through communal land tenure vested in chiefs resulted in the enrichment of chiefs and colonial employees and lawyers who expropriated land and “sold” or rented it to the highest bidder while the government employed the policy to expropriate land for forest reservations and concessions to mining and timber firms. The communal land policy, together with land expropriation for forest reservation and mining concessions, created land shortages and landlessness and consequently drove many Nigerians into poverty.

**Abolition of Slavery, Forced Labor, and Economic Dislocation**

Iliffe argues that the lack of labor continued to be a major cause of poverty under colonial rule, but pays little attention to the way in which colonial policies altered the forms of and access to labor. This section examines these policies and their results. One major change in the form of, and access to, labor under colonial rule resulted from the abolition of slavery and other forms of servitude and the manner in which this

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¹⁸² Ibid., 163.
abolition occurred. A combination of economic ideology, humanitarian concern, and the quest for political stability drove the abolition of slavery in Africa.

Slavery was viewed as an obstacle to development of both an independent peasantry and free wage labor by abolitionist humanitarian groups in both Britain and the colonies. However, British officials feared that sudden abolition would lead to social disintegration and the weakening of the authority of the local rulers on which the British depended. As well, British administrators were unwilling to pay local rulers compensation for their emancipated slaves. Given British experience of abolition and emancipation in the West Indies, the problem was approached with caution. Colonial officials appealed for only gradual abolition. Initially, the Colonial Office gave no specific directives to colonial administrators other than to outlaw slave raiding and slave dealing and disallowed any policy on slavery itself to be committed to writing. This left slavery itself as an institution tacitly condoned by the colonial administration.

Apart from Benin where slaves of non-cooperating chiefs were freed as a means of forcing them to surrender to the British after conquest in 1897, the policies of the three Nigerian administrations were initially directed at enforcing slave relations in line with Colonial Office directives and in reaction to the increasing number of runaway slaves escaping to the slave refuge settlement established at Mamu on the outskirts of Lagos and in Northern Nigeria to Satiru in Sokoto where some allied with rebel Madhists. In response to these flights to freedom, laws were enacted in all the Protectorates that made it difficult for the slaves to gain their freedom.

In Lagos Colony and Protectorate, the government promulgated a law in 1898 that fixed differential rates for self-ransoming in the various communities. While the price of self manumission was set so high to encourage slave owners to manumit their slaves, initially the inability to raise such high sums continued to tie many slaves to their masters. However, with increased employment opportunities in the Lagos Colony and Protectorate, especially with the building of railways and establishment of plantations, some slaves earned enough to self-ransom. The enactment of the Prohibition of Slave Dealing Proclamation in July 1900 gave further impetus in some parts of Southern Nigeria for masters and slaves to amicably dissolve their relationship. The resulting loss of labor to some smaller former masters, who could no longer meet their labor requirements and production needs, resulted in their impoverishment.

The Protectorate of Northern Nigeria proclaimed a similar law prohibiting slave raids and dealing, declaring anyone born of slave parentage after 1 January 1901 a free subject, and criminalizing the hunting and recapture of runaway slaves after 1 April 1901. This proclamation was criticized by Lugard’s officers such as Burdon, the Resident of Sokoto, who feared that it would alienate members of the ruling classes and create social disorder. Consequently, this Proclamation was amended in 1904 to allow “domestic” slavery, empowering Native Courts to try runaway slaves who failed to pay compensation or manumission fees, as was the case before colonial rule, and enforcing

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187 Falola, Politics and Economy in Ibadan, 1893-1945, 96.
190 Falola, Politics and Economy in Ibadan, 1893-1945, 95.
the authority of masters over slaves.\textsuperscript{191} According to Phillips, Lugard viewed the Colonial Office directive to prohibit slave dealing as too radical and instructed his Residents not to tamper with slave caravans.\textsuperscript{192} Though the directive preserved slavery, it did not stop the increase in the desertion of slaves. In the end, it was the imposition of direct taxation, based on assessment of farms and the need to pay the taxes of dependants, which gradually encouraged slave masters to renegotiate the relationship with their slaves who began to take responsibility for their own individual tax payments.\textsuperscript{193} This encouraged slaves to leave their masters to seek cash earning work. Here too, the loss of slave labor and the surplus it generated spelt poverty for some former masters.

In the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, where the economic powers of former coastal middlemen traders, who as House Heads were constituted into the Native Councils, had been undermined, there developed fear of further losses of slaves resulting from Colonial Office directives prohibiting slave dealing.\textsuperscript{194} Ralph Moor, the High Commissioner, who had been issuing manumission certificates since 1899, also feared that enactment of a proclamation abolishing slavery could lead to “a general uprising which would mean anarchy, crime and a general stoppage of trade.”\textsuperscript{195} This fear greatly influenced the timing, policies, and laws towards slavery and labor in general in the Protectorate. With a substantial area of the Protectorate still unconquered and with the government facing an increasing need for labor, three new laws were promulgated in

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\textsuperscript{192} Phillips, \textit{The Enigma of Colonialism}, 30. \\
\textsuperscript{195} Quoted in Tamuno, \textit{The Evolution of the Nigerian State: The Southern Phase 1898-1914}, 325.
\end{flushleft}
1901 to disguise the continuity of slavery and thus preserve stability. The Native House Rule Proclamation No 26 of 1901 subjected the employment of members of a House, including slaves, to the approval of the House Head who received a portion of the members’ earnings and punished the failure to perform defined obligations of members and House Heads to one another with a fine fifty pounds or a prison term of one year. This law had the effect of bonding house members to House Heads. The second law, the Master and Servant Proclamation of 1901, empowered House Heads and chiefs to recruit “apprentices” to execute government contracts and permitted children under 16 to be apprenticed for purposes of learning a trade for a period of five to twelve years as confirmed by a District Commissioner. A further law, the Prohibition of Slave Dealing Order No.5 of 1901 (effective from 1st January 1902) abolished “the legal status of slavery.” The implementation and enforcement of these laws was undertaken by the Native Councils and Native Courts made up of chiefs and House Heads who were thus put in a position to use the Native Councils and Courts to uphold their control over the House members and slaves.

The Master and Servant Proclamation was derived from laws used in Britain and the British Empire for three centuries to criminalize labor infractions and discipline labor. Though abrogated in Britain in 1875, its introduction to Africa served this same purpose; but in Nigeria it had the additional purpose of regulating and restricting the

196 NAI, CSO 1/13, Vol.14, Despatch 70 Ralph Moor, High Commissioner of Protectorate of Southern Nigeria to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 16/03/1901, 208.
197 Ibid, Vol. 18, Despatch 83, Ralph Moor, High Commissioner of Protectorate of Southern Nigeria to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 26/2/1902, 231-232.
territorial mobility of labor and maintaining a low wage regime.\textsuperscript{199} While the legal status of slavery was abolished, the House Rule made a farce of abolition until both laws were abrogated in 1914.

Although the Native House system was peculiar to the trading city-states of the Niger Delta, the Native House Rule was applied to the territories as far distant as Idah in the north and Benin in the west. In justifying the extension of this law, Moor enumerated its advantages as,

… the guarantee afforded it for the thrifty management of property, and the resulting absence of pauperization among the lower social grades of natives of this protectorate are recognized in the attempt made in Proclamation No.26 to consolidate ‘House’ regulations and to strengthen the quasi-parental authority of representatives of ‘Houses’.\textsuperscript{200}

The fact that it helped to perpetuate slavery was attested to by P.H. Daniel of the Colonial Office who hailed it as “a most ingenious and … successful device for maintaining the practical and beneficial features of domestic slavery.”\textsuperscript{201} Such laws that sustained slavery also helped to bribe the chiefs by permitting them to retain their slaves and, in addition, granted chiefs access to additional labor of formerly free people placed under their jurisdiction. These labor measures helped in no small way to guarantee the loyalty of the chiefs for the colonial state.

However, the House Rule and other related laws could not be sustained. The forced labor and bondage they engendered provoked protest, rebellions and criticisms from Christian missionaries and the press. This led to the amendment of the Native

\textsuperscript{199} NAI, CSO 1/13, Vol.14, Despatch 70 Ralph Moor, High Commissioner of Protectorate of Southern Nigeria to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 16/03/1901, 208 and Ken Swindell “ The struggle forr transport labour in Northern Nigeria, 1900-1912: A conflict of Interests” \textit{African Economic History}, No.20,1992, 143.

\textsuperscript{200} Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria Annual Report of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria for the year ending 31st December, 1901,Moor to Chamberlain, Despatch 381, 07/10/1902, 10.

\textsuperscript{201} Quoted in \textit{Ibid}, 327.
House Rule in 1908. However, Lugard, on his return to Nigeria in 1912, argued for the retention of various similar laws,

… in order primarily to prevent rapid dissolution of the House, and the consequent addition to the community of a large number of ‘masterless-men’ who may increase the criminal classes, and on the other hand, to save the head of Houses from sudden disorganization. 202

The Native House Ordinance was again amended in 1912 to allow house members to buy their freedom, and in 1914 the authority of the Native Courts to enforce House Rule was withdrawn, thus rendering the law unenforceable. 203 It was only in 1916 that an Ordinance which prohibited slavery was enacted in the amalgamated territory of Nigeria. These ordinances still did not end slavery which really only finally died out in the 1940s. Nevertheless, the losses of labor to former masters was huge and according to one Igbo chief cited by Ohadike “when slaves left, owners wept” 204 as this signaled the onset of poverty.

One major outcome of the abolition and decline of slavery was the intensification of pawning in the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and parts of the northern protectorate. Other factors that contributed to the intensification of pawning included the scarcity of wage labour, the absence of alternative credit institutions, convertible collateral like land, the increasing monetization of the economy, the introduction of direct taxation, and new wants or necessities obtainable only by cash payments. Likewise, increases in and the monetization of bride price and burial ceremonies drove some into debt resulting in the

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pawning of themselves or their dependants. The abolition of the legal status of slavery turned some of the wealthy into money-lenders who received labour services as interest on the loans from borrowers, or whose sureties became pawns. According to Falola, in Yoruba land some slaves who borrowed money to pay for their self-manumission changed their status from slaves to pawns. 205 Though the adult pawn was no longer a slave, the chances of liquidating the debt were low given that the pawn shared his or her labor with the creditor and could easily slip into poverty.

The intensification of pawning was also encouraged by the colonial state, which rationalized it as a means of increasing production and trade while preserving the pre-existing social order. It was only in 1916 that Lugard recommended the prohibition of the use of children as pawns on the grounds that they were pawned without their consent. This recommendation could not be effectively implemented because the pawning began to be disguised as marriage, guardianship, or apprenticeship. Pressure from the League of Nations in 1930 to end all forms of slavery led to another attempt to abolish pawning. This also failed, in part because the colonial officers rationalized pawning as an indigenous institution that differed from slavery. 206 However, pawning was modified with labor services being calculated on the basis of a fixed duration of service necessary to liquidate debts, but enforcement of this modification was difficult to achieve. It was only in 1937 and 1942 that pawning was declared illegal in Northern Nigeria and Western Nigeria respectively. In spite of abolition, it persisted into the 1950s and beyond.

205 Falola, Politics and Economy in Ibadan, 1893-1945, 98.
The gradual decline of pawning was assisted by the increasing ability to mortgage farmlands and standing tree crops when financially hard pressed.

The abolition and decline of slavery and pawning were sources of dislocation and impoverishment for many individuals and households that had depended on these institutions for their sustenance. The wealthy who owned slaves and pawns lost the labor services of both, making it difficult to maintain or expand production levels. Studies in Igbo land confirm that the abolition of slavery was a major loss to the wealthy and spelled the beginning of decline into poverty for some former slave owners. As well, some former slaves lost their rights to land in the communities in which they had been enslaved and since they could not always return to their places of origin, took to wage labor, a step that potentially impoverished them due to the prevalence of low wages.

**Forced Labor and Social Dislocation**

Social dislocation and impoverishment were further compounded by the various forced labor practices of the colonial state. These policies were hinged on the communitarian policies of the colonial state and were rationalized by reference to various pre-existing communal labor practices. Forced labor practices were enshrined in a variety of laws. This was the case in the Niger Coast Protectorate where Moor appended forced labor provisions to the House Rule system and Forestry Ordinance. The various ordinances to extinguish House Rule did not end coerced or “political labor” in the Central and Eastern Provinces of Southern Nigeria. Laws such as the Roads and Creek Proclamation of 1903

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imposed compulsory twenty-four days manual labor annually on all adult males between
the ages of fifteen and fifty-five years and females between fifteen and forty-five years,
with fines and prison terms for both the subjects and chiefs who failed to perform or
enforce the law. Moor went further to impose compulsory labor obligations on
communities that received royalties on their sylvan wealth through Rule XIII of the
Forestry Proclamation of 1901 of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. This law forced
village communities to establish and exploit communal rubber and timber plantations in
some districts of the former Central Province (later broken into Benin, Warri, and parts of
Kabba, and Ondo Provinces) for the colonial state. After the price of rubber fell
drastically and plantation rubber from Asia became available, the Forestry Department
handed over these plantations to the Native Administration which continued to work
them with forced labor until 1924. The Native House Rule and Collective Punishment
Ordinances were also employed by chiefs, acting as labor contractors for the state, to
mobilize forced labor to work at the government colliery at Enugu in Onitsha Province.

The use of forced labor would have been more widespread but for the restraining
influence of the Colonial Office. Attempts by Moor to extend his communal plantation
rule to other provinces were refused by the Colonial Office. Similar attempts to extend
some of the laws used for forced labor in the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria to the
Lagos Colony and Protectorate, following their amalgamation in 1906, were also

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209 For further details see footnote 37 above and National Archives, Ibadan CSO 1/13 Vol.15, Despatch
173, Forestry Proclamation 1901, Moor to Chamberlain, 21/06/1901.
210 National Archives Ibadan, File BP 262/1917 Para rubber, Benin Division, Preparation of - Resident,
Benin Province to District Officer, Benin Division, 18/2/1924 and Uyilawa Usuanlele “State and Class in
Benin Division, 1897-19159: A history of Colonial Domination and Class Formation” M.A. Thesis,
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1988, 250.
211 Carolyn A. Brown, “We were all Slaves”: African Miners, Culture and Resistance at the Enugu
212 Walter I. Ofonagoro, Trade and Imperialism in Southern Nigeria, 1889-1929, New York, Nok
disallowed by the Colonial Office. Before amalgamation, coerced labor was widely used in the Western Provinces and the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria without the legal instrument to support it. Here, forced labor was rationalized as “customary” communal labor that was the prerogative of chiefs to use for public and other sundry work. In the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, forced or “political” labor also was disguised as “assistance” to government. Although, recommended by Lugard for use only in emergency situations, its use was sanctioned for non-emergency public works beneficial to the administration, if frowned upon for other purposes.213 Another legal source of forced labor for public works was the Collective Punishment Ordinance that imposed compulsory unpaid labor on public works, in addition to monetary fines, on rebellious communities. This was widely used in Northern Nigeria by Lugard214 and his successors. Its implementation was protested and criticized, but it was defended as being employed in lieu of monetary taxation with the promise that it would be abrogated after introduction of such taxation.

The use of forced or political labor increased and worsened as colonial rule was consolidated. It was used in the construction of the railways, roads, telecommunication infrastructure, government buildings and the transportation of goods for the government and its officials. Forced labor was detested and was a cause of rebellion and revolt. While forced labor was at times paid for in Northern Nigeria, payment was subject to extortion and shortchanging. It remained largely unpaid in Southern Nigeria. In 1903 some Ibadan chiefs, who complained about the non-payment for forced labor, were told by the

214 Lugard, Political Memoranda :Revision of Instructions to Political Officers on Subjects chiefly Political and Administrative, 1913-1918, Memo No. VII, Para.21, 257.
Resident to pay for it from their share of the toll collection. The chiefs declined to follow
this instruction.\textsuperscript{215} Ward-Price, District Officer in Ilaro Division, Abeokuta Province,
reported in 1917 that road construction was done by youths under the whip and that
though “there were no funds to pay the workers at Ilaro; they cheerfully turned out at the
bidding of their parents, whom they always obeyed without question in those less
sophisticated times.”\textsuperscript{216} Ofonagoro’s claim that forced labor on roads was discontinued
in the 1910’s after the introduction of direct taxation\textsuperscript{217} is disputable. Though it was
policy to employ paid labor when taxation was introduced, this was not strictly adhered
to in practice. It was such non-compliance that partly provoked the Adubi War or
Abeokuta Rebellion of 1917. Another instance of such non-adherence in Itakpa Ekiti,
Ondo Province, in the 1920s was recalled by one victim, who stated that,

\begin{quote}
It was compulsory for individuals to participate, everybody was forced to do it, nobody had the sense to dodge it. People were sometimes involuntarily involved, passers-by were forced to work. During that period people were forcibly taken away from their farm to work on the road construction. Those who secretly went to their farms were caught and punished. And strangers on their journey were forced to work … before they were released to go…. \textit{No money was paid}''\textsuperscript{218} (my emphasis)
\end{quote}

As noted above, where and when wages were paid, it was common practice for the
laborers to be denied their wages in part or in full. Underpayments and outright theft were
the norms among officials and chiefs. The Assistant District Officer for the Igbo speaking
area of Agbor found that “it seems to be the idea in many chiefs minds that they have the
right to all the monies earned by their boys … a practice which I believe exists in Ishan

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\textsuperscript{215} Falola, \textit{Politics and Economy in Ibadan}, 92.
\textsuperscript{216} Ward-Price, \textit{Dark Subjects}, 63.
\textsuperscript{218} Elisha P. Renne (ed.) \textit{The Life and Times of Pa Francis Adeyanju of Itapa-Ekiti}, Ibadan, Book Builders, 2003, 14-5.
\end{flushleft}
and Benin City districts.” 219 While the chiefs confiscated wages and feeding allowances, African foremen and contractors used various means to defraud the conscripts. The Commissioner of Benin Province reported that “There is no doubt that many of these laborers are defrauded and particularly when they are engaged under native contractors.” 220 The construction of the Sokoto-Zaria road provided opportunity for a “system of extortion whereby 20% of men’s pay was taken from them. Everyone shared in the spoil, District Chiefs representatives, Mallams (clerks), PWD staff, etc. and the largest share went to the Sultan’s slave who was in supreme charge of the labor.” 221 The detection of some European supervisors’ involvement in such fraud by Ward-Price forced him to pay the laborers himself directly. 222 From conscription through the period of work, to payment and discharge, victims were subjected to cycles of oppression, deprivation and exploitation.

Forced labor was further abused by its use for private work. It was mobilized for private work for both chiefs and private employees in mines and timber concessions. Attempts were made at stopping the abuse such as in 1918, when officials in the provinces in Northern Nigeria (other than Bauchi) were ordered by the Lieutenant Governor to cease recruiting labor for the mines. 223 Another directive was also sent by Lord Cromer of the Colonial office in 1919 which stated that “we regard the system when

220 Ibid, James Watt, Commissioner, Benin Province to Secretary, Southern Provinces, 27/8/1914.
221 NAI CSO 26 File 03456 Annual Report 1921, Sokoto Province, by M.S.W. Edwards, Ag Resident, 15.
222 Ward-Price, Dark Subjects, 208-9.
employed for private profit as wholly unjustifiable. In spite of these directives the abuse continued. It was reported in 1923 that the Tiv of Benue Province were ordered to send one person per hundred in every clan for work in the mines. Political officers, particularly in Bauchi, Plateau, and Zaria Provinces preferred to cajole peasants to go to the mines to earn “quick tax money” rather than encourage their engagement in agricultural production and wait for the harvest and to sell their crops to pay tax. Forced labor was similarly used in Benin Province to mobilize peasants to work in timber concessions. For instance, although Lugard refused the request of Alfred Dobell, Secretary of London and Liverpool Chambers of Commerce to employ coercion to mobilize labor for the Messrs. Miller Brothers to meet its labor contract to the Admiralty during World War I, he advised the Resident to “assist” the firm in getting labor. Such labor could only be got through force and through chiefs who employed the various forced labor laws and Native Courts to compel the people to work on their behalf in the concessions. James Watt, the Provincial Commissioner for Benin Province, likened the terms of such recruitment through chiefs to “almost indentured labor.”

Though forced labor was claimed to have been abolished in the late 1920s, it continued in various guises and was used in the construction of infrastructure critical to

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227 National Archives Ibadan, BP 218/1918 Messrs Miller’s Timber area, Labour for- Lugard to Resident, Benin Province, 13/06/1918.

the consolidation of the colonial administration and the accomplishment of the objectives of opening up and expanding trade.

Forced labor was disruptive for individuals and communities, causing dislocation of their production. Major consequences included serious injury in the course of forced labor work which was rarely treated. Neither any resulting disabilities nor even death was compensated. A report on four hundred and twenty carriers from Benin Province who were sent to Cameroun and East Africa during WW I stated that the “mortality rate among them has been great,” and that they “suffered heavily from unsuitable food and the hardships of the campaigns” while thirteen of them were unaccounted for.\footnote{NAI BP 4/2/4 James Watt, Resident, Benin Province, Annual Report for the Year ending 31/12/1917, 16-17, BP 4/2/5 R. Hargrove, Resident, Benin Province, Annual Report for the year ending 31/12/1918, 7 and BP 4/2/7 James Watt, Resident, Benin Province, Annual Report for 1919/1920, 29.} The mortality rate was higher in construction work. During railway construction in Nassarawa Province, the mortality figures for 1923 and 1924 were 100 and 110 deaths respectively. These were largely from pulmonary-pneumonia and dysentery as a result of exposure to bad weather and bad food.\footnote{NAI CSO 26/2 File 12601 Vol.II, Nassarawa Province, Annual Report 1924 by T.F. Carlyle, Resident, 42.} Mortality was also probably high in the timber and mining industries where heavy materials had to be carried over long distances. Such casualties caused much hardship for families, particularly those that lost labor critical to the household economic unit as this could plunge a family into poverty.

Consequences could also be devastating for the economies of the affected communities. In the early period, communities were engaged repeatedly in multiple forced labor tasks. It was not unusual for communities to be involved simultaneously in road, railway, and building construction, and, in addition, mining or timber felling work. Such was the situation in Benin, Plateau and Onitsha Provinces from 1900 to the 1920s.
when communities were engaged all year round in various forms of forced labor. Reports from Niger Province indicated that 78,300 people worked on the construction of the railway in 1909 alone and, when construction ended in 1912, a total of 251,443 people had been employed from a Province whose population was only 253,261.231 Before the railways reached Jos, tin was transported by human porterage and in 1912 103,600 people are estimated to have been required to move the 2,800 tons of tin at a rate of twelve days per trip and 28 kilograms per carrier.232 This large number of laborers was drawn from the provinces adjoining the mines. The mobilization of this amount of labor alone would have had dislocating effects on the local economy. A report on the impact of forced labor on Benin communities observed that,

In Benin City district which is sparsely populated, the villagers are largely called on for labor and it is a common case to find a village nearly empty of its men when the (rubber) tapping gang arrives, the chiefs who own the villages also make labor contracts and take the villagers away for weeks and when they return they wish to farm and mend their houses instead of working on their (government created communal) rubber plantations.233

It was only with the abolition of the Native House Rule and the Roads and Creeks Ordinance in 1928 that forced labor began to be deemphasized until the “emergency” situation of WW II caused it to be revived.

Forced labor was made more disruptive by mobilization coinciding with peak periods of necessary agricultural labor. It was this aspect that made the work most detestable. An instance of such callousness about peoples’ survival needs was reported by the District Commissioner in Asaba District about the Ika who complained that “it was

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233 NAI BP 364/1914 Report on communal rubber plantations- Conservator of Forest, Central Province to Commissioner, Central Province 03/01/1914.
hard not to say cruel to take people away at this time (farm clearing season) of the year.\textsuperscript{234} The people of Owa in Agbor district reacted violently to the similar callousness of Crewe-Reade, the District Commissioner, by killing him and declaring war before their revolt was crushed by soldiers. A similar situation was protested by another District Officer in Agiae-Lapai division of Niger Province when he wrote to the Resident that “It is an extreme hardship to call upon these men in the height of the farming season, however well they may be paid.”\textsuperscript{235} This state of affairs caused the Lagos Newspaper \textit{The Pioneer} to report in February 1917 that,

… there is widespread discontent among the Egbas at the idea of taking people away from their farms for work on roads. Hundreds of farmers are being called away, most of whom have to travel for two days to reach where they are called upon to do work and had to stay away for months.\textsuperscript{236}

In such situations, when the people did not rebel, they deserted or emigrated.

By 1905-1907 the results of the widespread use of forced labor and the consequences of massive and frequent withdrawal of labor from the agrarian economy began to show. Given the dependence of local agriculture on tropical rainfall and the often gender specific nature of agricultural tasks, the absence of men, and the associated failure to plant and harvest on time, resulted in crop failure and food shortage. If this food shortage was followed by late, inadequate or excessive rains, famine would occur and long-term poverty might set in.

The role of forced labor in the undermining of local economies was recognized by individual colonial officers, but the colonial state officially characterized hunger as due to

\textsuperscript{234} NAI BD 13/2 Benin City District, Quarter Report, January to March 1906.
\textsuperscript{236} National Archives, Ibadan, ABE PROF 2/5 107/1917 Roads, Free labour on 1915, Newspaper cutting.
climatic problems or the result of native laziness. The local food economy having been undermined, people had to find the means to buy the food that they had paid as tax in lieu of cash. As a result of the food shortages and famines, people resorted to migrating to earn money to buy food. In Zaria, for instance, during the 1914 famine, there was an influx of people such as these whose reason for turning up, according to the Resident, was that “they were hungry.”237 Though many also deserted, the prospect of earning cash and getting food drove some to wage labor.

Similarly affected by forced labor were local craft industries. This diversion of labor deprived local craft industries of labor. This created a niche for European substitutes which were further popularized through their use as a “currency” for exchange and payment of labor. The dominance of the local markets by imported European substitutes not only killed off some local industries, but also increased the financial burden of the people who could no longer produce for their needs but now had to depend on the imports that had to be purchased with cash. This undermining of the local economy set the stage for the destruction of the self-sufficiency of the household economy that had formerly provided for the welfare needs of its individual members. It was also to institute a taste for and dependence on imported manufactures that could only be acquired through monetary earnings. Forced labor led to the loss of labor for families and the diversion of labor from local economies. It was an important factor in the creation of colonial poverty.

Monetization of the Economy: Extraction, Exploitation, and Impoverishment

One of the most important contributors to poverty in the colonial era was the monetization of those aspects of economic life that had formerly been non-monetized. While “cash hunger” is noted by Iliffe, and he notes that the “need to pay tax and economic fluctuations emanating from the world market … bred new types of rural poverty” and that “taxation drained money from rural communities”, he devotes minimal space to the issue. He is also nearly silent on the exploitation through trade that was achieved through price fixing by European merchant monopolies and their African agents. In order to appreciate this exploitation, it is necessary to examine how this kind of economy was developed by looking at the process of monetization and taxation that combined to make the people vulnerable to exploitation through trade.

One method used by the colonial state to reorganize the economy was demonetization of local currencies and their replacement with a uniform colonial currency. This development compelled those who needed cash to engage in activities that were remunerated by colonially issued currency. The demonetization of local currencies and acceptance of colonial currency took a long time, especially in Igbo and Ibibio areas and the eastern Niger Delta where use of native currencies continued into the 1940s in spite of coercion. This was because of the unwillingness of the colonial state and European merchants to incur any cost from the process. The currency situation was complicated by the European firms’ engagement in counterfeiting of currencies in use in

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239 Cowries were used in Benin, parts of Northern Nigeria and Yoruba land, while various dollar currencies were used in Lagos including the Maria Theresa thaler (Dollar) which was also used in Borno and manilla, iron rods and copper wires were in use in the Igbo area and Niger Delta city states.
Nigeria\textsuperscript{241} and continuing the barter trade with Africans\textsuperscript{242} that, Ofonagaro argues, yielded European firms higher profits.

The government of the Colony of Lagos began demonetizing local currencies through an ordinance in 1880. This was followed by the Protectorates which adopted a cautious approach because of the fear that forced demonetization could create disorder.\textsuperscript{243} The administrations in the Protectorates began by conducting all their transactions in colonial currency. But this measure affected only a few people and areas and so laws were promulgated that made the colonial currency the only legal tender and prohibited the use of local currencies in conducting government business. This gradually eliminated some local currencies from circulation.

It was the government’s payment in colonial currency for work in the various construction and haulage projects, on the railways, and on mining and timber concessions that largely monetized the economy. The laborers employed by government and the firms in mining and lumbering were mostly young able-bodied men and the new currency they earned empowered them in their communities. It enabled them to bribe older men into acquiescence, seduce women into marriage, and flood their communities with money and cheap imported goods that gradually became household necessities. It also worked to monetize what had been formerly exchanges in kind. These developments created and increased the cash needs of households and compelled others to engage in activities to earn colonial currency. At times, the pressure to earn the cash resulted in the removal of critical labor from the household and the destruction of self-sufficiency with consequent degeneration to indebtedness and poverty.

\textsuperscript{241} Ibid, 271.
\textsuperscript{242} Shenton, The Development of Capitalism in Northern Nigeria, 54.
\textsuperscript{243} Ibid, 262.
Taxation

The need for cash was manifested most greatly in the colonial administration’s insistence on payment of taxes in the colonial currency as opposed to in kind or in pre-colonial money. Moreover, these new taxes were not based on any known capacity to pay and, in some cases, were imposed on communities that had no tradition of tax payment. The imposition of colonial taxation on Nigerian communities was piecemeal and began cautiously. In part, this was a response to the “Hut Tax War” that the imposition of taxation had caused in Sierra Leone in 1898. However, even before the Hut Tax War, the Foreign Office under Lord Salisbury had counseled caution in approving the introduction of taxation in the Benin City territories in 1897. Sir Ralph Moor, of the Niger Coast Protectorate, had argued that the taxes were needed to defray the expenses incurred in establishing the administration, provisioning stationed troops, paying wages, and enforcing British sovereignty conferred by virtue of conquest. A “house” tax was assessed on the number of people living in a house in Benin City, while five yams per house and one goat per every ten houses were levied in the villages as “tribute”. The rapacious manner in which these taxes and tribute were collected combined with other factors to provoke a rebellion in 1906 in which a District Commissioner and a chief were killed. This rebellion and the increasing flow of import and export duties further delayed the extension of direct taxation to other parts of the Southern Protectorate.

244 Initially, taxes were paid in kind especially foodstuff, but this was changed to solely cash from the 1900s in Northern Protectorate and from the 1910s in the Southern Protectorate.
246 N.A.L., CSO 1/15, Vol. 9, Despatch 42, Widham Fosbery, Ag. Governor, Protectorate of Southern Nigeria to Secretary of State for Colonies, (Telegram) 16/06/1906.
In Northern Nigeria, the financial insolvency of the administration and the British government’s reluctance to finance the colonial administration caused Lugard to propose the taxation of export produce from the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, but this was not approved because of opposition from European trading firms. In response, Lugard introduced numerous levies including a caravan tax, internal custom duties, a canoe tax, a game tax, a native liquor tax, hawkers’ license and even *kurdin su* (a fishing tax) before these were gradually abolished by his successors between 1906 and 1909. He also proposed the imposition of direct taxation, justified by the right of conquest and as a continuation of the pre-colonial and Islamically sanctioned taxes, to offset the cost of administration generally and to pay salaries to the chiefs and Emirs, to pay wages, to provide security against slave raids for pagan communities, and to bring British colonial officials and the administration in closer touch with colonized subjects. He further argued that direct taxation would help reform the corruption and extortion that he argued had characterized the pre-colonial taxation and thus lighten the tax burden on colonized subjects. Approval was granted with the usual counsel of caution, and direct taxation was enacted under the Native Revenue Ordinance of 1906.

The full implementation of direct taxation was undertaken by Lugard’s underlings and successors like Charles Temple, who viewed direct taxation as a means of recreating or strengthening the authority of the village heads, elders, and their councils over their

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247 Microfilm CO 520/1 Frederick Lugard to Governor, Lagos Colony and Protectorate and High Commissioner, Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, 30/01/1900 and Chamberlain to Anthrobus, 22/07/1900.


people while increasing revenue and production. The socially conservationist role of direct taxation was emphasized by Temple to justify the increased involvement of British officers in the assessment and collection of tax. Consequently, the various existing taxes and levies were abrogated and replaced with a single tax on land (kurdin kasa), a cattle tax (jangali) and/or a craft tax or a combination of craft taxes where an individual engaged in more than one occupation.

The tax rates were not uniform and their assessment and bases of assessment varied from place to place depending on estimates of economic potential by British assessors and produce prices offered by the European merchants. For instance, when the railway was being constructed through Nassarawa Province in 1921, the areas traversed were quickly re-assessed and their taxes increased. This was in spite of the trade slump that was adversely affecting the area’s economy at the time. The amount of tax demanded ranged from 1s.6d per adult among the Bulla of Yola Province to 10s.1d in Ilorin Province in 1919 per annum. Such taxes were both higher than their pre-colonial counterparts and did not take cognizance of the indirect taxes paid on imported manufactured items, social services like school and hospital fees, and social obligations to family and community. A study on the Tiv of Benue Province showed that a peasant farmer family’s total income was a paltry £13:6s: 4d per year and was insufficient to pay the taxes of all the adults in the farming unit after deducting all expenses.

Despite the introduction of direct taxation, the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria remained insolvent and dependent on subsidies from Southern Nigeria and imperial grants-in-aid.\textsuperscript{255} Consequently, the Colonial Office decided to amalgamate the two Protectorates in 1914 and to use the revenue of Southern Nigeria to sustain the administration of Northern Nigeria thus freeing British taxpayers from financing the administration of Northern Nigeria.

The amalgamation was undertaken by Lugard who, as Governor General, exploited the opportunity amalgamation presented to extend direct taxation, an important pillar of the Emirate model of indirect rule, to Southern Nigeria. His objective was to reverse the administrative policy in Southern Nigeria which “was commercial, directed primarily to the development of resources and trade” and replace it with a policy that would be primarily “administrative” like that in the North\textsuperscript{256} in order to help to “arrest the disintegrating agencies at work” in southern Nigeria.\textsuperscript{257} After amalgamation, he revived the same arguments he had earlier employed in the north to seek approval for an extension of direct taxation to the south including the existence of tribute and tax payment in Benin and among the Yoruba in pre-colonial times. His proposals were continuously disapproved until a decline in the finances of the colony during the WWI compelled the Colonial Office to finally approve them.

Assessment and collection of taxes commenced with the return of staff after the war in Cameroun and East African in 1917-18. The tax was assessed by the District

\textsuperscript{255} Carland, \textit{The Colonial Office and Nigeria, 1898-1914}, 130-1.
Officers at 8% of rent of landlords and 2.5% of estimated peasant income, payable by every male youth aged 16 years and above and all adult males and females. The head of each compound was made to account for all eligible taxpayers in his compound who were collectively assessed and the tax paid in lump sum. Later, individual receipts were introduced and issued. The tax was fixed at 5/- per adult male and 2/6d per adult female in Abeokuta city, Abeokuta Province in 1917, 6/- per adult male in Ilesha, Oyo Province in 1918, and 2/- per adult male and female and 1/- per youth in Benin Province. In Benin, in 1927 the Native Administration excluded women from taxation and consolidated the women’s share into that of the men who henceforth paid 7/- tax. The initial collection was met with violent uprisings which continued into the late 1920s. Various forms of passive resistance were utilized as well and continued long after.

The Emirs and chiefs were initially allowed to pocket part of the taxes. This transformed them into willing accomplices of the administration. Emirs and Chiefs were later placed on fixed salaries while the village heads were assigned the task of tax collection in return for ten percent of money collected. The balance of the tax was henceforth paid into the Native Authority Treasury, known as Biet el Maal in Northern Nigeria from 1911 on. The share of the Native Administration was initially fixed at not less than fifty percent for Muslim Emirates and less for pagan areas. The balance went to the central government. Even when fifty percent became regularized as the share due

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258 N. A. I., File BP613/1919 Benin Division, Assessment- District Officer, Benin Division to Resident, Benin Province11/02/1920.
to all the Native Authorities, it was inadequate to meet the needs of many of them.

Attempts by Governor Clifford to get the Colonial Office to approve retention of the whole tax by the Native Authorities failed and it was only after the Legislative Council took up the issue in 1927 that the Secretary of State ruled that seventy percent be given to “fully organized” Native Authorities.\(^{261}\) This decision saddled the many small, less populous and partially organized Native Authorities with increased responsibilities and functions which they could not meet with the fifty percent share of tax they received. They thus remained at the mercy of central government which was unable to provide them with basic social services. Some of the results of this policy will be examined in subsequent chapters.

A major problem with colonial taxation was the administration’s inability to assess and tax the rich. The earnings and income of the wealthy were never known to be accurately assessed and according to Ward-Price, a District Officer and later Resident in Oyo Province, guesses had to be made about the wealth of the few persons who possessed motorcars, or who spent more money than the average.\(^{262}\) As a result, he noted, “the wealthiest and poorest of members of a particular trade pay the same tax.” Attempts to change this situation 1937 in Oyo Province were opposed.\(^{263}\) It was only cocoa farmers who could be assessed based on the number of trees owned from 1929. In the Northern Provinces arbitrary assessment was common and in some cases wealthy traders paid little or nothing. Investigation in Moriki District of Sokoto Province showed that 149 possible taxpayers, including the wealthy of the town and relations and servants of the village

\(^{261}\) NAUK, CO 583/244/1 Bernard Bourdillon, *Apportionment of Revenue and Duties as between the Central Government and Native Administrations*, Minute by His Excellency the Governor, Lagos Government Printer, 1939, 1.

\(^{262}\) Ward-Price, *Dark Subjects*, 150-1.

heads, paid no taxes in 1913.\textsuperscript{264} In some provinces, including Benin (for the period 1920-7), Ijebu, and Abeokuta, payment included women whose tax incidence was lower than that of men regardless of income.

The imposition of taxation over the entire Colony and Protectorate did not solve the administration’s financial problems which worsened during the depression of the 1930s. This prompted an investigation of the incidence of taxation which revealed its uneven impact. The report showed that in the Southern Provinces individuals were paying between 2.5-3\% of income, while in the Northern Provinces this ranged from 6\% to above the notional ceiling of 10\% when assessment included unmerchandized agricultural products and cash wealth.\textsuperscript{265} However, it must be realized that these figures were based on estimates of wealth, and there was little check on overestimation. In Bauchi Province the incidence was 10\% and above in all the districts, with Shira District of Katagum Emirate having the highest incidence at 14.8\%.\textsuperscript{266} Jacob, the government statistician, also drew attention to the problem in the Northern Provinces as one in which “before the slump they were paying too little and after it rather too much.”\textsuperscript{267} The claim of the peasants paying too little before the depression is open to question as other studies\textsuperscript{268} have shown the contrary. Jacob also confirmed that “the ordinary native has less margin, less surplus farm produce in reserve, and can afford very much fewer imported articles. There can be no question of the fact that the Nigerian is paying a much

\textsuperscript{265} NAI CSO 26/2/27331/S.I, Inquiry into the incident of Taxation, Northern and Southern Provinces- S.M Jacob, Government Statistician to Chief Secretary to Government, 14/5/1934, 18.
\textsuperscript{266} Ibid Percentage of Gross Income on 1933-34 incidences, 23-4.
\textsuperscript{267} Ibid, S.M.Jacob, Government Statistician to Chief Secretary to Government, 14/5/1934, 15.
larger proportion of his cash income in various taxes than he did before the slump.”

The report recommended the reduction of tax rates in the Northern Provinces.

Both the high incidence and assessment in the Northern Provinces and low assessment in the Southern Provinces proved to be a heavy burden on the peasant population. This was attested to by the former District Officer Crocker who found that it was not unlikely that the tax money was the only available cash in some communities and during the depression there was an absolute “absence of currency in the villages” of Idoma Division in Benue Province.

Rates of taxation were continuously increased and rarely reduced. The few known cases of reductions or delays in collection were the result of resistance and revolts, which attracted reprisals and monetary fines. During the 1930s depression and in cases of crop failures, tax collection was only delayed while the rates were maintained and often increased once the crisis ended. This made payment difficult and various means, both individual and collective, were used to evade payment. But the colonial state and its principal architect Frederick Lugard regarded taxation as “a powerful instrument of labor and industry,” and used every means, including violence, to enforce payment.

Accounts of violent reprisals against defaulting communities inundate the annual reports and the memoirs of colonial officers. The annual exercise of mass seizure of

269 NAI CSO 26/2/27331/S.I, Inquiry into the incident of Taxation, Northern and Southern Provinces- S. M. Jacob, Government Statistician to Chief Secretary to Government, 14/5/1934, 15.
270 Crocker, Nigeria: A Critique of British Colonial Administration, 69.
valuables, which in some cases constituted the only store of wealth of absentee or runaway members of various communities, was common practice until the 1930s. When evasion failed, the defaulters resorted to desperate measures to pay. They initially sold their livestock and later resorted to other desperate means to pay tax. In Yoruba land,

… the elders of the house, when hard put to it to pay, would borrow the money from a trader, and hand over one of the family to him as a pledge of repayment. The man or boy so pledged … worked for the creditor for stated periods, this representing interest on money borrowed and not part of the original debt, which had to be paid in full. There are cases where men have been working in this manner for twenty years, because the families have never been able to raise enough to pay off the debt.275

Among some of the Igbo people, men pawned themselves or their children “in order to obtain money to pay their taxes.”276 In the Nupe area of Northern Nigeria, pawning increased and three thousand pawns were freed officially upon abolition in the Bida Emirate alone in 1937.277

The family was deprived of the labor of those pawned and its lowered output potentially led to hunger and poverty. The necessity to pay tax forced peasants to plant more cash earning crops at the expense of food. It was found in Dambarta District of Kano Emirate, “there has been an approach to famine conditions owing to the farmers having planted nothing but groundnuts last season and being left with no money to buy food owing to fall in the price”.278 The report blamed the peasants’ cultivation of insufficient land and reduced earnings from groundnuts and crafts for the near famine

275 Ward-Price, Dark Subjects, 152.
278 NAI CSO 26/2/27331/S.I, Inquiry into the incident of Taxation, Northern and Southern Provinces-P.G. Harris, Secretary, Northern Provinces to Chief Secretary to Government, 12/9/1934, 33.
conditions. It added that over-assessment was also a contributing factor leading to incomplete payment of tax, mass migrations, sale of livestock and conflicts with district and village heads all over Northern Provinces.\textsuperscript{279} Other such desperate measures were the mortgaging of standing crops and the sale of land.

The effects of taxation were most glaring in the Northern Provinces where direct taxation was earlier introduced and other factors combined to exacerbate poverty. The adverse effects of taxation were manifested more slowly in the Southern Provinces and were mitigated slightly by more widespread mission education which enabled a few to seek employment elsewhere. But mission education was itself later to become a harbinger of poverty as employment opportunities contracted.

The ability to pay tax depended on many factors, among the most important being the availability of cash earning opportunities (itself contingent on extra labour), soil fertility, proximity to market and employment centers, roads, prices and so on. Arguably, the adoption of export cash crop agriculture and labor migration, both encouraged by the colonial state, made those who adopted them more vulnerable to poverty. The resultant monoculture in the case of cash crop agriculture and migrant wage labor work exposed participants to the vagaries of the world market. When climatic conditions or disease affected crop yields or when the prices of crops, sylvan products, or minerals fell, peasants and migrant laborers were pushed into debt which often degenerated into poverty.

\textsuperscript{279} Ibid, 35-6.
Trade and Exploitation

If taxation deprived the peasants of substantial part of their income, another nemesis was exploitation through trade. Colonial rule was about the “opening up of Africa to trade,” a euphemism for exploitation by British firms, whose profitable operations were one driving force for the establishment of the colonial state. The colonial state functioned largely to remove the obstacles to profitable trade by the colonial firms. The big coastal middlemen African traders and the various toll collection gates of African states constituted the initial obstacle. But more important obstacles were the various local forms of production geared mainly towards meeting local or regional needs. These had to be altered or dismantled to allow entry by the European firms into local circuits of production and consumption.

If military conquest of the coastal states and the toll-collecting polities of the interior removed the initial obstacle, administrative policies were used to achieve the objectives of reorienting production activities and establishing the order and structures necessary for the growth of a European dominated import/export trade. In addition, some of the lucrative extractive production activities, like mining and lumbering, were placed on licenses for which bank guarantees were required. The inadequate capital of most African traders limited their direct participation in mining and lumbering and consequently many became middlemen and contractors to European firms.

Intense rivalry, cut throat competition, and the periodic formation of temporary oligopolies among European trading firms combined with changes in the global political economy to determine profit margins which in turn informed their commercial policies and activities. In spite of removal of obstacles to trade, European firms initially largely
confined their activities to the coast and a few inland river “beachheads’. Nwabghughogu claims that, amongst other factors, the initial Colonial Office sympathy for African middlemen accounted for this slow penetration, but this is not an adequate explanation. Colonial Office support for African middlemen was probably motivated by a concern for the security of lives of European traders in the incompletely pacified interior, and the fear that their activities would create further entanglements. There were also the problems of inadequate knowledge of the interior - especially language and customs, limitations of transport, and more importantly the continued profitability of the mode of operation of European firms. As long as they posed no threat to profit margins, European firms continued to depend on the African middlemen traders. Apart from European firms which attempted to defend their profit margins by shifting any potential shortfalls to peasant producers, African middlemen further added their own costs and profit margins.

The opening of the interior threw up a new wave of small middlemen who moved from the coast and joined the middlemen traders of the interior. They proliferated in places where the colonial communication network was least developed and thus least penetrable by the firms. In the Eastern Provinces, especially among the Igbo, this new crop of middlemen employed bicycles in conducting the palm oil and imported goods trade between the firms and the peasant producers for a profit that has been calculated to have averaged £22 annually. According to Nwabghughogu, the small middlemen traders

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281 Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Microfilm Boz 953, Reel 23, Annual Report of Protectorate of Southern Nigeria 1901, Ralph Moore, High Commissioner to Chamberlain, Secretary of State for Colonies, Desptach 381, 7/10/1902, 3.
fixed low and high prices for produce and imported goods respectively and reaped “high profits” for a very brief period.\(^{283}\)

Sir Ralph Moor argued that the middlemen were mere carriers between the European firms and people of the interior and that the differential in prices which the middlemen received was not profit but reimbursement for moving goods given the poor development of transport.\(^{284}\) However, in addition to realizing their transport costs, the middlemen of this early period exploited producers and consumers through cheating. As early as 1905, colonial officials reported that some Benin villages were boycotting Itsekiri traders accused of shortening of cloth and the adulteration of gin with water in Sapoba Market and that this was affecting trade.\(^{285}\) Middlemen also engaged in adulterating local produce, prompting the colonial state to enact an ordinance to control the adulteration of produce in 1896-7.\(^{286}\) Later, produce inspection was introduced and enforced. This innovation created a whole new set of possibilities for bribery by unscrupulous produce inspectors.

African middlemen traders also used political force to increase their profit margins. In the Northern Provinces, traders employed the services of District and Village Heads to advance money to peasant producers to pay taxes that were due long before the harvest. This took the form of “advanced sales” of export crops at prices substantially lower than could be gotten at harvest.\(^{287}\) In Sokoto town it was discovered that people were forced to sell their produce to certain middlemen and extortionate fees were being


\(^{285}\) NAI BD 13/2 Benin City District, Quarter Report ending 31 March 1905.

\(^{286}\) NAI CSO1/13, Vol. 7 Despatch No 151 Niger Coast Protectorate Annual Report 1897-98 Galway to Marquis of Salisbury, 1/9/1898, 252.

charged as commission. This discouraged people from bringing goods to sell in Sokoto.²⁸⁸

European firms also engaged in various forms of cheating. The European firms saturated the markets with inferior manufactured goods and counterfeit currencies for distribution and sale to Africans. In Ibadan, the firm of Messrs. F. Swanzy, which had a monopoly lease of rubber forest in 1895, was reported to be engaged in issuance of “I Owe You” bills in lieu of payment which were at times not honored and the outright seizure of “adulterated” produce which was exported as poor grade rubber until these activities led to the abrogation of its lease.²⁸⁹ The use of IOUs or scrip disappeared earlier in the Western Provinces because of Lagos press criticisms and availability of colonial currency, but it continued in the Eastern and Northern Provinces for a longer period. It was only after the introduction of direct taxation and during the depression that trade by barter was reported to be disappearing and the produce trade was conducted solely in cash.²⁹⁰ Peasants in the Northern Provinces were forced to engage in barter trade with European firms who refused to pay them in cash because they desperately needed cash to pay their taxes and the sale of the bartered imports they received for their produce was one of the few ways of obtaining it. The barter trade favored the firms as it enabled them to undervalue peasant produce in relation to their imports.²⁹¹

An important weapon wielded by the European firms in maximizing their profit margins and exploiting peasants was price fixing. Global changes in prices of produce and hikes of duties were used to justify arbitrary price changes by the firms. Changes in

²⁸⁸ NAI CSO26/03456 M.S.W.Edwardes, Ag Resident, Sokoto Province Annual Report 1921, 36.
²⁸⁹ Falola, Politics and Economy in Ibadan, 1893-1945, 107.
²⁹¹ Shenton, The Development of Capitalism in Northern Nigeria, 55.
the political economy of the Europe and North America affected commodity market prices and cutthroat competition continually threatened the profits of European firms. Their response was to “pool together” or cooperate in setting prices for imports and exports. However, these “pool” agreements were unstable because the pursuit of maximum profits, distrust and inequality amongst the firms led to agreement violations and the resumption of competition. Pooling was a recurrent practice in produce trade. The bulk of the profit of European firms was usually made on imports and realized through the fixing of high prices and practices such as over-invoicing. Such activities placed pressure on the profit margins of African middlemen and pressured them to maintain profits at the expense of African producers and consumers.

Despite being relatively undercapitalized, some of the largest African traders still tried to compete with the European firms. The European firms’ pool agreement of 1920 was partly weakened by big African traders’ offers of higher prices for produce and engagement of direct shipping to Europe. This forced the European firms into a price war and caused the collapse of the pool. This development intensified trade competition which was heightened further by the entry of Lebanese and Syrian middlemen who used lorry transport, higher prices, and direct shipping to compete with the Europeans in Northern Provinces in the 1920s and 1930s. The intensification of competition from

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292 Ibid., 78-90.
293 Ibid., 78.
295 Shenton, The Development of Capitalism in Northern Nigeria, 56.
both African and Lebanese merchants combined with other factors in the global political economy to increasingly drive the European firms into mergers. By 1929, this process ultimately produced the merger of some of the biggest European firms into the United African Company (UAC) that cornered the lion’s share of Nigeria’s trade.\textsuperscript{298}

The intermittent response of African peasant producers and the small middlemen to pools and price fixing, especially palm oil and kernel producers, was to “hold back” their produce. During the pool of 1898, it was reported that the peasant producers “prefer growing farm (sic) and sitting down to taking a lower price and it takes a very long time as a rule to explain to them the changes that are continually taking place in the price of produce in England.”\textsuperscript{299} But the holding back from sale of produce usually could not be sustained for long in the face of the need for cash for taxes and other necessities. African middlemen often supported the holding back of produce sales because arbitrary price changes reduced their profit margin on produce that they had already “advance purchased”. The plight of middlemen and peasant producers during the 1920-21 pool following the post-WW I slump was highlighted thusly:

… the collector of produce is not even recompensed for his time and the middlemen receives no price sufficient to provide a living when it comes to shipping. The European Firms offer a most miserable price - consequently there are no collectors or middlemen.

From all districts come the reports after enquiries by Political Officers that the if European firms will reduce the price of their European articles, hardware, cloth etc. then it might be possible to work local produce at a small profit but not till then….\textsuperscript{300}

\textsuperscript{298} Ibid, 94.
\textsuperscript{299} NAI CSO1/13, Vol. 7 Despatch No 151 Niger Coast Protectorate Annual Report 1897-98 Galway to Marquis of Salisbury, 1/9/1898, 259b.
\textsuperscript{300} NAI CSO 2I/150 File 443 Benin Province Annual Report for 1920-31.3.21 by H.C. Aveling, Ag. Resident, 8-9.
One paradoxical producer response to sustained low prices caused by pooling and/or prolonged economic slump in the face of the inability to sustain produce sale hold ups was to increase production through investing in more land and labor time in export cash crops in order to sustain cash incomes to meet tax and other money obligations. This was often done at the expense of food crop production and could lead to producer impoverishment.

The improvement of transport infrastructure facilitated the movement of the European firms into the interior where they started opening canteens along the newly constructed roads and railway lines opened between the 1910s and 1930s. But they were usually a step behind their Lebanese competitors who employed every means to undercut both European firms and African merchants and middlemen. This movement into the interior dealt a blow to some African middlemen traders whose small profit margin was eroded. In Owerri, this development drove the Igbo middlemen further into areas inaccessible to lorries. In Benin, when one African trader protested to the District Officer that “the bush people will get a bigger price from the European firm than they do from the middlemen”, the Resident replied that “it is contrary to the policy of government to interfere in commercial or economic matters in favor of any particular class or classes of the community.” One reaction in some parts of Yoruba land was an attempt to prevent the settlement of Lebanese. In response, the Lebanese then began

303 NAI BD 22 Vol.1, Correspondence with Trading Firms -Comments on Petition of Mr. Sunday Osunde and Others in District Officer, Benin Division to Resident Benin Province, 1/05/1930.
304 Ibid, Resident Benin Province to District Officer Benin Division, 1/05/1930.
trading from lorries and bribing their way in to the communities. Colonial officials, though not generally supportive of Lebanese merchants, saw their advance, and that of the European firms, as good for trade and the peasant population. The Resident of Owerri Province reported that this development pleased women producers who were paid higher by the firms; while the District Officer of Benin Division viewed this development as one benefiting the common good.

The increased competition arising from the movement of the European firms into the interior did not benefit peasant producers and consumers as much as was claimed by the colonial officers whose views are noted above. In part, this was because such expansion directly benefited only a small, if growing, portion of the population. The slow and limited development of railways and roads meant that European and Lebanese firms still had to rely on the small African middlemen traders to get to the vast areas that were untouched by these new modes of transportation.

Also, in addition to the advance sales for tax payment and political pressure to sell at reduced prices mentioned above, other strategies were introduced or elaborated on to the disadvantage of peasant producers. These included the manipulation of scales to reduce the weight of produce and the bribing of produce inspectors to downgrade peasants’ produce in order to force sales at lower prices. Probably more important was the continued maintenance, or indeed increase of obligations to the state like taxes, fees and fines, and communities levies that also came with better communications. In


\[306\] NAI BD 22, Vol.I, Correspondence with Trading Firms -District Officer, Benin Division to Resident, Benin Province, 1.5.1930 and NAI CSO 26/2/11930 Vol. VIII, W. Hunt, Snr. Resident Owerri Province Annual Report 1930, 68.
addition, greater involvement in the colonial cash economy led to not just the monetization of obligations formerly payable in kind or local currencies, but an escalation of in the number, size and cost of various household and social needs. Increasingly, clothing, tools, and other household items, as well as marriage goods, costs of naming and funeral ceremonies, children’s school fees, health care, judicial services all required increasing amounts of cash.

Given these increasing cash obligations, any serious misfortune, such as climatic or pest induced crop failure, land shortage and soil depletion, disability, death and even a poorly timed marriage, could generate a desperate need for cash and thus a domestic crisis. In many cases the only option, in the absence of savings, was borrowing at usurious rates from moneylenders. In the Northern Provinces, Shenton and Lennihan, using a study conducted in Zaria Province in the late 1930s, showed that “between 30 and 40 percent of all rural producers were indebted, that is, they cannot get through an agricultural cycle without borrowing.” In the Western Provinces, particularly among the dominant Yoruba groups, there developed an increased population of pawns, clear evidence of increasing indebtedness. Those without dependants resorted to self-pawning or used the produce of their cocoa farms to pay interest on loans until the capital was paid. In the Eastern Provinces, in addition to pawning, the Igbo in particular were forced into the pledging of their land as collateral and its consequent loss when

usurious interest rates or personal misfortune caused them to be unable to repay loans.\textsuperscript{310}

Those without land to pledge took the extreme measure of selling their children into bondage and prostitution. S. K. George, Assistant Commissioner of Police, in the eastern provinces, found in Owerri Province that contrary to custom,

\ldots nowadays normal children are being sold: a) because of extreme poverty of the parents. This is particularly so in the Uturu clan of Okigwi division. Further reasons for sale among this clan are that they are non traders,… (b)There is a large surplus of girls who cannot get husbands because the young men of today are unable to pay the dowry asked. Or because of the Mission influence which allows only one wife and so has reduced the demand for girls. (c) Pure cases of pawning as a more or less temporary measure for raising money. But this is not confined to children. Men frequently pawn themselves.\textsuperscript{311}

This development is further corroborated by a study of the economy of sixteen Igbo individuals in Ozuitem village in Owerri Province in 1938-1939 which showed that 8 were indebted and had expenditures higher than income.\textsuperscript{312} These debts resulted largely from taxes and seasonal borrowing of food.

In order to pay these debts and meet other obligations, especially taxes, and food production shortfalls, some peasants were pressed into working for their neighbors at critical moments during the farming season at the expense of working their own farms which thus became less productive and thereby further impoverished them. A recurrence of any of these misfortunes in quick succession could lead to further indebtedness and or complete ruination of the peasant. In the face of such calamity, many of the affected resorted to migration and crime. Some even ventured outside the colony as far as Gold

\textsuperscript{312} J.S Harris “Some Aspects of the Economics of Sixteen Ibo Individuals” \textit{Africa} Vol. XIV, No.6, April 1944, 330.
Coast in the west and Spanish Equatorial Guinea in the east. Women were worst affected because of their unequal access to land as well as the inadequate educational and employment opportunities for women in the colonial society. Some were consequently forced into prostitution, with the women from Ogoja Province going as far as Gold Coast.

Conclusion

As noted in chapter one, Iliffe argues that in twentieth century Africa “conjunctural and structural poverty converged.” This was result of “broad increases in wealth, diversified sources of income, more effective government, better transport, wider markets, and improved hygiene and medicine.” Once again, Iliffe’s argument is incomplete in that it fails to give sufficient attention to changes in social relations.

This chapter has examined the various processes of colonial impoverishment. It has shown how policies intended to avoid social disintegration produced the unintended outcome of impoverishment. Indirect rule changed power relations between chiefs, Emirs and people. In tandem with the policy of communal land tenure policy, it limited credit, constrained labor mobility, sowed the seeds of ethnic strife, and corrupted chiefly power. Taxation policy deprived the peasants of substantial part of their surplus produce and, together with indirect rule and the communal land policy made the peasantry easy prey for European and Lebanese firms, their African agents, corrupt chiefs and usurious

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315 Iliffe, 6.
moneylenders. As well, the growing monetization of the necessities of social reproduction placed ever greater burdens on peasant producers. All of this resulted in indebtedness for many that made them more vulnerable to drought, locust invasion, crop blights and the like. Many became impoverished and forced to migrate from their communities for wage labor and prostitution. Widespread poverty produced new social groups and social problems threatening the maintenance of social order. The colonial response will be examined in the following chapters.
CHAPTER FOUR

EUROPEAN SURVIVAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS- INDUCED SOCIAL SERVICES, 1900-1939

It is also, I fear beyond question that both educational and medical facilities are seriously inadequate to the needs of the people. At the moment the Government can only afford to spend just over 4½d per head of the population on education and just under 6½d per head on health.

Bernard H. Bourdillon, Governor of Nigeria to Malcolm MacDonal d, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 5th April 1939 NAUK CO583/243/19 Economic Development of Nigeria, 8/32

Introduction

This chapter examines the aims and objectives as well as the development and implementation of policies and measures that facilitated the provision of basic social services in the areas of medical health and education before 1939. It is argued that the provision of health and educational services were poor and influenced by the needs of Europeans health and administrative efficiency rather than African welfare which was neglected due to racism, a stringent financial policy and poor economic management of the administration. Although neither the provision of health services nor education were designed to address the problem of colonial poverty, they constituted the vast bulk of social services before 1939 and are thus worthy of examination in their own right. Moreover, because they constituted the bases of social service provision, a discussion of their evolution is necessary in order to detail the subsequent formation of social welfare policy and its implementation.
Medical and Health Service: From the Survival of Europeans to the Productivity of Africans

The earliest social services introduced by the colonial state in Nigeria were medical and health services. These were introduced to ensure the survival of Europeans amidst a hostile climate whose fatal effects on European health had earlier earned West Africa notoriety as the “Whiteman’s grave.” The health of Europeans was critical to the colonization of the interior of Africa and its development as a source of the raw materials and markets for Britain. The colonial state preceded the Christian missionaries in the establishment of health service institutions. Although European missionaries with some medical personnel are known to have plied their trade in Nigeria among fellow Europeans, African missionaries, and converts, they did little to establish medical and health institutions. Rather, beginning in 1873, it was the colonial state that pioneered the provision of medical and health institutions primarily to care for the health of European and African personnel in the Colony of Lagos. There then followed the beginning of medical provision in the hinterland. However, despite the critical nature of the health of European officials to the colonial enterprise, the provision of medical

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318 Agubosim has argued that it was the British official adherence to various laws that had been passed in the Crown Colony of Lagos that prompted the colonial state to need to extend medical facilities to the interior of Nigeria after conquest. He claimed that as a British crown colony and port, some of the metropolitan laws in operation in Lagos, namely Prisons Ordinance No.9 of 1876, Pilotage and Harbour Ordinance No.3 of 1878 and Town and Police and Public Health Ordinance No 10 of 1878 had provisions for the use of hospitals or medical personnel. However, this is unlikely as the initial provision of medical services preceded the passage of these laws. Samuel Chukwudoruen Agubosim “The Development of Modern Medical and Health Services in Warri/Delta Province, 1906-1960” Ph. D. *Thesis*, University of Ibadan, Ibadan 1997, 46.
services for them in large parts of the interior could not be guaranteed in the early years.

For instance Harry Maddock, District Officer, Brass Division complained in 1926 that,

... it is deplorable that a division where there are at least twelve Europeans, a large staff who are entitled to free treatment and thirty to fifty prisoners that some arrangement cannot be made for medical attendance. If a Medical Officer cannot be spared, at least a dispenser might well be left behind.319

Thus, even though the survival of Europeans more greatly influenced the provision of medical and health services in Nigeria from the 1870s on than any other reason, the services provided for Europeans were minimal. This was largely because of the strict adherence to the Imperial financial diklat requiring colonies to be self-supporting. As a result, medical services for Europeans could not be provided where they resided. Instead, a centralization of these services was practiced with European hospitals being built in central locations and sick Europeans evacuated to these when necessary and possible.

The provision of medical services for Europeans was predicated on the encouraging results of advances in medical research on the tropical diseases that had earlier slowed the expansion of British interests and trade in Africa. This research, by end of the nineteenth century, had produced two contending biomedical schools concerning tropical diseases - curative, emphasizing the role of the pathogen/host, and preventative - concentrating on environment and sanitation in addressing the problem of health in the tropics. Africa was a major laboratory of these contending schools. The Colonial Office favored the pathogen/host school of disease associated with Sir Patrick Mason, medical and health adviser to Joseph Chamberlain, while a faction of merchant capital,

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represented by the Liverpool Chambers of Commerce, promoted Dr Ronald Ross\textsuperscript{320} environment/sanitation school of disease eradication.\textsuperscript{321} The choice of the Colonial Office, which would become the key provider of medical care in the early years of colonial rule, had important implications. While the environment/sanitation school, which emphasized prevention and community treatment, might well have been beneficial to the greater African population, the pathogen/host school that employed less expensive curative and individual based treatment was available only to Europeans and a few African functionaries.

The pathogen/host school of Mason not only viewed African children as major carriers of tropical diseases, but also held that African adults, because of their supposedly lower intellectual capabilities, could not to be employed as medical officers.\textsuperscript{322} Although the Mason school was initially predominant, as Vaughan has shown, elements of both schools and practices stemming from them were put to use in British colonial Africa including Nigeria.\textsuperscript{323} Before the First World War this mix was reflected in the provision of segregated hospitals and housing for Europeans and their African employees in major centers of European settlement and trade and public health and sanitation measures that emphasized segregation in government stations with sizeable European populations. To a

\textsuperscript{320} Dr Ronald Ross 1857-1932 was Surgeon in India who confirmed Dr Patrick Mason’s hypothesis that Malaria was caused by Mosquitoes and went further to prove the mode of transmission and eradication of the disease from the environment. His works earned him the Nobel Prize. Raymond E. Dunnet “The Campaign against Malaria and the Expansion of Scientific Medical and Sanitary Services in British West Africa, 1898-1910” \textit{African Historical Studies}, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1968, 160-1.


\textsuperscript{322} Mason stated that “The intellectual level of West Africans was lower than that of Indians.” Quoted in Raymond E. Dunnet “The Campaign against Malaria and the Expansion of Scientific Medical and Sanitary Services in British West Africa, 1898-1910” \textit{African Historical Studies}, 193-4.

small extent such public health measures were extended to Africans. The specific mix, in any particular locale depended to a large extent on the medical “man on the spot.”

The Lagos Colony and Protectorate were fortunate in having Sir William MacGregor, a medical doctor, as Governor between 1899 and 1902. Possibly because of his professional disposition, he went beyond his official brief to employ African Medical Officers to augment the health services of the Colony and Protectorate. He viewed the health of non-official Africans as critical to the good health of Europeans and extended medical services to them in addition to undertaking large-scale sanitation work without the segregation of races and destruction of communities. He created medical districts and appointed District Medical Officers who, while primarily catering to the needs of Europeans, also addressed epidemic outbreaks in African communities. He established a Board of Health for the Lagos Colony and utilized the services of civic organizations like the Lagos Ladies League in infant mortality reduction campaigns and other welfare programmers. This pro-African approach to health was to some extent continued in Lagos by his successor Walter Egerton but was not extended to the hinterland.

The provision of medical and health services in the other Nigerian protectorates was largely contingent on a large presence of Europeans in a locality. The first hospitals to be built were European hospitals, with African hospitals only being added later in some towns. In the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria the long coastline and its many ports attracted settlement by many European traders. The prevailing belief that the mangrove

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swamp vegetation of these areas constituted a health hazard prompted Sir Ralph Moor to embark on the establishment of medical facilities there. By 1905 there were eight medical districts under Medical Officers, one small pox vaccine production unit in Sapele, one European hospital, and two native hospitals. Two other hospitals were under construction, and approval to build two more was being awaited. By 1906 the numbers had increased to four European hospitals in Calabar, Sapele, Warri and Onitsha, while there were Native hospitals in Calabar, Bonny, Sapele, Benin City, Forcados and Onitsha in the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria.

Racial segregation and destruction of native towns for purposes of protecting European health were practiced in some stations or medical districts. Sanitation measures, centered on drainage work to check malaria-carrying mosquitoes, were undertaken in the major urban centers of Calabar, Benin City, Brass, Forcados, Akassa, Asaba and Bonny. Where there were few or no Europeans, there were no sanitation programs. Outside these government stations and schools, sanitation was reported to be “according to Native ideas”. These were “without sanitation as understood by more civilized peoples. No precautions are taken against fly and water borne diseases.”

The situation was little different in the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria under Frederick Lugard and his immediate successors who believed in “preserving Africans in their primitive state” and labored under financial constraints. They provided hospitals only in the cantonments of Lokoja and Zungeru which, at various times, were both

329 Annual Report on Medical Department, Southern Nigeria for the year 1906, 299.
capitals of the Protectorate before 1910. The extension of the railway to Kano in 1911 and the resulting influx of European traders led to the extension of medical services there. Sanitation of native towns was reported to be poor because “Native habits are difficult to change”; and segregation of the races remained the guiding principle until the late 1910s. Segregation was taken a step further in the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria by the separation of the Africans who were deemed not native to a settlement, and known as “native foreigners” or “non-native natives”, from locals. Such native foreigners were made to establish their residences in different locations within the same town on the basis of religion or place of origin. In cities like Zaria, the indigenes remained in their ancient walled city, while the non-indigenes of the Muslim faith were located in the Tudun-Wada (strangers settlement) and non-indigenous non-Muslims from the Southern Protectorate and other parts of West Africa were confined to the Sabon-Gari, or “new town”. Each location was demarcated by buffer zones. The Annual Medical Report of 1910 maintained that “the sanitary habits of this class of Africans (non-indigenes and non-Muslim) are much worse than those of the [local] natives.”

The implementation of the policy of segregation on both health and racial grounds in the protectorates that were to make up Nigeria was not uniform and depended largely on the “man on the spot” before the amalgamation of the protectorates. But with the appointment of Frederick Lugard as Governor General of the amalgamated protectorates in 1914, racial segregation was legalized and strictly enforced all over Nigeria as a health measure. This situation was worsened by Lugard’s unbridled racism and his passionate

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330 Medical Department Annual Report, Northern Nigeria Gazzette, 1908, 100.
331 Northern Nigeria, Annual Medical Report for the year ending 31st December 1910, 10-14.
333 Northern Nigeria, Annual Medical Report for the year ending 31st December 1910, 5.
hatred for the educated elites of Lagos and Southern Nigeria and their critical press. As a result, the health-care of Africans was largely neglected. Lugard closed medical facilities and rejected requests for employment of African medical officers and suggestions of policies that promoted African health. At the end of Lugard’s tenure in 1918, there were only 16 dispensaries and 18 hospitals in the whole of Nigeria serving a population of about 17.5 million.

Apart from providing facilities addressing the immediate health problems of the European community and African employees of the administration, the state was also concerned during this period with preventing the epidemic diseases that were most fatal to Europeans. Both trained and untrained “vaccinators” were employed for the purposes of mass inoculations in and around the government stations where Europeans resided along with their African functionaries. Outside these areas, it was reported that “It is only when it (epidemic disease) assumes an epidemic form that we are able to detect it.” Preventive health measures were restricted, and only extended to Africans when there were epidemic outbreaks capable of threatening the health of Europeans.

The Native Councils rather than the central government undertook the funding of the vaccination materials and vaccinators. Vaccinations were often ineffective because of the spoiling of vaccines from poor and/or long storage. Worse still was the fact that

334 On the educate elite of Lagos, Lugard wrote that “These people are seditious and rotten to the core. They are masters of intrigue and have been plotting against the government ceaselessly …But after 29 years as Governor here, I am free to say that the people of Lagos are the lowest, most seditious and disloyal, the most prompted by merely self seeking of any people I have ever met” Quoted in Rina Okonkwo, Protest Movement in Lagos, 1908-1930, Enugu, ABIC Publishers Ltd, 1998, 4.
336 Nicholson, The Administration of Nigeria, 1900-1960: Men, Methods and Myths, 244.
338 Ibid.
although vaccination was supposed to be administered free to the African population, it provided an opportunity for extortion. In addition, there existed the problem of post-vaccination ulcers. This problem was attested to by a 1927 report on Plateau Province where it was observed that the problem of ulcers caused opposition to vaccination. Such problems caused some communities and individuals to evade the occasional visit of the Medical Officer and vaccinator as well as to conceal epidemic disease outbreaks. As late as 1945, an outbreak of small pox was concealed in Ishan Division of Benin Province and only discovered in 1946 because of its great mortality, with some individuals consequently being convicted for its concealment.

Segregation of sufferers of certain contagious diseases like small pox and leprosy, as well as non-contagious “diseases” like lunacy, was undertaken with the establishment of a small number of asylums, quarantine stations, infectious disease hospitals and leper villages in all the protectorates. These segregated medical establishments were few and largely restricted to communities where Europeans resided. Save for the quarantine stations that were established in port towns to check for the introduction of new diseases, those within these segregated establishments received little medical attention. The Lagos Leper Asylum and Lunatic Asylum, established in 1903 and 1907 respectively, were in the late 1900s without necessary supplies for the inmates. No psychiatrist was provided for the Lunatic Asylum throughout most of the colonial period. In 1905 the Asaba Leper Asylum, the only one in the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, was refusing

admission of lepers due to lack of funds, while those already admitted were dying or leaving for lack of care. It was recommended that the asylum be closed and the care of lepers transferred to their local communities.\textsuperscript{343} It was only in the 1910s that attempts at the segregation of lepers were once again considered.

The only other African groups that received some medical attention were prisoners. The use of prisoners for sundry work, especially sanitary work in the European quarters, required that they be in good health. As a result, most prisons were provided with at least an untrained dispenser. By contrast some of the communities where prisons were located might have no medical services at all. Jamaare, in Bauchi Province had no hospital or dispensary in 1927, but had a Dogari (Palace Guard) trained as dispenser to cater for the prison.\textsuperscript{344} In Auchi, Benin Province, an untrained prison clerk doubled as a dispenser in the prison in 1924.\textsuperscript{345}

Medical services in the period before and during the First World War were so restricted that it was reported that “The general health of only a small portion of the whole community comes under observation.”\textsuperscript{346} Even this restricted access was further constrained by the charging of fees for health care. In 1914, under Lugard, the fees charged were viewed as too low and increases were proposed to the Legislative Council for approval.\textsuperscript{347} Such charges made access to biomedical services difficult for the bulk of the non-official African population. This, rather than “conservatism”, partly accounts for the poor response of some of the local people to biomedical services.

\textsuperscript{343} Medical Department Report for Southern Nigeria for the year 1905, 10.
\textsuperscript{345} NAI, BP 238/21 District Officer, Kukuruku Division to Resident, Benin Province, 4/01/1924, 37.
\textsuperscript{346} Nigeria Southern Provinces Annual Medical and Sanitary Report for the year ended 31\textsuperscript{st} December 1915, 38.
\textsuperscript{347} NAUK CO 652/7 Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, 10/2/1914, 7.
The attention given to the health of Africans from the late 1910s on was influenced by three developments of which two were connected with the First World War and its aftermath. In the Northern Provinces the Emir’s share of taxes was converted to treasury revenue for the development of the Native Administration. With this, from 1911, the Native Administrations in the Northern Provinces began to establish native hospitals and dispensaries and engage in sanitation work. However, expenditure on African health ultimately depended on the disposition of the British political officer. In 1913, for instance, medical services constituted the second highest expenditure (after the land survey) in Bornu Province, while Zaria, Ilorin, Bassa and Kabba Provinces expended nothing on medical services.\footnote{348}

The establishment of more hospitals and dispensaries was hastened by the outbreak of the First World War which necessitated the medical examination of those to be recruited for the war. The colonial state quickly established so-called “Bush Hospitals” in temporary structures, some of which were later converted to native hospitals.\footnote{349} The recruitment exercise exposed the numerous diseases and physical disabilities suffered by the colonial state’s African subjects.\footnote{350}

The war also exposed the insecurity and vulnerability of British imperial sources of raw materials and food supplies to blockades. This in turn necessitated a search for reliable African alternatives. Even before the war ended, means of cheaply producing more African agricultural goods for British consumption started to be explored. The achievement of this end was seen as requiring the creation and maintenance of a healthy

\footnote{348 NAK SNP 10/1-717P/1913 Native Administration Expenditure incurred to December 31\textsuperscript{st} under Roads, Public Works, Education, Land Survey, Medical and Economic, 1-2.}
\footnote{349 Schram, \textit{A History of the Nigerian Health Services}, 136.}
population. In a reply to Lord Milner, one of the principal proponents of the scheme to increase African agricultural productivity, Lugard opined that the success depended, amongst other things, on “the control of disease especially small pox and venereal [diseases] which prevent the increase of population.”

A third factor that worked to promote concern with the health of Africans was the establishment of the League of Nations which put part of former German colony of Cameroun under British Mandate in a joint administration with Nigeria at the end of the war. Under the League of Nations’ mandate Cameroun and other former German colonies were deemed to be “trust” territories to be developed and the welfare of the subject people improved. This policy had spillover effects into the administrations of British colonies themselves and provided a limited impetus for the colonial state to provide at least a semblance of welfare. These developments might have been expected to increase the long-term provision of medical and healthcare services for Africans in Nigeria but, given the limited fiscal base and the doctrine of colonial financial self-sufficiency, little was achieved.

Nigeria’s revenue was derived largely from import and export duties and direct taxes that were greatly dependent on unstable world markets for primary produce. The precarious nature of Nigeria’s finances was further compounded by a number of government policies and decisions. For instance, during his two tours, Lugard embarked on policies and projects motivated more by racist concerns such as the employment of Europeans at relatively high salaries for work that Africans could have undertaken at lower cost.\textsuperscript{352} The amalgamation of Nigeria resulted in the inheritance of the debts incurred in building railways in the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria and payment of the

\textsuperscript{351} Rhodes House Library, Frederick Lugard Papers S. 74/ FF 100-133 Lugard to Milner, 26/4/1919, 48.
massive mineral royalties to the Niger Company.\textsuperscript{353} Amalgamation freed the former protectorate of Northern Nigeria from dependence on imperial grants in aid, but resulted in the indebtedness of Nigeria as a whole. Under Governor Graeme Thomson, Nigeria’s debt soared, with new loans taken to finance infrastructure projects critical to colonial exploitation and the welfare of European officials.\textsuperscript{354} Thompson increased recruitment of European personnel from 1,671 in 1925 to 2,664 in 1927. Much of the colony’s revenue was channeled to payment of the colonial bureaucracy, servicing debts, and investment in the bonds of other colonies through the British Crown Agent.

Worse affected was Northern Nigeria which continued to adhere to a balanced budget and investment of revenue surpluses in Britain at the expense of social services even after amalgamation.\textsuperscript{355} In the 1927-28 financial years, a total of £2,029,488 was expended on salaries and duty pay. This increased to £2,449,638 in 1929-30 with an additional £322,324 “allocated for ocean and rail passages, traveling allowances including assisted passages for officials’ wives, pensions and gratuities.”\textsuperscript{356} This amounted to 24.6% of the total gross revenue of £11,244,000 in 1929-1930. On the eve of the depression Nigeria was in deficit, eliciting the protests of the Lagos press and prompting the Colonial Office to again press for prudence. By 1936, about 27% of tax revenue was going to the servicing of debts.\textsuperscript{357}

\textsuperscript{353} Robert W. Shenton, \textit{The Development of Capitalism in Northern Nigeria}, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 198.
Given such management and the policy of colonial financial self sufficiency, there was little left for African welfare. Hodge acknowledges the penny pinching financial policy of the British Treasury, but argues that the weakness of the colonial state and the experience of India made European administrators harbour a fear of the African elite’s resistance to health and sanitation measures. He claims that it was this fear that contributed to the administration’s cautionary approach to sanitation or public health and the delegation of the health care and social welfare of Africans to voluntary agencies.\textsuperscript{358} The fear of resistance noted by Hodge does not seem applicable to Nigeria and does not seem to have affected the medical and health care services of the colonial state. The colonial state practiced segregation in Nigeria and engaged in destruction and evacuation of communities where it found these actions necessary to safeguard European health. Such destruction and evacuation of African communities was carried out in Calabar, Warri and Benin.\textsuperscript{359} In Northern Nigeria, Emirs were “advised” to undertake the widening of roads, which involved destruction of parts of their towns, clearing of bush, and prohibition of cultivation within and around compounds in the name of public health and town planning. All these were done without regard to possible resistance. It was racism, the stringent financial policy towards African welfare, and poor economic management rather than the fear of resistance that accounted for the Colonial state’s neglect of African health care.

By the mid-1920s Nigeria, with a population of over 18 million, had only 21 hospitals with 636 beds and spent only 5d per person on health compared with Gold

Coast whose population of two and half million boasted 25 hospitals, 644 beds and expended 2s per person on health. This difference was partly the result of relative affluence of Gold Coast, but it was also the result of better management. The Gold Coast in the 1920s had been privileged to have a “development” minded Governor in Sir Frederick G. Guggisberg, 1919-1927, who invested in social services, particularly in health and education, which he believed were keys to development and increased trade between the Gold Coast and Britain. Nigeria did not.

The situation only changed slightly in the late 1920s and early 1930s when more serious consideration was given the health of Africans. This change was prompted by developments in the British economy which suffered from massive unemployment problems as a result of economic crisis originating in the aftermath of the First World War. The British governments solution to this problem was, in part, to find trading opportunities abroad that would generate the increased activity of its home industries and absorb some of its unemployed. The colonies were one key area targeted to provide these markets. However, it was realized that the population and productivity of African colonies were in danger of decline due to poor health arising from prevalence of disease, malnutrition and related causes.

In 1926, the Colonial Office sent the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies W.G.A. Ormsby-Gore to undertake a survey of the state of socio-economic development of the West African colonies. This revealed that Nigeria had the least developed

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healthcare and social services in West Africa. He attributed this situation to “financial stringency” and recommended that government extend healthcare services to non-official Africans and train local people as dispensers and dressers.\(^{364}\) Ormsby-Gore’s survey was followed up in 1928 by visitation by Dr. A.T. Stanton, an adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, which resulted in similar recommendations. It was most probably these recommendations that prompted the colonial administration in Nigeria to increase its facilities to cater for African health. In addition, the local administration was well aware of the situation. For instance, a directive in Bauchi Province in 1927 stated that “The provision of rural health services is an essential prerequisite to any agricultural development program, for it will help to keep the workers on the land and halt the present drift to the towns.”\(^{365}\) Improvement was spurred further by the creation of the Colonial Development Fund (CDF) of 1929 from which grants were drawn for health services.

However, grants from the metropolitan state remained grossly inadequate and the central government maintained its financial stringency while turning increasingly to the Native Administrations to finance the establishment of medical facilities including those of the central government and missions. For instance, the Bende Native Administration contributed £100 towards assisting the Primitive Methodist Hospital, Amachara, while Okigwi Native Administration funds were used to build the Okigwi Native Hospital in Owerri Province in 1928.\(^{366}\) Similarly, the Jos Native Administration built additional wards in the African Hospital in Jos, Plateau Province in 1931.\(^{367}\)

Native Administrations only came in 1931 through the Colonial Development Fund of 1929. This augmented the Native Administrations’ funding of the rural dispensaries and training of their personnel as well as sanitation work between 1930/1 and 1936.\textsuperscript{368} By 1938, there were 12 hospitals and one dispensary with 143 beds for the exclusive use of about 4000 Europeans, while Africans had only 52 hospitals with 1930 beds for Africans and 337 dispensaries\textsuperscript{369} for over 19 million people. By 1938 estimated government expenditure on health care had increased to 1s 11d per person. The total value of the CDF assistance to individual Nigerians, according to the calculation of the Resident, Abeokuta Province, showed that the inhabitants of the province only enjoyed only 0.1d per person of the 0.34d that the CDF allotted per person in the empire.\textsuperscript{370}

The standard of these numerous dispensaries built in the early 1930s was poor and in 1936, it was suggested that “when financial considerations permit, model rural dispensaries … be constructed”\textsuperscript{371} The poor quality of the existing dispensaries was confirmed by Dr Walter Miller who stated that,

I am very doubtful of the value of small dispensaries scattered about all over the country, unless in the hands of exceptionally good and well-trained African dispensers. Their use in any case should be mainly that of providing a centre for the visits of traveling medical men and for collecting patients.\textsuperscript{372} Miller omitted to mention the inadequacy or lack of drugs, dressings and other amenities.

The provision of these continued to largely depend on the financial buoyancy of the Native Administrations concerned and the disposition of the political officers. For…


\textsuperscript{370} NAUK CO583/244/18 Resident Abeokuta Province to Secretary, Western Provinces, 19/07/1939, 7.


instance, it was reported that the total cost of drugs and dressings, including the cost of packaging and freight, for one dispensary that was to serve a population of 16,796 people in one district in Benue Province in 1939 was one pound, ten shillings and nine pence of which over sixty percent consisted of dressings for treatment of wounds.\textsuperscript{373}

The use of these services, even by African officials, was not always free as they were expected to pay for medical services outside office hours.\textsuperscript{374} Non-officials paid some fees at all times. The payment of fees was a major disincentive to the use of services. The Resident of Benin Province observed in 1924 that people did not use the hospitals because “they are generally poor people who are unable to pay any fees much less such fees as the Medical Officer has demanded.”\textsuperscript{375} This view was further confirmed in 1938 when it was found that a decrease in attendance at the two government hospitals in Benin Province was in part because of “a more strict enforcement of the hospital fees ordinance.”\textsuperscript{376} Similar experiments with the enforcement of fees were also tried in rural dispensaries. It took a boycott of some of these dispensaries for the fees to be reduced or abolished. For instance, when nine dispensaries were opened in Plateau Province in 1931, the fees of one penny per patient and one shilling per injection led to a boycott at Kwoi in Jemaa Division that forced the abolition fees in this locality. However, fees were continued in others.\textsuperscript{377} It was similarly reported that the introduction of charges in the newly opened dispensaries in Sokoto Province led to a drop in attendance with only small revenue being realized from fees.\textsuperscript{378} A similar introduction of fees to the rural

\textsuperscript{374} NAI BP 238/21 Memorandum No 72 of Department of Medical and Sanitary 17/2/1926, 56.
\textsuperscript{375} Ibid, E.C. Palmer, Resident Benin Province to Secretary, Southern Provinces, 11/8/1924, 39.
\textsuperscript{376} NAI CSO 26/2, 14617 Vol. XII Benin Province: Annual Report 1938, 17.
dispensaries of Warri Province in 1938 also led to sharp decline in attendance.\textsuperscript{379} Such fees were introduced at a time when it was still being noted that the local people were distrustful of European medicine and tended to avoid it in preference to native healers. But a more cogent reason for the avoidance of these facilities was because “… the native healer is often content to take his payment in kind, whereas cash is required at the dispensaries and … cash is far from plentiful.”\textsuperscript{380}

In theory, by the 1920s, government employees, school children, and the indigent were exempted from fees. But this policy was not adhered to by all District Medical Officers and fees continued to be charged without exemption. This led the Resident of Benin Province to file a formal complaint in 1924. Though he was informed by the Secretary of Southern Provinces “that every indigent person may receive free treatment under 8 (a) of Part 1 of the Regulations under Cap 49”,\textsuperscript{381} fees were still being charged in 1926. The Director of Medical Services issued Memorandum No 72 to remind Medical Officers to comply with the regulations.\textsuperscript{382} Even so, the indigent were not exempted from payment for accommodation and feeding in the hospitals. In Sokoto, the Sultan was reported to have been paying the bills of indigent or pauper in-patients in 1929.\textsuperscript{383}

Hospitals charged the Native Administrations for the care of the paupers. However, such payment was not automatic but subject to the discretionary approval of the Political Officers. It was only in 1931 that the Director of Medical Services issued a circular directing Native Administrations to set aside funds for feeding of pauper in-

\textsuperscript{379} Agubosim “The Development of Modern Medical and Health Services in Warri/Delta Province, 1906-1960” Thesis, 111.
\textsuperscript{381} NAI BP 238/21, Secretary, Southern Provinces to Resident, Benin Province, 29/8/1924, 40.
\textsuperscript{382} Ibid, Memorandum No.72 by Director of Medical and Sanitary, 17/2/1926, 56.
patients, while in 1934 another directive was issued ordering the Native Administrations to transport such destitute patients to their homes.\textsuperscript{384} Political officers were directed to “enquire into the local circumstances of the pauper” to establish “if the patients were genuinely destitute” before such assistance was rendered.\textsuperscript{385} In Benin City, in 1938 such investigation was reported to have resulted in reduced attendance by pauper patients.\textsuperscript{386}

The inadequate medical services provided by the colonial state resulted in private health care initiatives being undertaken by individuals and trading firms. Some of the firms, like the mining companies on the Jos Plateau, had long provided private medical services for their own use before governmental hospitals were established, including a motor ambulance and three sleeping sickness dispensaries for services in the mining areas.\textsuperscript{387} The provision of these medical facilities by the mining firms was intended primarily for their European personnel who numbered as many as six hundred by 1927.\textsuperscript{388} Private medical practice had long existed in Lagos where even government employed medical officers were reported to have been permitted to engage in it to supplement their salaries. In Benin City, it was reported in 1938 that there were frequent visits of a Dr. Gaston, a private physician, to the city.\textsuperscript{389}

In addition to private professionals, another by-product of state policy was a thriving group of quacks. Because the colonial state failed to provide adequate training facilities, it depended on untrained African personnel with inadequate supervision. Some of these former government messengers, guards, and clerks who received crash training

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\textsuperscript{384} NAI BP 874 Medical Officer, Benin City to Resident, Benin Province, 1/08/1931, 1 and Secretary, Southern Provinces to Resident, Benin Province, 21/09/1934, 2.
\textsuperscript{385} Ibid, Secretary, Southern Provinces to Resident, Benin Province, 21/09/1934, 2.
\textsuperscript{386} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{388} NAI CSO26/2 12601 Vol. V Plateau Province: Annual Report, 1927, 44.
\textsuperscript{389} NAI CSO 26/2 14617, Vol. XII Benin Province: Annual Report, 1938, 19.
\end{thebibliography}
in administering injections and dressings later turned themselves into “quack doctors” who visited havoc on rural communities\(^{390}\) where medical facilities were largely unavailable.

It was not until the early 1930s that organized training in some of the hospitals and specialized schools started to be given to low level personnel made up of midwives, sanitary inspectors, dispensers, and vaccinators. The training of Africans as medical assistants and druggists/pharmacy assistants commenced at Yaba Higher College in 1934. Due partly to the racist disposition of the administration, opportunities and facilities for the training of African doctors were still not provided. Because of the inadequacy of medical personnel and training opportunities, the Calabar Native Administration, which had an elected representative in the Legislative Council, sent some of its indigenes abroad for full medical training. Requests by other Native Administrations to follow this example were refused.\(^{391}\) For instance, the Benin Native Administration’s request to award scholarships for full fledged medical training of some of its indigenes was rejected by the District Officer because he claimed that the Native Administration was already training youths as sanitary inspectors, foresters and teachers.\(^{392}\) The failure to establish medical training institutions and train colonized subjects professionally for medical work before 1938, when the Nigerian Medical School was awarded a license, greatly affected the delivery of healthcare to the populace.

In spite of the slight improvement in the attention given to the health of Africans, the administration’s efforts continued to be primarily geared towards the survival of

\(^{390}\) NAI BP2285 Illegal Practice of Medicine

\(^{391}\) This involvement and desire of African Native Administrations to train their indigenes as Medical doctors shows their interest and favourable disposition towards European Biomedicine contrary to claims of African rejection.

\(^{392}\) NAI BP1527 R.B Kerr, District Officer, Benin Division to Resident, Benin Province, 27/9/1938, 9.
Europeans. Most endemic diseases that caused great mortality and morbidity amongst Africans were neglected, while those that threatened Europeans continued to receive attention. The special attention given to sleeping sickness, for example, was not unconnected with its being endemic in the tin mining areas of Plateau and the devastating effects it had on the health of the large European population involved in tin production. In 1925 alone, eighteen Europeans were reported to have contracted sleeping sickness in Plateau Province and the administration resolved to relocate the administrative headquarters of Jemaa Division from tsetse fly infested Daroro to Keffi.\textsuperscript{393} Part of the 1929 Colonial Development Fund allocated to Nigeria was directed to research aimed at a reduction of the incidence of this disease. Other widely endemic diseases like venereal diseases, cerebro-spinal meningitis, yaws and leprosy, which were causes of infertility, great mortality and morbidity amongst Africans were annually acknowledged in reports, but not given the investigation and treatment they deserved save for the intervention of international voluntary agencies such as the British Empire Leprosy Association and Rockefeller Yellow Fever Commission. The most inadequate services and facilities were those provided for infant and maternal health care. This was despite high infant and maternal mortality rates and the fears of declining population in the 1920s and 1930s.\textsuperscript{394}

Save for occasional mass vaccination and sanitation measures after epidemic outbreaks, rural inhabitants were left largely at the mercy of indigenous healers, quacks and missionaries. Indigenous healers operated with trepidation because most of them did not know which aspects of their practices were acceptable to the colonial officials. They were classed along with quacks as criminals and so charged on the report of death of their

\textsuperscript{394} Nigeria: Annual Medical and Sanitary Report for the year 1936, 40.
patients. They were denied any form of registration, but advised to operate within the ambit of the law. Some of their practices were prohibited as in the case of small pox, which indigenous healers were prohibited from treating by an ordinance in 1907. The only other medical services available to the rural populace were those of the Christian missions whose healthcare services were geared towards winning converts.

**Medicine and Missionaries**

The entry of Christian missionaries into Nigeria preceded colonial rule. In some cases, they were invited by the indigenous rulers because of the educational services they offered; in others with the objectives of obtaining firearms or the political support of European officials in their internal power struggles and conflict with neighbors. Save for some coastal towns, Abeokuta, and few other Yoruba and Efik settlements, Christian missionaries did not penetrate the interior until the establishment of colonial rule provided them with protection. Pre-colonial Christian missionaries were mostly people of African descent from Sierra Leone who were of freed slave origin.

However, the Christian missionaries that came in the wake of colonial conquest were largely Europeans who marginalized the African clergy and thus prompted the rise of African independent churches. Their close relationship with the colonial state and its officials, and their paternalism towards Africans, has tainted these European missionaries as imperialist collaborators in the eyes of scholars. One counterclaim in their defense has argued that the European Christian missionaries’ paternalism and subordination of

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395 NAI BP1269 Herbalists or Native Doctors: Application for permission to cure Diseases.
African clergy were motivated by renewed puritanism\textsuperscript{398} and the humanism of their faith\textsuperscript{399} rather than racism and an imperial agenda. Such arguments notwithstanding, the simultaneous subordination of educated Africans both in the church and colonial administration in the 1890s was no coincidence. Missionaries were not insulated from the cultural milieu of pseudo-scientific racism that permeated European societies of the late nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{400} Both missionaries and the administrative officers shared a paternalist view towards Africans.

The reason for being of Christian missions in Nigeria was conversion and the health situation in Nigeria provided a potential starting point for this process. Although Christian missionaries, who had been established in Nigeria from the first half of the nineteenth century, practiced medicine for their own survival, medical mission activities directed to Africans only began with the establishment of colonial rule. Medical mission activity aimed at Africans seems to have started in Eastern Nigeria in the 1880s where it was prompted by rivalry for converts between the long established British Protestant Church Missionary Society and the newly arrived French Roman Catholic Missions. Reverend Father Lutz, who sparked the rivalry and exploited a dysentery epidemic in Onitsha in 1889 to insist on baptism as a condition for medical care, gleefully reported that “the care we gave to the children and to diseases has easily conquered for us the sympathies of the natives.”\textsuperscript{401} The loss of converts by the CMS forced it to change its


\textsuperscript{400} Phillip D. Curtin, \textit{The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850, Volume Two}, 419-431

strategy to include the employment of medical services for conversion. In the then still independent community of Abeokuta, the Roman Catholic mission commenced charity work amongst lepers and abandoned babies and this work formed the nucleus for the establishment of the first mission hospital, Sacred Heart Hospital, in 1895. With the influx of various missions of different nationalities and denominations into the interior, rivalry intensified and medical services became strategic in the struggle to win converts.

Although Christian missionary strategy of using the provision of medical services to entice Africans into conversion was beneficial to the colonial enterprise, the colonial state’s attitude towards the missionaries was one of either outright hostility or ambivalence depending on the dominant religion of the area and the individual disposition of the political officers. One reason for this attitude was the potential for Christian missionaries to offend the religious sensibilities of some African peoples and therefore threaten the colonial order. As a result, the Christian missionaries were tolerated only in circumstances where they were amenable to some form of control.

Colonial officials were especially ambivalent to missionaries in the Muslim communities of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. Lugard had great reservations about Christian missionaries, and particularly those whose actions and viewpoints he saw as diminishing the supposed superiority of Europeans before Africans. However, he granted some of the Christian missions permission to establish stations and undertake medical and education work in the Muslim emirates of the Northern Nigeria where there

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was no opposition to this from the Emirs. The CMS established stations in Zaria and Bida, while the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) did so in Pategi and Wase, all of which were under the rule of Muslim Emirs. But he also did not hesitate to close down the mission stations, as he did in the Muslim town of Wase in 1906, when the Emir expressed opposition to the station.

Lugard’s successors, Hesketh Bell and Percy Girouard, took a harder line. They exploited the spectre of Mahdism and Jihad to convince the Colonial Office, between 1907 and 1911, to prohibit Christian missionaries in the Emirates and in non-Muslim areas under Emirate rule. Their motive in doing so, as argued by Tibenderana and confirmed by Barnes, was not to preserve African traditions and customs but to prevent Christian missionaries from providing literary education to Africans who they believed would come to equate themselves with Europeans and challenge colonial rule. As a result, mission stations in Muslim towns were closed down, the land leases of Christian missionary stations were made subject to annual renewal to enable easy revocation, conditions were made more stringent for establishing stations, and until 1930 mission schools in the Northern Provinces were denied financial assistance.

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The situation in the north was made worse by the fact that the various mission denominations had partitioned the area amongst themselves and barred competition.\footnote{NAUK CO 237/27/1 Memorandum on Missionary Work in Northern Nigeria of 20\textsuperscript{th} June 1927, 13.} This lack of competition meant that only a few missions adopted the inducement of medical service as a conversion strategy. While Barnes observed that “Proselytizing at present takes a secondary place to the enhancement of the material welfare and health of the people and it is probably this which has contributed so greatly to the popularity and success of the mission among the Bura and Margi people,”\footnote{Quoted in Barnes “Evangelization where it is not wanted”: Colonial Administrators and Missionaries in Northern Nigeria during the First Third of the Twentieth Century” \textit{Journal of Religion in Africa}, 435.} most other missions, particularly the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), which was the largest mission in the Protectorate, largely concentrated on evangelization without the inducement of provision of medical or other social services. The result was fewer conversions as was attested by a report on the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) in Adamawa Province in 1930 in which it was observed “that evangelization takes the primary place in the program and medical, social and material progress are subsidiary considerations … all efforts of the mission are directed to this end the number of converts is extraordinarily small.”\footnote{Quoted in \textit{Ibid.}} The absence of the rivalry that had stimulated competition amongst missions and drove them to provide skeletal social services in Southern Nigeria denied the people of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria missionary based social services and was one of the causes of great imbalance in this regard between the Northern and Southern provinces of the colony.

Another reason why medical mission work was limited was because it was expensive and required trained personnel, buildings, equipment and medicine. The colonial administration did not support the missions until 1929 when grants of £1600 and
£6000 were made to missions in the Northern and Southern Provinces respectively. This was not an annual grant and as the depression worsened, it was either drastically reduced or not given at all in subsequent years.\textsuperscript{410} Like the colonial administration, the missions employed non-professionals for medical work and resorted to soliciting payment for treatment. Medical missionaries in many cases had to improvise facilities, equipment, personnel, and even medicines, as was reported by the American Baptist Nurse Mary McCormick.\textsuperscript{411} Though she was a nurse, her practice, as she notes below, went well beyond nursing:

> When I was in Nigeria, the British government health department gave me a permit ‘to practice and dispense medicine.’ This gave me the legal right to do so, but not the skill and knowledge I needed, nor did it provide facilities and medicines.\textsuperscript{412}

Many other missionaries were also issued with licenses and permits to practice and dispense medicines.\textsuperscript{413}

Some of the missions carved out a niche for themselves in the various aspects of healthcare that the colonial administration neglected. In spite of the hostility of the colonial administration to missions in the Muslim Emirates, the missions were invited to assist with care for lepers and freed slave children even during the time of their general prohibition.\textsuperscript{414} The bulk of the leprosy work was assigned to the missions, which were offered funds for this purpose by the West African Medical Conference because “Leper

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{410} See NAK SNP17/K3863 Vol. I Grant to Medical Missions in Nigeria
\item \textsuperscript{411} Mary R. McCormick, \textit{Memoirs of Nigerian Days 1925-1941}, Jackson, Tennessee, Author, 1981, 86.
\item \textsuperscript{412} McCormick, \textit{Memoirs of Nigerian Days 1925-1941}, 85.
\item \textsuperscript{413} Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria, \textit{Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of Nigeria, 1933}, Lagos, Government Printer, 1934, 22.
\item \textsuperscript{414} Boer, \textit{Missionary Messengers of Liberation in a Colonial Context: A Case Study of the Sudan United Mission}, 190.
\end{itemize}
work is pre-eminently an activity in which missions excel.” However, even work among lepers was a source of rivalry between the missions as was the case with Roman Catholics and Protestants over the control of Ossiomo Leprosarium in Benin Province.

The medical services provided by the missions were largely curative. This was borne out of the strategic role medical care played in the pursuit of their objective of conversion. Some missions did not hesitate to deny poor patients treatment on account of their inability to pay. Such an instance was recorded in Plateau Province where Dr. P.W. Barnden of the Sudan United Mission Hospital in Vom wrote regarding a patient that, “As this man cannot pay for either his food or medicine I cannot agree to treat him.” This statement angered N.A. Dyce-Sharp, the Acting Senior Medical Officer in Jos, to the extent that he complained that “It would seem that the Missions can no longer claim to be the charitable institutions bent on works of mercy and pure charity that we have so long been led to believe.” Even the drugs for treatment of sleeping sickness, which the government gave free of charge to the missions, attracted a fee payment of five shillings per injection. This was at a time when the average weekly wage in the tin mines of the Jos Plateau was two shillings and six pence or less. Thus, it required two full weeks’ wages for an injection, leaving the patient without money for other needs during the period. The mission claimed it cost 12/6d to administer the injection and was therefore subsidizing treatment. But since the government gave these injections freely to the missions, the government directed the missions to pay the fees they collected into

417 NAK SNP 17/K3863 Vol.I Ag. Senior Medical Officer, Jos to Assistant Director of Medical and Health Services, Kaduna, 16/10/1930, 122 -3.
government treasury. In the face of widespread poverty, few could avail themselves of the medical missions’ services.

The missions were restricted in the aspects of health with which they dealt. This was partly because they sought to use their health services to demonstrate the efficacy and powers of their God over the African indigenous religions and Islam and thus engaged in activities that were visibly efficacious. In addition, they did not have the funds to engage with some critical aspects of health. In their desperation to win converts, amidst the lack of funds for basic requirements and government inaction, missionaries persisted in their work. Thus, McCormick claimed to have treated leprosy to the best of her ability against the counsel of the Medical Officer who insisted that,

…a patient should have sanitary living quarters, proper food and treatment for all the other diseases he might have. Dr Lockett did not have the facilities nor the money to do this, so he would not consider treating leprosy patients at all.\footnote{McCormick, \textit{Memoirs of Nigerian Days 1925-1941}, 92.}

The communities where missionaries operated remained cesspools of preventable endemic diseases that were exacerbated regularly by epidemic diseases. These diseases, observed the medical missionary Dr. Walter Miller, were the cause of high mortality and “population decline.”\footnote{Miller, \textit{Have We Failed in Nigeria?}, 130.} These diseases either resulted either in morbidity which lowered productivity or, in some cases, the mortality of labor necessary to the household. Both could result in increased poverty.

\section*{Infant Welfare and Maternal Health}

An area where missions preceded the government and in which they dominated was the provision of infant and maternal health services. Their activities began with

\footnote{NAK SNP 17/K3863 Vol. I Resident, Plateau Province to Secretary, Northern Provinces, 9/5/1932, 162.}
destitute children, especially orphans and abandoned twins in Abeokuta and Calabar in the 1890s. Missions pioneered the provision of infant welfare, maternal health services and clinics, and nearly monopolized this activity in the small towns and rural communities in many parts of the country. They also engaged in the training of midwives, which both the central and Native Administrations neglected before 1930s.

Excepting the administration of McGregor in Lagos Colony, the other administrations took little interest in maternal and infant welfare in the early colonial period. McGregor had expressed concern about high infant mortality of Lagos in 1899 and mobilized the support of the Lagos Ladies League to do propaganda work among women. Infant mortality problems were largely blamed by government reports on primitive and unsanitary maternity and child care practices. African children were continuously viewed as carriers of disease, especially malaria, who should not be allowed contact with Europeans. As late as 1938, a Medical Officer, Dr. Dunn, issued circulars to Europeans prohibiting African children and domestic staff in the European reservation in Port Harcourt following the death of a European from yellow fever in Degema. Until the inter-war period, the government’s showed little interest in child and maternal welfare, and this left the field open to the missions.

The Christian missionaries interest in children and women was critical to their strategy of conversion. The missions viewed the children and women as vehicles for creating the new Christian society. According to the Baptist missionary McCormick,

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423 Government involvement in midwifery training started in 1930 See NAI CSO 26/2 File 23668 Vol. III Director of Medical and Sanitary Services, Lagos to Chief Secretary to Government, 19/05/1930, 176-8.
“The training and development of Christian Women is the one hope we have of changing some of the evils of the existing social order in Nigeria.”426 Very early in colonial rule Christian missions worked among ostracized women and abandoned children thereby winning their support. Though they shared the view of the government on causes of infant mortality, the missionaries exploited medicine to demonstrate the superiority of the Christian God over the non-Christian “God” of the Africans. To this end they blamed sickness and death on the “superstitious” beliefs and practices of the old women and indigenous midwives who were the custodians of these practices. Christianity was viewed as the antidote which would displace these practitioners through the introduction of European infant welfare and maternal health services. The wives of missionaries and some trained nurses provided pre-natal, maternity and infant welfare services, especially for the babies without wet nurses, in their homes and/or dispensaries. Some of these later developed into “Maternities”427 which also provided training for future midwives such as the Roman Catholic Mission owned Sacred Heart Hospital which was established in Abeokuta in 1895 and Church Missionary Society built Iyi-Enu Hospital near Onitsha in 1900.428

The government’s slow response to the maternal and infant health issues was connected to the parsimony of government expenditure on improving the social conditions of Africans. Lugard is credited to have remarked that “the care of children is not lucrative.”429 In 1918 the Maternity and Child Welfare Act was passed in Britain.430

427 Maternity (ies) refers to Hospitals dedicated solely to delivery of babies.
This development spurred activity in other African colonies like Uganda and Sudan where urgent need was felt to reverse a supposedly declining population and the fear of fewer men for future labor needs.\textsuperscript{431} It was otherwise in Nigeria where these services still remained exclusive to the Christian missionaries. It was only after the British Parliament directed the colonies in 1923/4 to introduce maternal health and infant welfare program\textsuperscript{432} that these began in Nigeria under Governor Clifford who had experience in the introduction of similar program in Ceylon. His wife, Lady Elizabeth Clifford, was known as a women’s advocate who worked with Lagos women’s groups. Some of the women involved in these groups had been active in Governor McGregor’s campaign to reduce infant mortality and malaria in Lagos between 1901 and 1904 and were already championing women’s issues before Lady Clifford’s arrival.\textsuperscript{433}

Following the Parliamentary directive a female Medical Officer was appointed in 1925 and, on completion in 1926, the Massey Street Dispensary in Lagos was used for the introduction of infant welfare and maternal health services. In addition, the Roman Catholic Mission Sacred Heart Hospital, Abeokuta, was converted into a full-fledged maternity facility and maintained by the government. Also, in 1926 maternity services were commenced in Ilorin in Northern Nigeria.\textsuperscript{434} In 1928 nine Health Visitors, who were nurses specialized in child health and health education, were employed to follow up

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Margaret Jones “Infant and Maternal Health Services in Ceylon, 1900-1948” Social History of Medicine, Vol.15, No.2, August 2002, 268.
\item Rina Okonkwo, Protest Movements in Lagos, 1908-1930, 73.
\item Nigeria: Annual Medical and Sanitary Report for the year 1926, 37.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the work among women and children in Lagos, and an infant clinic was also started to combat the high infant mortality rate.\textsuperscript{435}

Outside Lagos, government involvement in infant welfare and maternal health services was sparse. Instead of employing Health Visitors for other provinces, the government only subsidized the salary of one fulltime Health Visitor, Miss Mary Elm of the CMS, to tour schools and Native Administrations and give lectures on infant and maternal health in Southern Nigeria.\textsuperscript{436} This was grossly inadequate for the vast area and large population of over nine million people. Given this gross inadequacy, the Native Administration in Abeokuta proposed another maternity to compliment mission work. Mission maternity centers also started to spread during this period and were soon operating in Ogbomosho, Ilesa, Uburu, Itu, Etinan and Umuahia in the Southern Provinces and Mkar in the Northern Provinces.\textsuperscript{437}

It was the release of Dr. A.T. Stanton’s report and the introduction of the Colonial Development Fund in 1929 that gave a further boost to government health program including infant welfare and maternal health. The dependence on Christian Missionaries for maternal and infant welfare had its drawbacks. One major problem was the refusal of missionaries to employ midwives trained by denominations other than their own. In response, the government proposed the establishment of training centers for African midwives who were seen as critical to reducing high infant mortality. Approval was given for the establishment of midwifery training centers in Calabar and maternities in

\textsuperscript{435} Nigeria: Annual Medical and Sanitary Report for the year 1928, 29.
\textsuperscript{436} Nigeria: Annual Medical and Sanitary Report for the year 1928, 29.
\textsuperscript{437} NAI CSO 26/2 File 23668 Vol.III Director of Medical and Sanitary Services, Lagos to Chief Secretary to Government, 19/05/1930, 177.
Ilorin and Aba in 1930. In the same year, certification and registration of midwives started in the Lagos Colony and in the Abeokuta Native Administration Maternities. Mission maternities at Iyi-Enu, Ogbomosho and Ilesha were also approved for midwifery training and certification. Female medical officers and nurses were gradually recruited as funds permitted and deployed to government hospitals to expand infant and maternal health services. By 1936 the government, Native Administration and missionary child welfare centers numbered 17 and 28 respectively in the Northern Provinces and 20 and 27 respectively in the Southern Provinces.

Perhaps to cover up inadequacies, the government stated in its Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the people of Nigeria, 1933, that “the African hospitals throughout the country have women’s wards where maternity cases are admitted.” In fact, maternal health services were not provided in Benin Province until after the Second World War and only pregnant prisoners received maternity care from government. When an infant and maternity clinic was started in Ibadan in 1939 and was besieged by women, the Resident complained that the women were “attending for the purpose of receiving a bottle of medicine rather than to receive instructions.” Many Native Administrations did not secure approval for the provision of infant and maternal health services until after the Second World War and as a result these services were provided only sporadically in the provinces. The expansion of maternity and child welfare remained largely in the hands of medical missions. In 1938 it was reported that

438 NAI CSO 26/2 File 23668 Vol.III Director of Medical and Sanitary Services, Lagos to Chief Secretary to Government, 19/05/1930, 176-8 and NAI CSO 26/2 File 27628 Colonial Development Fund: Progress Report Upon Schemes Assisted by Director of Medical and Sanitary Services, 21/71931, 29.
439 Nigeria: Annual Medical and Sanitary Report for the year 1936, 41.
441 NAI BP 934, Hoskyn Abrahall, Development Plans for Maternity Service, Benin Province, 15/8/1945
442 NAI CSO 26/2 12723 Vol.XVI, Oyo Province Annual Report, 1939, 12.
“in the provinces training (of midwives) was carried out at Mission and Government centers and forty Grade II certificates were granted.”

By 1938, the number of missionary hospitals, dispensaries and maternity and infant welfare clinics had increased to 16, 94 and 53 respectively in 1938 while the number of government and Native Administration hospitals with maternity wards was 24.

In spite of the expansion of these services, reports for the year 1936 indicated a sharp rise in infant mortality. High infant mortality was caused by poor nutrition and poor housing conditions of the parents caused by poverty and the unsanitary and disease ridden environment which they inhabited. The non-employment of pediatricians until 1952 worsened these children’s health situation as there was no specialist treatment for children’s health problems. Only Lagos and two towns in Northern Nigeria kept statistics on births and deaths. Though Lagos statistics indicate a progressive decline in infant mortality in the colonial period, these were hospital statistics based on the small proportion of women who attended them. A later scholar stated that the statistics on which this supposed decline was based were of “questionable accuracy and relevance”, especially where data collected by Health Visitors showed that “by far the majority of births in Lagos were attended by ‘Native medicine men’ rather than by trained medical

444 Ibid, pp.22 and 26  
practitioners. The high dependence on native medicine men was possibly due to the fees charged which the majority of the population could not afford.

The medical services provided by both government and missionaries, including maternal and child health, were not only sporadic and haphazard, they were grossly inadequate to be effective in improving the welfare of the African population. The government’s motive in providing medical and health services remained primarily to safeguard the health of Europeans personnel. Though the government was aware of the effect of improved health on increasing the productivity of Africans for the realization of colonial objectives and had a consequent fear of a declining population, the provision of medical and health services was dependent on the availability of funding that was largely determined by market fluctuations and remuneration of European personnel.

The gradual expansion of medical and health services for Africans was only a drop in the ocean given the large population, and a large number of areas were never touched by such services. The health of the populace was greatly affected by the advent of mechanical transportation and mass migration as well as by the poor and overcrowded housing in the urban areas that increased the spread of diseases and exacerbated them to epidemic proportions. Low wages and poor returns on crops contributed to the development of malnutrition and made the population more vulnerable to disease. The new health services imposed new costs on the populace and in cases where they had no alternative they had to find means of paying which further impoverished them.

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**Education for Service in the Colonial Administration and the Expansion of Trade**

The introduction of rudimentary western education into what was to become Nigeria by Christian missionaries preceding the colonial conquest was motivated by their desire for conversion. These efforts were followed in the post-conquest period by those of the colonial state which sought to provide limited education to create a small class of auxiliary clerical personnel to serve the needs of colonial administration and European firms. Meanwhile, the African population increasingly came to appreciate the potential benefits of western education and sought it as an instrument for advancing trade, welfare and social status. These differing objectives generated a conflict of interests between the Christian missionaries and the colonial state and between both and the colonized African population. The colonial state continuously struggled to control access to, as well as the quality and content of, the western education available to Africans. This section examines the politics and policies of western education in colonial Nigeria.

Before the establishment of colonial rule, western education had reached some Nigerian communities. European Christian missions on entering the Nigerian area had adopted education as a strategy of conversion and established some schools in some Niger Delta, Igbo and Yoruba communities by the second half of the nineteenth century. Their curriculum was restricted to the “three R’s”, Bible knowledge, literacy in indigenous languages, and, in a few cases, the teaching of crafts. But because of limited objectives of their education strategy, their minimal funding, and their racist disposition, some of the missions were ill disposed towards providing education beyond the

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449 The realization in some communities in the Niger-Delta that Western Education could improve their businesses and well being made the people of Bonny to request for its introduction, while the desire by returnee freed slaves of Yoruba and Igbo descent in Nigeria and Sierra Leone as well as people of Efik descent in Jamaica for Christianization of their homelands made them send missionaries to propagate the gospel which brought Western Education along. Emmanuel A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis*, London, Longman Group Ltd, 1966, Chapter One and G.O.M. Tasie, *Christian Missionary Enterprise in the Niger Delta, 1864-1914*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1978, Chapter One.
rudimentary level necessary for conversion and consequently their schools were of low standard. The African returnees from the new world and local indigenous missionaries and merchants who had different aspirations, generated funds locally to establish secondary schools in Lagos in the 1850s to prepare their children for higher education and the professions.\textsuperscript{450} Others sent their children for further education along the West African coast and to England by the late nineteenth century.

This was the prevailing situation when Nigeria came under colonial rule. Since colonialism required certain specialist skills, the few people with western education were readily employed by the colonial administration. But the products of the mission schools were both inadequate in skills and numbers. As a result the Lagos colony administration decided to intervene by providing grants to the missions to improve their schools.

The extension of colonial administration to the hinterland increased the demand for educated African personnel and their unavailability caused the colonial administration to recruit staff from the West African coast communities, the West Indies and Europe. Foreign personnel came at a high cost. Given the parsimonious colonial financial policy, an alternative was sought. Faced with the inadequacies of mission schools, the administrations of Lagos Colony and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria established government schools to meet the needs of administration.\textsuperscript{451}

\textsuperscript{451} In Lagos, the priority was inducing the large Muslim population to accept western education through the establishment of Government School, in Lagos in 1896 which was followed by others in Badagry and Epe while the interior continued to be served by the missions. Gbadebo O. Gbadamosi, “The Establishment of Western Education among Muslims in Nigeria 1896-1926” \textit{Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria}, Vol. IV, No.1, December 1967, 107-9.
The absence of mission schools in Benin and the west Niger Delta area of the Niger Coast Protectorate led Governor Ralph Moor to establish a government school in Benin City in 1901 to “improve the lot” of the “uncivilized.” Moor also solicited funds from European firms to open nine more government schools and assisted the missions with funds that were used to upgrade Hope Waddel Institute, Calabar, in the eastern Niger Delta into an industrial and secondary school. In addition, McGregor and Moor invited Lugard to join them in the establishment of a Normal High School for the three administrations. However, Lugard failed to support the proposal as he was against literary education for Africans. Instead, Lugard left the issue of education to his Residents and his missionary friend Dr Walter Miller. Consequently, there was no clear policy on education in Northern Nigeria, little government involvement in education before Lugard’s exit, and restriction of Christian missionary establishments in most Muslim Emirates.

By 1906 when Lagos was merged with the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, there were thirty one government schools and numerous mission schools. The establishment of government schools galvanized the Christian missions into competition with one another and with the government which resulted in the establishment of more mission schools.

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453 NAI CSO 1/13Vol 7 Despatch 159 Niger Coast Protectorate, Annual Report for the Year 1896-7 Moor to Foreign Office, 10/12/1897, 384 and NAI CSO 1/13 Vol.14, Despatch 29 Moor to Secretary of State, Colonial Office, 6/02/1901, 68-9.
455 Graham, Government and Mission Education in Northern Nigeria 1900-1919, chapters one and two
schools in the hinterland. The situation was different in the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria which had only one school in Sokoto started by the Resident Burdon in 1905 with government funding. Except for the CMS Schools in Lokoja and Bida, and Dr. Walter Miller’s school in Zaria, the other missions in the protectorate contented themselves with proselytization rather than education.\textsuperscript{457}

In spite of their differences, the administrations shared the objective of education for the production of a small cadre of clerks, artisans and low-level staff for the various departments of government and European firms. The remaining population was to be maintained in its pre-colonial state save increased production of primary commodities to meet the needs of the colonial economy. This was not only an issue of cost, but also in large measure stemmed from the fear that a rapid expansion of western education might cause the disintegration of African societies and destabilize the colonial order. The need to preserve colonial order was to continue to be a guiding principle in formulating educational aims and objectives. Contrary to Fajana’s claim that Lugard originated the idea of African education along “native lines”,\textsuperscript{458} he was preceded in this by McCallum of Lagos and Moor of Niger Coast Protectorate. McCallum’s stated aims of education as set out in the revised rules of the Education Code were “Not to divert the education of the boys into unnatural and unserviceable channels but rather to keep in touch with the development actually going on in the Colony and the requirements of ordinary life…”\textsuperscript{459} McCallum’s “unnatural and unserviceable channels” as well as “ordinary life” in the Colony can be read as euphemisms for “western” and “African primitive life”

\textsuperscript{457} Mahmud M. Tukur, \textit{The Essential Mahmud Tukur: A Selection of his Writings}, Zaria, MtMC, 1990, 110-118.
\textsuperscript{458} Fajana, \textit{Education in Nigeria, 1842-1939: An Historical Analysis}, 118.
\textsuperscript{459} Quoted in Fajana, \textit{Education in Nigeria, 1842-1939: An Historical Analysis}, 65.
respectively. His introduction of education in the vernacular into the code was in keeping with the philosophy of education along “native lines”. Moor, though a zealous advocate of government establishment and funding of secular educational institutions, shared the prevailing views of most administrators of orienting education towards preserving the colonial order. He argued that,

> The aping of the European destroys the independence of character and the initiative of the native of these territories and certainly during the period of their education, I consider it infinitely preferable to keep them clothed in some suitable native garb with a view of maintaining their distinct native character.  

He opposed the establishment of a full-fledged secondary school because “the education necessary to enable the Natives [to] take their place as useful members of their community need not necessarily include the entire secondary course.” J.A. Douglas, the first Inspector of Schools and adviser on education to Moor, continued to regret the non-realization of this vision of an abridged secondary education for Africans and the lack of control over mission’s education policies in this regard.

Walter Egerton, who succeeded Moor as Governor between 1904 and 1911, tended to rely on Henry Carr, an African and the Director of Education of Lagos Colony, for his educational policies. It was Carr who proposed the establishment of a University College - King’s College, Lagos - in 1906. Though the proposal for a university college was rejected and an attempt by the London Board of Education to change it into a technical and agricultural training school failed, King’s College, Lagos, was established in 1909 as a full-fledged secondary school. In addition, Egerton increased the number of Government Schools to 61 (with 113 assisted mission schools) by the end of his tenure.

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460 NAI CSO 1/13 Vol.15 Despatch 160 Moor to Rev. J. Buchanan, 15/106/01, 480-1.
in 1911. The curriculum of the Government Schools was also enhanced. The English language was made compulsory under the new education code and under it the numerous infant schools that did not meet the established requirements were refused government grants in aid. The Government Schools were partially funded through levies on communities collected by chiefs and court fees. In this way, a few people, mainly boys, were enabled to acquire some level of western education at little or no cost before 1917.

In spite of Egerton’s seeming liberal attitude, he introduced the distinguishing character of the so-called “Native Education” in which manual and agricultural training, that aimed at reorientation of African youths into taking to agricultural production rather than clerical employment, were made compulsory. This was an attempt at finding a solution to the anticipated problem of school leavers’ abandonment of rural life to seek clerical employment with government and the firms and, when failing, to become political agitators. This problem, which had been previously experienced by the British in India and Egypt led the first Inspector and Adviser on Education, Mr. J.A. Douglas, to complain that the lack of control over mission agencies was making it difficult to implement a native system of education. As well, the London Education Board opposed the establishment of university and recommended a technical and agricultural training school instead. Because of the need to check this anticipated problem, ways were sought to infuse school curricula with manual and agricultural education as a means of redirecting school leavers towards agricultural production. Mr. James Watt, Provincial Commissioner for Benin Province, went as far as stating what the objectives of this

463 Annual Reports of the Colony of Southern Nigeria for the Year 1911, Lagos, Government Printer, 1913, 42.
464 Annual Reports of the Colony of Southern Nigeria for the Year 1911, 42-5.
agricultural education should be: “The school farms should not in my opinion be used for growing yams, beans and corn in the usual native fashion…. I am inclined to think that the school farms can be used to instruct in the best methods of growing economic plants suitable to the district such as cocoa (and) para rubber.”466

In the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, Lugard’s successors kept his vision of preserving African society from disintegration in mind in developing an educational policy that was completely under their control. The main movers behind the policy were Governor Percy Girouard, aided by Charles L. Temple, and continued by Hesketh-Bell with the approval of the Colonial Office. This policy, according to Tibenderana, was driven by the attempt to avert the emergence of a class of political agitators and create a docile and servile population that would facilitate the perpetuation of colonial rule in Northern Nigeria.467 Temple had argued that the Muslims were too intelligent to be exposed to literary education in both English and Arabic as he believed this would bring them in touch with subversive political ideas, while the pagans were too attached to “tribe” and “customs” to be easily influenced by Christian missionary evangelization.468 Temple and his boss Girouard, further believed that western education would “denationalize” the natives of the Muslim Emirates creating problems for the practice of indirect rule.469 Also, he opined that evangelization activities required Christian missionaries interaction with natives that would hurt native religious and cultural

466 N.A.I. BP 553/1915 Education in Benin Province-James Watt, Commissioner, Benin Province to District Officers, (Circular) 19/110/1915
467 Tibenderana, Sokoto Province under Colonial Rule 1903-1939, 190.
sensibilities and lead to conflict, disintegration, loss of “native character” and undermine
the authority of the native rulers. This situation, he argued, could only be preempted by a
segregation of the races and tribes that education might undermine.\textsuperscript{470}

Since the skilled labor needed by the administration and firms was lacking in the
Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, Governor Girouard and his Residents formulated a
policy aligned with their vision of strictly controlling access to western education that left
little role for Christian missionary participation. To this end, Girouard whipped up the
danger and problems of Christian missionary activities in predominantly Muslim
communities and elicited the support of his Residents for the restriction of Christian
missionary activities.\textsuperscript{471} He thereafter used the Residents’ opposition to Christian
missionary activities to convince the Colonial Office to withdraw approval for a proposal
by the medical missionary, Dr Walter Miller, for the establishment of a “Sons of Chiefs
and Mallams” School in Zaria. This proposal had earlier been recommended and
approval secured by Lugard. In its place Hans Vischer, a former missionary turned
colonial Resident, was appointed to undertake a study tour of education in other colonies
and to design an educational policy and program tailored to the vision and needs of the
northern Nigerian administration.\textsuperscript{472}

The outcome was a policy and program for the training of a few Mallams
(Koranic school teachers) as teachers for the proposed government training schools in
Nassarawa, Kano, who in turn would train the sons of chiefs and Emirs and the few other
personnel required for the administration. The program also entailed the establishment of
schools with elementary and primary sections conducted in Hausa and other dominant

\textsuperscript{470} Temple, \textit{op.cit}, 213-7.
\textsuperscript{471} Tibenderana, \textit{Sokoto Province under British Rule 1903-1939}, 186-190.
local languages to impart the three Rs, local crafts, agriculture, and basic hygiene knowledge at lower levels, while the English language would be introduced at the senior levels of the primary schools to enable graduates to undergo training in various departments as assistants. The education program terminated at the primary school level. The schools were to be established in the various provinces with separate schools for Muslims, Pagans and Christians as the need arose and finances allowed. Inter-provincial transfer of pupils and teachers was not to be allowed and the number of pupils admitted was to be determined by projected openings in the administration. This education policy and program was approved and forwarded by Girouard to the Colonial Office which sanctioned its implementation by the new Governor Hesketh Bell in 1910.

This policy and program gave the government monopoly control over the content, quality, and quantity of recipients of western education and thereby minimized the envisaged problems of political agitation and unemployment of educated subjects. It also rendered missionary education unattractive to the colonized, especially as there were no government employment opportunities for its recipients. In addition, various policies were put in place to tighten restrictions on missionary activities in both the pagan and Muslim areas of the protectorate. At the time of amalgamation of the protectorates in 1914 (which did not affect the education departments), only eight elementary schools for Muslims had been established in the protectorate, while one school for non-Muslims had just been started.\(^{473}\) The system was yet to produce a single clerk and over ninety percent of the clerks in the administration were “Native foreigners”.

\(^{473}\) Annual Report on Education Departments of Nigeria 1914 Northern Nigeria No 11 of 1915 before the Legislative Council, 25 September 1915, 4-6.
The problem of the insufficiency of clerks and artisans to meet the needs of the administration affected the Southern Provinces differently. Here it was the availability of African clerks with only low levels of education that necessitated continued dependence on foreigners. This problem had been caused by unavailability of trained and certificated teachers that had been recognized but inadequately addressed since the 1890s. The missions, which were expected to assist in production of teachers, continued to resist attempts at control by government. This was manifested in the reluctance of some of the missions to adopt English as a medium of instruction in place of the vernacular especially in the Yoruba and Igbo dominated provinces. The language issue further compounded the problem of the shortage of clerks and artisans literate in English required for the conduct of administration and trade. The desperation of both government and European firms for personnel literate in English led to the employment of pupils still undergoing their primary education.

The firms recruited pupils from as low as primary class three, while missions employed the same as pupil-teachers. For instance, Jacob Egharevba, the Benin folk historian, worked as a time keeper for a timber firm in the mid 1900s after dropping out of primary school because of lack of money for fees. In 1913, Bishop James Johnson lamented that youths had adopted “the making of money as government or mercantile

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475 Fajana, Education in Nigeria, 1842-1939: An Historical Analysis, 55.

476 NAI BP 62/1922 Resident, Benin Province to Secretary, Southern Provinces, 11/05/1922.

477 Jacob Egharevba, Itan Edagbon Mwen, Benin City and Ibadan Ethiope Publishing Corporation and Ibadan University Press, 1972,
clerks, court interpreters or messengers as the chief aim of life.” To check the employment of dropouts, the administration introduced a qualifying examination open only to standard six holders in 1909 as a requirement for entry into the public service. This had little immediate effect. In 1922, Dawson, the Resident of Benin Province still reported that many pupils who attended government schools in Ishan Division dropped out in the third and fourth standards to “apply for clerical billets for which they are unfit.”

Given the employment prospects for recipients of western education, many communities in Southern Nigeria began agitating for the establishment of schools in their communities not only to advance the interests of their youth, but to increase their prestige and safeguard them against government agents. This resulted in an influx of missionary agencies into the various communities of Southern Nigeria. It also triggered local rivalries and struggles to attract mission stations. The stations functioned as both church and school and were run largely by former graduates or dropouts from mission schools in the Southern and especially Eastern Provinces. This resulted in the mushrooming of what were described as “hedge schools” by Governor Hugh Clifford.

479 Nigeria: Annual Report for Colony of Lagos and Southern Nigeria for the Year ending 1909, Lagos, Government Printers, 1911, 328
480 NAI BP 62/1922 Resident, Benin Province to Secretary, Southern Provinces, 11/05/1922
481 The presence of missionaries was viewed by rural communities as their safeguard against violent attacks and oppression by government agents and impostors which characterized the establishment of colonial rule in many village communities in Eastern Nigeria. Ekechi, Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland 1857-1914, 147-150
These were mission schools that were supported largely through community subscription and levies on pupils which were used to pay the teachers salaries.\textsuperscript{482}

The proliferation of schools by the Christian missions in the Southern Provinces affected the household economic organization as they took many children away from the farms and craft workshops. The school calendar did not take cognizance of children’s involvement in household production activities and this resulted in the loss of labor to families and contributed to the reduced productivity of the household. Initially, this was compensated for by the quick employment of both school dropouts and school leavers who found jobs. But as time went on, such employment was no longer guaranteed.

The expansion of Christian mission schools in Southern Nigeria created new problems for the colonial administration which was concerned about how to control proliferation of Christian missions schools, make their products submissive to the administration, and make them operate within the bounds of customary organization of their village communities.

As shown above, Governor Lugard responded by articulating a policy of “African education” along “native lines”. Under the proposed Education Code of 1916, grants in aid to mission schools were to be contingent on the secular moral and character training of pupils and availability of certified teachers and facilities in a school instead of the examination results formerly used. The Code also provided for the establishment of provincial education committees to cater for the particular education needs of individual provinces and ensure cooperation between government and missionaries. The Code further provided for the establishment of three types of schools which were to provide

education deemed appropriate for the individual’s social standing within the pre-existing customary organization. These were the School for Sons of Chiefs to train them for leadership of Native Administrations, Provincial Schools in the major urban centers to provide literary education for urban dwellers who might also pursue further education to fit them for work in the colonial administration, and rural schools to teach agriculture and crafts and fit inhabitants to their rural life. The medium of instruction in the schools was also to be the vernacular where possible.

Lugard’s Education Code of 1916 broadened the policies that been started by McCallum and Moor on native education and differed from Vischer’s policy in the Northern Provinces only in its restriction of agriculture and crafts to rural schools and provision of opportunities for further education in some urban areas. While the emphasis on morality and character training were designed to ensure the loyalty of pupils to the colonial administration, the restriction of education training by locality and social standing in the community was to preserve the communities from feared disintegration and engage people in production activities that served colonial needs.

The Colonial Office disapproved of aspects of the proposed Code because of its promotion of literary education in the urban centers, its proposal of secondary and post-secondary education that entailed the passing of Cambridge Certificate Examination, the teaching of English language, and the proposed increase of funding for education. It was feared these would breed nationalist agitators at a time when a new educational policy had been developed for Northern Nigeria to checkmate such threatening tendencies. This Code’s aim of unifying the educational policies of the Southern and Northern provinces by extending the educational program beyond the elementary school

level was also rejected by the Colonial Office. Similarly, the proposed extension of
grants-in-aid to the Christian mission schools in the Northern Provinces was rejected. It
took a spirited fight by Lugard to secure approval of grants to missions and schools
established before the Code. As a result of the few government aided schools, strict
control of opening of schools, restriction of missionaries, only an insignificant number of
people in the Northern Provinces were able to acquire western education. Ayandele
blamed the poor educational attainment of the people of Northern Provinces on Lugard’s
non-implementation of the Education Code, while Fajana argued that it was because
European lifestyle did not appeal to the people, hence they did not embrace western
education. Both arguments overlook the fact that the Colonial Office opposed the full
implementation of the Code in the Northern Provinces and the existing education policy
in Northern Provinces made western education unattractive.

The finally approved 1916 Code barely affected educational policy in the Northern
Provinces where access to western education remained restricted and thus further
widened the gap between the Northern Provinces and Southern Provinces in educational
attainment. The lack of educational facilities and various control measures of the
administration made western education largely inaccessible to the mass of the people and
this, in the long term, contributed to the higher poverty level in the Northern Provinces.

Apart from lack of support from the Colonial Office, the First World War affected trade
and revenue and these constrained the implementation of the Code and especially the
establishment of schools in Southern Provinces.

484 Ayandele blamed Lugard for the educational policies of the Northern Provinces Emmanuel A.
Ayandele, Nigerian Historical Studies, London, Frank Cass,1979, 255-7, while Fajana’s argument that “the
European way of life did not appeal to those for whom the Scheme (western education) was designed” in
the Northern Provinces Fajana, Education in Nigeria, 1842-1939: An Historical Analysis, 127.
Lugard implemented parts of the Code before his exit, including the training of more personnel for the administration, the conversion of Government Schools in Bonny and Warri into teachers’ training schools, increasing the number of schools in receipt of grants in aids, and increasing funds for teachers’ salaries, apprenticeship schemes and scholarships. At the same time, Lugard worked hard at controlling and restricting access to literary education. He achieved this through the closure of some government schools, the abolition of the chiefs’ contributions to education, and the introduction of payment of school fees on an individual basis in the government schools in 1917.

The introduction of fee payment to government schools brought the Southern Provinces into line with the Northern Provinces where payment of fees by individual pupils had for long been used to control and restrict access to western education. Fees were higher in the Northern Provinces than in the Southern Provinces. For instance, the fees approved for government schools in Benin Province in 1917 were 6d and 1/-d monthly per elementary pupil and per primary pupil respectively, while they were 2/6d for sons of chiefs and 1/6d for sons of ordinary peasants in Sokoto Province. In addition, in the 1910s, children from outside Sokoto town paid a boarding fee. According to Tibenderana, this ranged from 10s per month to £6 per annum, while another report stated that the cost of education was as much as £18 per annum in 1921.

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488 Tibenderana, Sokoto Province under Colonial Rule 1903-1939, 211 and NAI CSO 26, 03456 Annual Report: Sokoto Province, 1921, 43.
province where the average annual income of an adult male in the most prosperous
district was £6 10s. There were no guarantees of jobs for recipients of this vernacular
education outside the Native Administration. The high cost of education and lack of
prospects of employment for the children of peasants in the Northern Provinces made
western education valueless and unattractive.

The relatively cheaper fees and teaching in English in the Southern Provinces plus
the prospects of employment produced an influx of children to schools. Because of the
discrimination against rural areas in the provision of grants, the more ambitious youths
flooded the well-funded and better-equipped urban schools. But there were very few
good schools even in the urban centers. This was because government not only stopped
opening new Government Schools after 1910, but those experiencing poor attendance
Government Schools continued into the 1920s and curtailed government involvement in
education. This further intensified mission rivalries resulting in the establishment of more
new mission schools in the urban centers.\footnote{Even private individuals exploited the demand for education to establish night schools which became part of the educational system in some of the Southern Provinces in the 1920s.} People turned increasingly to mission
schools, despite the fact that they charged fees to sustain themselves.\footnote{The Christian missions usually introduced fees payment immediately children start to attend schools voluntarily.}

The number of mission schools rose from 42 in 1916 to 121 in 1929 in Benin Province, from 126 in 1920 to 132 in Oyo Province in 1921, and from 795 in 1922 to
1213 in 1923 in Owerri Province.492 A report from Owerri Provinces noted that “it was not an uncommon thing for a small mission school to be conducted by a teacher who had only attained to standard III,” while in Benin Province it was found that “about forty-five percent of these schools have only one teacher who often has to depend upon collection of fees for salary. The average attendance at non-assisted schools is less than twenty and there is a considerable wastage of pupils, due principally to economic causes”.493 Since these schools’ primary objective was the conversion of the pupils, the missions did not always conform to government guidelines requiring the teaching of agricultural and crafts skills. For instance, Mr. F.B. Adams, Resident of Owerri Province commented that “The literary and moral education imparted (by mission schools) is valueless and the main result is a contempt for ordinary farm work”494 A similar situation existed in Oyo Province where there were “… many mission schools, but none teach a trade. In consequence there are a large number of partly educated boys, who are insufficiently trained to be of real value as clerks, who consider themselves as being too important to work with their hands.”495 When employment opportunities became more restricted during the inter-war slump, many school leavers and dropouts could not secure employment. This resulted in the loss of the families’ financial investment in their children’s education as school leavers who lacked agricultural or craft skills increasingly turned to menial jobs at poverty wages. This problem took on a heightened importance in the context of British imperial economic strategy.

One imperial response to the unemployment of British workers arising from the inter-war slump was the promotion of intra-imperial trade. This, in turn, was dependent in part the continued loyalty of colonial subjects and the direction of their economic activities to those – primary goods production - that would foster this strategy. But uncontrolled missionary educational activities were becoming a source of unemployment and destabilization.\footnote{NAUK CO 879/121/4 Minutes of the First meeting of the Advisory Committee on Native Education in Africa, 9/1/1924, I (282).} Because of the conflicting interest of the colonial state and missionaries with regard to education, both the imperial government and the administrations in the colonies were faced with the challenge of controlling the missions and redirecting Africans to activities that they regarded as desirable and beneficial to the colonial project. Christian missionaries, particularly the Protestant missions became increasingly worried about the critical stance of the colonial government towards their work. In response, and under the leadership of Joseph Oldham, founder and Secretary of the International Missionary Council, they sought a rapprochement with the imperial government that led to the establishment of the Advisory Council on Native Education in Africa in 1923.\footnote{Seppo Sinoven, \textit{White Collar or Hoe Handle: African Education under British Colonial Policy, 1920-1945}, Helsinki, Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1995, 52-7.}

The Advisory Committee on Native Education in Africa’s major accomplishment was the preparation of the 1925 \textit{Memorandum on the Education of African Communities} that restored the primacy of place to Christian missionaries in their partnership with the colonial state in the provision of education in Africa and formulated policy guidelines to re-orientate the education of Africans to the service of imperial interests. The Memorandum attempted to adapt western education towards perpetuating a society based
on agricultural and handicraft production and imparting moral and character training through local vernacular languages. The Memorandum seems to have been influenced by the Phelps Stokes Commissions Report\textsuperscript{498} that had been commended by Joseph Oldham to the Advisory Council. The ideas contained in the Report were largely in agreement with those that Lugard and Vischer had promoted and, in part, implemented. It has been cogently argued that the trio of Oldham, Lugard and Vischer manipulated the Advisory Council and that the resulting Memorandum was an embodiment of their vision of education of Africans.\textsuperscript{499} Thus, the 1925 \emph{Memorandum on the Education of African Communities} only reinforced what was already government policy in Nigeria.

Working independently of the Advisory Committee on Native Education in Africa, Governor Sir Hugh Clifford of Nigeria was also trying to grapple with the problem of missions and education as they affected the realization of imperial objectives. At a 1923 meeting with Clifford at Aba on the proliferation of mission “hedge” schools, especially in the eastern parts of the Southern Provinces, the missions agreed to establish spheres of influence for the various denominations, and to seek the approval of the Provincial Residents as a precondition for the opening of new schools which they also agreed had to be two miles distant from other missions.\textsuperscript{500} Clifford also proposed to the Colonial Office that the government should discontinue the opening of new elementary schools and relinquish control over primary education to Christian missionaries who would be provided with grants. The government would provide inspection, partial

\textsuperscript{498} The T.J Jones Phelp Stoke Commission’s report on Africa was produced in the United States of America in 1921 and emphasized agricultural and craft training education for African-Americans. The report was itself inspired by Booker T. Washington’s Tuskegee College agricultural education experiment aimed at perpetuating former African-slaves as rural labourers in the racist American South.


funding and take responsibility for post-primary education in Southern Provinces. He further proposed the establishment of an advisory board with executive powers to sanction the opening and closing of schools, the development of suitable curricula, and the appointment of an expert educational adviser to the government to help reorganize education in Nigeria.

The Advisory Committee on Native Education, closely guided by Lugard and Oldham, reviewed Clifford’s proposals in consultation with Colonial Office. This resulted in the 1926 *Memorandum on Education in Southern Provinces*. This Memorandum accepted all of Clifford’s proposals except that of relinquishing control over primary education to missions. The Education Department was reorganized and expanded, superintendents were appointed to inspect teaching, government teachers’ training colleges were established in the western and eastern parts of the Southern Provinces to improve the standard of teaching, and a scheme for the establishment of a secondary school for girls was commenced. The request for the power to close schools was viewed as superfluous since the laws of Nigeria had already vested this power in the Governor.

Government colleges for the training of teachers were established in Umuahia and Ibadan in 1927 and 1929 respectively. A few scholarships were offered by these colleges, but it was made clear that “only boys of real ability, preferably of well known local families” should be recommended for them. These colleges were grossly inadequate to

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501 NAUK CO 879/121/4 Minutes of the Ninth and Tenth meetings of the Advisory Committee on Native Education in Africa, 16th January 1925 and 28th January 1925.
502 *Memorandum on Education in the Southern Provinces, Sessional Paper No 3 of 1926 laid on the Table of the Legislative Council.*
503 NAUK CO 879/121/4 Minutes of the Ninth and Tenth meetings of the Advisory Committee on Native Education in Africa, 16th January 1925 and 28th January 1925.
504 NAI BP78/27 Superintendent of Education, Benin Province to District Officer, Benin City, 1931.
provide teachers needed for the government primary schools in the colony and no such college was established in the Northern Provinces.

Governor Clifford’s proposal to permit missionary enterprise in Northern Provinces that had a mixed Muslim and non-Muslim population was disallowed and this issue had to be taken up by his successors. Perhaps emboldened by the role assigned to them in both Memoranda, the missionaries increased their pressure on government to allow proselytization in the Muslim areas of the Northern Provinces. The Protestant Missions came together and engaged both the Colonial Office and the Nigerian administration which they accused of promoting Islam through their policies. 505 It was the 1929 Fraser Report on Education in Northern Provinces that ultimately occasioned a policy change. Fraser, a former missionary and Headmaster of Achimota School in Gold Coast, was appointed by the Nigerian government to review the education in the Northern Provinces. His assessment of the existing policy showed it as backward, favorable to the promotion of Islam, unsustainable and inimical to educational progress in Northern Nigeria. Among the changes he recommended was the opening of the area to missionaries. 506 His report was accepted and implemented, and the educational policies that had helped perpetuate poverty in the Northern Provinces were changed. However, the fees charged by the mission schools and problems associated with proselytization continued to constrain access to and attendance at schools.

Other issues dealt with by the 1925 Memorandum were the long-standing problems of female education and teacher education. The education of females had

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505 For various dimensions of this struggle see NAUK CO 583/150/6 Mission Activity and NAUK CO 583/176/15 Mission Activities.
earlier been taken up by government, resulting in their admission to Government Schools, but no provision had been made for their further education or employment.\textsuperscript{507} It was pressure from elite educated women organizations in Lagos, who backed their demands with funds and the influence of Lady Clifford, which prompted the government to establish the Queen’s Girls College, Lagos, in 1927.\textsuperscript{508} However, this move should not be taken as indicative of any really serious interest in secondary education for women or their employment. The aim of the mainly domestic content of the curriculum was that of providing educated wives for educated African men. Education for girls, which was started in the Northern Provinces three years later, had the same objective.\textsuperscript{509} Without employment prospects, investment in female education remained unattractive for the bulk of the population.

Another change that resulted from the 1925 Memorandum was the appointment of Mr. E.J.R. Hussey as Director of Education.\textsuperscript{510} He attempted to re-organize Nigerian education by developing a uniform policy that created three stages of education: elementary (two years infant plus four years), lower middle school (three years), upper middle school (three years), and lengthening the duration of formal education from eight to twelve years. This made only graduates of the upper middle school acceptable for employment in government service and admission into higher colleges. This policy was criticized for lowering the standard of education by shortening the duration of elementary education.

\textsuperscript{507} In the 1920s parents of young female school leavers and some of the females started inundating government with complaints and request for employment in the government service, but it was difficult finding and creating employment for them. See NAI CSO 26/1 File 03571 Employment of African Women in Government Service, Vols. I and II.


\textsuperscript{510} Mr Hussey had earlier reorganized education institutions in Uganda.
education and denying the graduates of elementary schools the opportunity to take the Cambridge Certificate Examination and thus gain admission to British higher education institutions. One intention Hussey’s proposal of an alternate stream of education and qualifications for Nigerians, which was based on a Ugandan precedent, was to prevent the latter from favorably comparing their qualifications with European staff and demanding equivalent positions, pay and benefits.\textsuperscript{511} Hussey’s reorganization had the effect of minimizing the problem of completion of school at a younger age and reducing the number of school leavers, but it also increased the dropout rate because of the longer duration and consequent higher cost of education.

The proposal received the approval of the Colonial Advisory Committee of Education before it was presented to the Nigerian Legislative Council. It was implemented in 1930 when some graduates of the two Government Colleges were sent for training to the Medical Department as Medical and Pharmacy Assistants. These students formed the nucleus of the Yaba Higher College that was started in 1932 and formally opened in 1934 and received a license for medical training in 1938. The manner of the College’s establishment, its non-degree awarding status, and non-affiliation to any recognized British University, angered the emergent educated elite. The Nigerian educated elite not only criticized Yaba Higher College, but formed a political organization, the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), to agitate against British administrative policies that subordinated their aspirations.\textsuperscript{512}


None of the policies implemented by the government resolved the conflicts over access to, or the content and objectives of education that persisted, especially in the Southern Provinces, among colonial officials, missionary agencies and colonized Africans. The missions remained unwilling to accept all government directives and objectives in their entirety. They were emboldened in their independence because, despite the problems of unemployment, the demand for education continued to increase. Given the importance of the provision of education for conversion, this demand continued to fuel competition among the missionaries themselves. Even in the Muslim areas of the Northern Provinces, where employment opportunities were restricted to sons of chiefs, there were more pupils than the schools were ready to accept.\textsuperscript{513} The missionaries capitalized on this opportunity to establish schools in areas which had none. In doing so, various means were employed by the missions to circumvent the Code. In Owerri Province, the missions and communities changed the nomenclature of their schools from “elementary” to “vernacular” to circumvent the Memorandum’s restrictions on new schools, while in Benin Province inter-denominational rivalries intensified, leading to opening of many new “infant” schools.\textsuperscript{514} Communities that had no missionary schools resorted to self-help to establish their own schools. Private individuals invested in establishing schools as profitable business ventures in the Southern Provinces where not only “day” but “night” schools proliferated.

The majority of the old schools and the new schools, especially in the rural areas, could not qualify for government assistance because they could not meet the stringent


conditions due to a lack of funds for necessary facilities and personnel. As a result, their standards remained very low and this forced rural parents with the wherewithal, or pupils with the sheer determination, to migrate to better-equipped schools in the urban areas. The Superintendent of Education, Benin Province reported that, “In 1940 I discovered that large number of children from Benin Districts [rural districts] attended school in the City, living during the week under appalling conditions of accommodation and undernourishment. I was assured on all sides that they came because there were no good schools in the districts.” This caused overcrowding in the urban schools, particularly the better equipped Government Schools. But there were only a few good schools and a few spaces; it was reported that “Everywhere there are long waiting lists for admission into government schools.” Though the government recommended the opening of Native Administration schools, this was dependent on the finances of the Native Administration in question and, more importantly, on the disposition of the local administration. For instance, in 1934 the demand of the Emir Sule of Fika Emirate in Borno Province for more elementary and a middle school was discounted by the District Officer who refused to recommend approval. The Education Department’s proposal to open two Native Authority schools in Benin Division in 1936 was reduced to one by the District Officer who argued that the peasants would not financially support the maintenance of the schools and consequently their opening was delayed until 1938.

515 NAI BP 762 District officer, Benin Division to Resident, Benin Province, 26/3/1945, 38.
518 NAI BP1290 District Officer, Benin Division to Resident, Benin Province, 5/03/1936 and NAI BP 41/Vol.VII Benin Division: Annual Report, 1938, 42.
The basis of official opposition to opening of new schools and or improvement of old ones was not far fetched. Both the school leavers and dropouts refused to take to farming or craftworks in the rural areas. They were reported in Oyo Province to “become hangers-on to the middlemen and cocoa buyers, and wander about the town with nothing really to do and make a precarious living”\textsuperscript{519} while in Owerri Province it was reported that it was:

… unlikely that more than five percent … are able to find steady employment on their departure from school. The remainder, unwilling to return to their villages and settle on the land drift aimlessly up and down the country… joining the floating population of one of the large population centers … where they live a precarious and somewhat mysterious life doing little good either to themselves or to their country.”\textsuperscript{520}

The unemployment problem of school leavers was compounded by the new requirement of a Cambridge School Certificate for entry into clerical service in the 1920s. Some of the chiefs proffered the establishment of secondary and technical schools as the solution to the problem of juvenile unemployment. The government was least interested in post-primary education and had established only two secondary schools and three teachers training colleges for a population of over 20 million by 1939. As a result, the chiefs and their subjects in Abeokuta, Ijebu Ode, Ilesa and Ile Ife in the Western Provinces contributed money to establish community secondary schools, while Okrika and Owerri followed suit in the Eastern Provinces in the 1930s. These communities resorted to self-help efforts because of their realization that education would help their youths escape the drudgery and poverty of peasant life. This is attested by a report that observed that “the

\textsuperscript{519} NAI CSO 26/2 19723 Vol. V Oyo Province: Annual Report 1927, 34.
\textsuperscript{520} NAI CSO 26/2 11930Vol.X Owerri Province: Annual Report, 1932, 64.
tendency on the part of the contributors, parents and pupils, is all towards a higher Cambridge standard which is now considered the passport to clerical service."521

If the number of secondary schools was inadequate, very few could afford their fees. Consequently, some primary school leavers opted for teachers colleges because of the availability of “bonds” offered by the missions which needed teachers. School leavers were less interested in the teaching profession itself because of the poor remuneration of the profession especially in the mission schools. Entry into teachers colleges and the teaching profession were stopgap measures to keep open the possibilities of moving to better paying occupations or professions. By the late 1920s, it was observed that teachers were in the habit of transferring to clerical jobs.522 Those who remained in the profession formed the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) in 1930 to agitate for improvements in conditions of service, welfare conditions and education. But the colonial administration, as usual, blamed poor finances for both the poor remuneration of teachers and inadequate grants in aid to schools. This was the excuse given to the NUT President Rev. Israel O. Ransome-Kuti523 when he made representations to the Colonial Office in 1939.524 As a result, only a small number of children and youths were in school at the outbreak of the WW II as shown in the table below:

523 Rev. Isreal O. Ransome-Kuti was the (son of a freed slave returnee Rev Josiah Ransome-Kuti). Isreal established the first private secondary school (Abeokuta Grammar School). His wife Mrs Fumilayo Ransome Kuti organized women to agitate against taxation and indirect rule and woman leader of NCNC and only female member of Nigerian delegation to the British government to protest the Richard’s constitution in 1946. They were the parents of Fela Anikulapo Kuti, the late foremost Afrobeat Musician and social activist and late human rights campaigner Dr Beko Ransome Kuti.
NUMBER OF SCHOOLS AND CHILDREN ATTENDING SCHOOL IN NIGERIA, 1937 (TABLE 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protectorate</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Elem schs.</th>
<th>No of Pupils</th>
<th>Sec. schs.</th>
<th>No of Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern Nig</td>
<td>3533</td>
<td>218,680</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>4825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Nig</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>20,269</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20,000,000</td>
<td>4072</td>
<td>238,959</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4890</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The funding of education was as low as £231,983 or 3.5% of the total expenditure in 1937.\(^525\) The population of children in school had increased slightly by the outbreak of the Second World War, but still only 350,000 (about ten percent) out of three million school age children were reported to have been in school.\(^526\) Of these, many were never able to complete their elementary education because of their inability to pay school fees. Some of those who continued under conditions of poverty ended up being expelled on account of either poor performance or being too old. The dropout rate was worst in Northern Nigeria where it was reported in 1927 that “half of the children who enter Native administration schools never get beyond the first standard.”\(^527\) A report for Benin Province in 1938 showed that “less than one percent of the population remained long enough to complete the course of elementary class four”\(^528\) [the terminal class]. Not just the dropouts, but many of those who completed school lacked the skills to function


\(^{526}\) Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, 126.


\(^{528}\) NAI CSO 26/2 File 14617 Vol. XII Annual Report of Benin Province, 1938
within the new colonial economy and many ended up with accepting menial labor at very low wages. This accelerated their descent into poverty.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the development of social services in colonial Nigeria before the Second World War. Unlike social provision in Britain, which developed organically out of a long accommodation between contending domestic forces and needs, social provision in Nigeria was the product of a colonial society. The initial impetus for welfare and provision was the needs of the colonizer: in health, the survival needs of Europeans; in education the requirements of the colonial administration and European firms; in both, the motive of missionary conversion. Overarching all, were the twin colonial demands of parsimony and the maintenance of “traditional” social order. The need to address African poverty played a minimal role at best. Nevertheless, the provision of the health and education detailed above, provided the bases of whatever further social service and welfare provision there was to be in the later years of colonial and, indeed, independent Nigeria.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE STATE, POVERTY AND EMERGENT SOCIAL PROBLEMS BEFORE WW II (1900-1939)

…the care of children is not lucrative.


The people of Nigeria have not reached the stage where it has become necessary for the state to make provision for its destitute members.


Introduction

From the inception of the colonial state in Nigeria, it had to contend with the conflicting interests of the mercantile firms, the European Christian mission community and, especially in Lagos Colony, the educated African elite. The latter two had a vested interest in the “civilizing mission” amongst the peasant population. The educated elite had the additional interest of wanting for itself an influential role, and participation, in the administration and in trade which were controlled by European personnel and mercantile firms respectively. The interests of the missionaries and educated African elite were not always in agreement with those in the administration which had preconceived ideas about the Africans and how best to administer them.

Though suffused with racist and stereotyped views of Africans, the three administrations in Nigeria gradually adopted a *laissez-faire* approach of non-intervention and conservation of indigenous institutions based on a “peasant policy” or “development
along native lines.” The peasant policy entailed attempting to preserve the peasant communities and prevent the disintegration of their way of life. The peasant way of life was believed to be unchanging with few wants while Africans in general were viewed as having unambitious or unenterprising dispositions. This is attested to by numerous reports such as one in 1932 that stated, “The Bini is not as a rule wealthy. He is unambitious and so long as he has the wherewithal to exist on, he does not exert himself unduly. The division being very sparsely populated, the struggle for existence is not acute and there is little or no actual poverty.” Crocker made a similar claim for the Tiv and claimed that “There is no land shortage - a wide margin between population and economic resources exist. Given their needs I should say that they are a well-off people to whom poverty is unknown.” In Oyo Province, the Resident described the people of Oyo Division as “… comparatively poor, but there is no want of the ordinary necessities of life; they are very conservative, and unenterprising and seem very satisfied with their lot.” Similar claims of lack of ambition or disinterest in material goods and higher standards of living were made for other groups and the low standard of living of the peasant was seen as being natural. This ill conceived view of the colonized African peasant, which formed the underlying basis of the “peasant” or “development along native lines” policy of minimal intervention, largely defined and influenced the colonial state’s attitude and response to the social wellbeing of the colonized population. The policy precluded the improvement of Africans’ standard of social wellbeing as long as

they continued meeting the needs of Britain. It took calamities, fears of their occurrence, or threats to the production needs of Britain for the colonial state to intervene in matters relating to the well being of colonized Africans.

In spite of the peasant policy, minimal and occasional interventions were undertaken, but these were largely either to safeguard the well being of the colonial officials or in response to the effects of certain measures that created new social problems. Some of these social problems were created by colonial legislation introducing British ideas of justice that formed the basis of tolerance or prohibition of indigenous African customs. Practices which were deemed to be “repugnant” to British ideas of justice were prohibited with the result that the intended victims of these practices, whose lives were no longer viable in their communities, had to be taken into some sort of care. Also in need of care were those Africans deemed to constitute a threat to the colonial order or the health of the European officials. These constituted the major deviations from the non-interventionist policy of development along native lines.

The adoption of this minimal policy towards African welfare was also influenced by the nature of social welfare in Britain itself. Social welfare in nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain was primarily a means of dealing with the threat posed by pauperism and the ideology of socialism espoused by a section of the emergent working class movement. Hence it was a means of attempting to reconcile labor to the interests of capital. Under colonialism the conflict between labor and capital took the form of a small group of European nationals representing their state and imposing their rule on the

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533 Social welfare policy was undergoing a transition in the late nineteenth century and the first three decades of the twentieth century and it was only after the Second World War that a welfare state was established in Britain. M.E. Chamberlain “Imperialism and Social Reform” in C.C. Eldridge (ed.) British Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century, London, Macmillan Publishers Ltd, 1984, 165-6.
colonized with the objectives of extracting profit for the benefit of the economy of the colonizing power.

The kinds of social problems, particularly unemployment, which had bedeviled European societies since industrialization and necessitated the continuous reform of social welfare, did not initially exist in early colonial Africa. Colonial state officials were conscious of this, and tried to preempt their emergence in Nigeria through legislation and a conservative system of indirect rule. The colonial state attempted to minimize what it saw as the corruptive influences of European values (espoused by some missionaries and the coastal literate African elites) among the colonized Africans who were to be kept as peasants or temporary migrant workers. But in spite of the policy, there emerged social problems like destitution, vagrancy, crime, unemployment, begging, juvenile delinquency and so on, that needed to be addressed. The reference point for colonial state officials was Britain, where social welfare since the New Poor Law of 1834 emphasized work and tended to punish rather than assist the poor (assistance largely being left to voluntary agencies) while curtailing central state involvement in pauper welfare. The approaches of the colonial administration in Nigeria and the policies measures taken, resembled what obtained in nineteenth century Britain rather than the later developments of the 20th century. Like 19th and early 20th century Britain, the provision of such social services for African welfare as came to exist was shared by the central government, local administration and voluntary agencies - primarily the Christian missionary organizations.

The colonial state exploited the readiness of some of the voluntary religious agencies’ provision of some services aimed at inducing people into conversion. At the

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same time, the colonial state was also increasingly delegating the provision of social welfare services to the Native Authorities. Where the Native Authorities were financially insolvent, the colonial state occasionally assisted, but this depended on the disposition of the “man on the spot” as well as the financial situation and directives from the Colonial Office. However, it should be noted that Colonial Office directives were not sacrosanct and could be circumvented by the local administration on various grounds and especially financial ones. As a result, varying ad-hoc or “man on the spot” approaches tended to prevail in the colony and two protectorates, ranging from employment of philanthropy to outright indifference.

Consequently, there was little uniformity in policies until the First World War and its aftermath, when amalgamation of the Colony and Protectorates led to a gradual harmonization. The colonial state also came under scrutiny and pressure from the League of Nations, the International Labor Organization and other international bodies which became increasingly critical of colonialism and demanded reports and investigations of social conditions in the colonies. These began to force the colonial state to take some measures to address colonial social problems. In spite of these developments, poverty worsened throughout this period and led to occasional social conflicts that often were met with violent suppression and/or administrative reforms. It was only when social conditions or conflicts threatened the social reproduction of Africans and therefore the supplies of produce to the metropole that the administration tried to address social welfare. This chapter examines the policies and measures the colonial state adopted towards solving the social problems that emerged before 1939. It will first examine the treatment of the socially excluded segments of the population. This will be followed by
two sections that will look at the policies and measures taken against the social problems arising from poverty caused by the political economy of colonial rule in rural and urban areas.

**State Prohibition Induced Destitution and Care: The Dilemma of Institutional Care and Development Along Native Lines**

A major justification for British colonization of Nigeria was the alleged “savage” and “barbaric” practices of the African people which needed to be stopped if they were to be brought into “civilization”. Though this “civilizing mission” was soon jettisoned for “development along native lines”, the colonial administration still went ahead with its self-assigned task of ending such practices. The administration embarked on prohibition and criminalization of those indigenous practices which were deemed to be repugnant to the British sense of justice. The prohibition of these practices had the consequence of rendering some people destitute of family and community.

The abolition of slave trading, customary practices of killing or abandoning twins and babies whose mothers died at childbirth, banishing or killing alleged witches and wizards and the like soon created a class of people who were either socially excluded or unable to locate their families or communities. Some of these were rescued by state officials, thereby putting them in the custody of the state. Others like lunatics and lepers, whose free movement was felt to constitute a danger to the colonial state and society, also had to be taken into state custody.

The question of the custody and care of these people created the dilemma of whether they should be put under institutional care or left to be cared for along “native
lines”. The choice of action was largely influenced by both financial considerations and the disposition of the “man on the spot.” In the early years, there was a trend towards institutional care and expectation of philanthropic support for the institutions. For instance, Lugard sought private philanthropic support for the Freed Slaves Homes he established in Northern Nigeria. But judging from the way these institutions were planned and expected to operate, they were established out of expediency to temporarily solve the immediate problems created by implementation of policy. As the administrations consolidated their rule and with the gradual adoption of a peasant or “development along native lines” policy, institutional care gave way to local community and voluntary agency care. Even the local community or administration involvement was largely dependent on the disposition of the man on the spot. It is against this background that the following sub-sections examine the development, demise or surrender of such institutions to voluntary agencies starting with the earliest institution of the colonial state - the prison.

**Prisons and Asylums as Quasi-Social Service Institutions**

The colonial state created various laws to enforce its rule and to this end established prisons to punish violators. The prison was so critical to the maintenance of colonial order that the building and operation of prisons preceded the enactment of the Prison Ordinance of 1876. Indeed prisons were among the first institutions created by colonial rule. But the prisons came to be also used to care for people taken into custody

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for reasons other than criminal acts. Thus the prison became a social welfare/service institution which played a vital role in providing social care services for the colonial government. Moreover, initially the existence of prisons tended to inhibit the need to establish other social care institutions.

As a result of this multi-purpose function of prisons, they had to be established in communities that had no prior system of prisons. This began in Lagos in 1872, while the pre-colonial prisons in the emirates of Northern Nigeria were adapted and modified to suit colonial needs. More prisons were later established in the interior and the Native Courts Ordinance of 1906 in Southern Nigeria was later used to give legal backing to the operations of the numerous prisons that already existed in nearly every district headquarters.\(^{536}\) The establishment of prisons placed responsibility for the care of inmates on the colonial state. The laws establishing prisons had provisions for the social wellbeing of the inmates. As a result, certain social services such as medical care, which were not available in the larger society, were provided first for prisoners.

The prison in colonial Nigeria also served the function of protecting the larger society from people whose state of health was feared to endanger the society. Though these people were not convicted for any crime, their health and behavioral disposition recommended them to the state for incarceration. These were mainly lunatics who were seen as having violent dispositions or known to have engaged in violence against members of the society and were found unfit for judicial trial. Initially, male lunatics

were sent to asylums in then Gold Coast (now Ghana) and Sierra Leone, while women were confined in the soon overcrowded lunatic ward of the Lagos hospital.\textsuperscript{537}

Lagos newspapers demanded the protection of society from freely roaming lunatics and called for them to be put under some sort of care.\textsuperscript{538} The extent to which this press campaign influenced the government to legislate the Lunatic Removal Proclamation of 1904 of Southern Nigeria is not known, but this legislation empowered the police to remove and control lunatics anywhere in Southern Nigeria. This proclamation was reenacted in 1906 as the Lunatic Asylum Ordinance which stipulated the establishment of lunatic asylums in Nigeria. It was amended in 1916 and re-amended six subsequent times between 1918 and 1933.\textsuperscript{539} But the ordinance and its many amendments were not fully implemented because of the financial policy of the government that made the establishment of asylums difficult. As a result, only two asylums were established in Lagos and Calabar. It was only in 1938 that Lokoja Prison was confirmed as a lunatic asylum for Northern Nigeria. Before then, it was not unusual for some lunatics to be sent from the Northern Provinces to the Lagos Asylum.\textsuperscript{540}

The implementation of this ordinance was selective. Lunatics believed to have benign dispositions were left to forage in the streets at the mercy of the elements. The prevalence of lunatics in particular areas was attested to by Ian Brook, Assistant District Officer of Benin Division, who was charged with the supervision of the prison. He recounted, “As we spoke, a woman lunatic walked past the door (by the Kings Palace).”

\textsuperscript{540} NAK SNP 10/8/108p/1920 Lunatic (Native of Zaria) at Jos: Removal to Yaba Asylum.
She was completely naked, an unkempt young woman…. Benin seemed to always have more than its fair share of lunatics, many of them by means … harmless.” The Ordinance was applied only to lunatics with violent propensities in major urban centers with prison facilities. The determination of the disposition of the lunatic to be incarcerated does not seem to have been professionally undertaken and would have depended on the judgment of the political officer in charge of the urban centre and possibly the courts. This selective incarceration reduced the number of lunatics for which the government had to care. Because of the scarcity of asylums, many of the lunatics taken off the streets were incarcerated in provincial prisons. They were, according to Brooks, “chained up like animals” and fed, which he considered was “the only way we had of helping them.” This system also helped the colonial administration to avoid the establishment of more asylums for the care of lunatics.

Lunacy among the colonized people was observed as having increased during the early colonial period. Dr Home, the government appointed Alienist who undertook a tour of the country in 1928 reported that there were more cases of insanity in the “civilized communities,” or urban centers and he anticipated a higher incidence in Southern Nigeria in the future. Such reports may have been influenced by the official disdain for the “Europeanized natives” who were viewed as a source of problems for the administration. Dr. Home further noted that syphilitic infection induced psychosis was common. The increased incidence of syphilis is known to have been spread by colonial migrations.

542 There were no Psychiatrists or Alienists in the employment of government for 25 years, 1924-1949.
543 Brook, *The One-Eyed Man is King*, 138.
545 Nigeria: *Annual Medical and Sanitary Report for the Year 1928*, 37.
The employment of professionals for the care of inmates of the lunatic asylums was largely neglected and in the period from 1924-1949 there were no psychiatrists working in the asylums. Apart from the provision of food and basic medical care, no attempts were made to treat inmates’ illness. The conditions in the asylums and lunatic wards of prisons were reported to be atrocious and in some cases the lunatics were exposed to the elements.

The conditions of the non-lunatic prisoners were no better, depending largely on the discretion of the man on the spot and available funds. The organization of the prisons was ad-hoc especially in the rural provinces. Rex Niven, as District Officer of Kabba Division in 1923, reported finding a prison there where the men and women shared a communal dormitory and facilities. The women told Niven that they not only cooked meals for the inmates, but also had “disturbed nights” caused by the male inmates.

Unlike lunatics who were selectively incarcerated, the government was interested in achieving complete social control over all lepers because of the contagiousness of the disease. While government worked towards preventing lepers from roaming the streets, its medical department worked towards relinquishing responsibility for their care. In the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and Lagos Colony, isolation and segregation were started very early. Before government intervention, the Roman Catholic Mission had established the Abeokuta leper centre in 1895. The first government Leper Asylum was established in Asaba in Igbo land in 1905 where the number of lepers was reported to be

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548 Ibid, 30-33.
in the thousands.550 Some of the inmates of this leper asylum were taken there by force according to a Church Missionary Society (CMS) report.551 The asylum was started under the administration of High Commissioner, Ralph Moor, but his successor, Governor Walter Egerton, curtailed the disbursement of funds for the asylum. This led to the neglect of the leper asylum, a halt to the admission of lepers, a high death rate of the children of the inmates, and desertion by the survivors in 1905. Dr. E. Moor, the District Medical Officer, was so exasperated by these developments that he advised the closure of the existing asylum and the building of a new one for 1000 inmates in Onitsha as soon as funds allowed. He also recommended isolation of all lepers near their communities under a government appointed supervisor and the village headman.552 The relocation to Onitsha was effected, but the village settlement scheme was not implemented. Another asylum was established in Lagos following the enactment of the Leper Ordinance of 1908, which empowered the Governor to establish asylums where and when he deemed it necessary for the compulsory confinement of Lepers and which also prohibited lepers from engaging in trade and other activities that endangered public health.553 Additional settlements were established in Okpanam, Ibusa and Illah, all in western Igbo land.554

The establishment of leper asylums in the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria lagged behind in spite of an official report in 1910 warning that, “…the leper must be regarded as the chief danger and should therefore be isolated.”555 This delay was because it was

feared that there would be violent African resistance to segregation. However, the Sultan of Sokoto gave approval at first request in 1911 and the first leper settlement in Northern Nigeria was established very close to the city of Sokoto. By 1912, other settlements were established in Maiduguri and Giedam in Borno Province, Hadeija in Kano Province, and other locations in Nassarawa and Muri Provinces. In 1913, it was complained that segregation had not gone far enough as lepers still roamed the streets and engaged in various occupations.

The position of lepers was difficult because their treatment in the pre-colonial societies varied from toleration to ostracism or outright banishment. The colonial government worsened their situation by concentrating facilities for their care in urban centers where lepers were not wanted, but were the only places they could seek medical attention and beg for alms. Their convergence in urban centers in large numbers was seen as a threat to the health of Europeans. Compounding the problem of inadequate knowledge of the treatment of leprosy, the administration was unwilling to expend funds on controlling its spread. As a result, Lugard complained in 1915 that, “The Leper question is one of the greatest difficulties. I personally consider that nothing of practical value will be effected unless and until compulsion is enforced thoroughly. It may be that the time is not ripe for that.” The same complaint was echoed in the Medical Department’s Annual Report of 1927: “The problem of Leprosy in Nigeria is a very large and difficult one.” Only Lagos colony enforced compulsory isolation/segregation, of

556 Northern Nigeria, *Annual Medical Report for the year ending 31st December, 1911*, London, Waterlow and Sons Ltd Printers, 1912, 44.
lepers, while segregation and isolation was made voluntary and left to the discretion of the native authorities and missionaries in the two protectorates.

The native authorities consequently established isolated settlements for the lepers who volunteered for treatment. These were reported to be of “doubtful value and such provisions as they afford affects only a few hundred lepers in an advanced stage of the disease.”559 According to a report, lepers in advanced stages of the disease had in some cases been forcefully incarcerated560 and segregated from those in the early stages who were treated either as in-patients or out-patients. Even the segregation of lepers according to stages of disease was difficult because most missionaries were not trained for this work. The retention of children by leper parents contributed to the death of many of them. Voluntary segregation, which allowed the lepers to move in and out of various communities, led to the further spread of leprosy. This was especially the case outside Igbo land in the Southern Provinces where reports indicated that the disease was spreading. There were an estimated 32,000 lepers in the Northern Provinces in 1927; a survey in 1932 indicated 82 lepers per 10,000 people in the Northern Provinces, while 10.6% of the 29,782 people in seven communities in Kwale Division of Warri Province in the south were lepers.561

By the 1930s the Native Authorities were put in charge of establishment of leper settlements and assisted missionary agencies with funds, while the central government only provided drugs believed to stem the progress of the disease. This treatment was not

559 Ibid.
always free as some patients were reported to pay a token ½-1d. Initially, some of the Native Authorities took responsibility for the feeding of lepers in the settlements or providing weekly allowances for their food. The contribution of the Native Authorities coupled with success in the treatment of yaws in some communities quickly led to an upsurge in the number of lepers seeking treatment with a large number walking many miles to get to dispensaries and settlements. Both the native authorities and the Missionary agencies had difficulties coping with the increased numbers.\[562\]

The missionary agencies organized their leper settlements on the basis of self-reliance through engagement of lepers in the production of their own food and crafts goods for the market. The success of this policy of self-support, which started in Itu, Calabar Province, in the 1920s, was copied by the government and Native Authorities which began to establish leper farm colonies from the early 1930s with the support of the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association (BELRA). In Gusau, Sokoto Province, it was reported that the lepers detested farming and other labor works,\[563\] probably because being in a Muslim society, it may have been easier for them to have supported themselves through begging as had been the case in the past. But this resistance to work did not stop the establishment of more leper farm colonies. By 1934, there were eleven farm colonies in the Northern Provinces and twelve in the Southern Provinces.

In spite of the increasing number of leper colonies, the continued spread of the disease made it difficult for these farm colonies to cope. They began restricting admission to “early treatable cases” and also making “the family or a leper patient contribute

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\[562\] Nigeria Annual Medical and Sanitary Report for the Year 1936, Annual Reports Of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria for the year 1936, 24.

towards his support while in the colony.”

In the Southern Provinces, a leper seeking admission had to be confirmed by a Medical Officer to be an early treatable case and certified by the District Officer to be able to pay the cost. The various farm colonies adopted different policies in dealing with this problem. In the Uzuakoli settlement, which was financed by group of Native Authorities in Owerri Province, allocation of space was based on the contribution of the Native Authority and the lepers were segregated according to their village of origin. This formula was also adopted by the leper colony in Ossiomo in Benin Province, which was partly financed through the Colonial Development Fund and supported by Native Authority grants for sponsorship of their lepers, while the family unit was relied upon for funding in the Oji River colony of Onitsha Province.

In the face of discrimination against poor lepers, a leper settlement created by the lepers themselves with no government and missionary support sprang up in Abakaliki. Poor lepers who were refused admission to the colonies were forced to find their own ways back to urban centers to beg for alms. Some, who were left destitute around the colonies, were reported in the 1940s to have erected illegal structures, and were engaging in stealing and prostituting female relatives to support themselves in Ossiomo.

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565 Nigeria Annual Medical and Sanitary Report for the Year 1934, Annual Reports Of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria for the year 1934, 1935, 8.
567 Nigeria Annual Medical and Sanitary Report for the Year 1938, Annual Reports Of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria for the year 1938, 9.
568 NAI BP2246 A, Leprosy Control: Organization of- District Officer, Benin Division to Resident, Benin Province, 4/1/1950, 134.
The withdrawal of central government from leprosy care was achieved in 1938 when the West African Medical Conference resolved to leave the care of lepers to medical missionaries. The Nigerian Medical Department welcomed this development as approval of its long practiced policy. Thus the care of lepers came to be at the mercy of the poorly funded local authorities and missionaries who could do little for them. As McCormick, the American Baptist Mission nurse observed, the greatest difficulty in the treatment and control of leprosy was the poverty of the patients who needed better nutrition and housing for treatment to be effective. These were largely unaffordable by the lepers and their families as the lepers’ disability often resulted in the impoverishment of their families.

Care of Freed Destitute Slaves – Children under Mandate, Freed Slave Villages and Homes

Another group of people who came under the custody of the state were freed slaves. The various laws prohibiting slavery had been crafted with the objective of avoiding the social dislocation that it was feared would follow emancipation of slaves. However, actions to stop the trade often yielded rescued victims including children and adults who could not return to or recollect their homelands and those who would not be welcomed back because of the past crimes that led to their sale into slavery. The upkeep of the freed slaves became the responsibility of the administration.

569 Nigeria Annual Medical and Sanitary Report for the Year 1938, Annual Reports of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria for the year 1938, 80.
571 The emancipation of slaves in the British West Indies provided a part of the experience which informed the policies employed in preventing massive social dislocation in Nigeria.
572 Christian missionary agencies were indifferent to the freed slaves, which might be attributable to their poor finances. It might also have to do with the bad impression association with slaves might give to their
In spite of prohibition, the kidnapping and enslavement of children persisted in the Protectorates of Northern Nigeria and in the Eastern Provinces of Southern Nigeria Protectorate. When rescued, these children were put under the “mandate” of the state. The administration gave the children to missionary agencies or responsible foster families with a monthly or annual fee being paid for the children’s upkeep. The rescued children remained under such mandate either until the age of eighteen or marriage. But with amalgamation, the Native Children (Custody and Reformation) Ordinance was enacted in 1917 which reduced the maximum age of beneficiary children to fifteen years. This ordinance also covered the care of criminally convicted children, orphans, abused children, and other children detained by the court. During this “mandate” period the child was to be either provided with education or taught a trade. Females were usually married out on reaching the age of maturity, while males sought employment. In Owerri Province, for instance, there were twelve children under such mandate in 1922 of which four were rescued in 1921 and seven were under the care of missionary agencies, four with private families, and one married at the age of eighteen. The appearance of the names of the same children for three consecutive years in the reports on the children seems to indicate no deaths and provides some evidence that the system was benign.


NAI CSO 26 /09501 Owerri Province: Annual Report, 1922, Political Form No. 6.
Widely practiced in Southern Nigeria,\textsuperscript{576} this system helped avoid the establishment of state orphanages and thus reduced costs to the government.

The “mandate” system was initially adopted in the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria; however, Governor Frederick Lugard quickly reversed the policy. This was partly because of the inhumane treatment of some of the freed slaves by their custodians, but largely due to Lugard’s ambivalent attitude towards Christian missionaries whose objective was to convert the freed slaves,\textsuperscript{577} which he feared might offend the sensibilities of the Muslim rulers. To this end, Lugard made some funds available to provide European and African staff and buildings for the establishment of a Freed Slave Home in Zungeru in 1903. The difficulty of travel for the children presented by the distance of over 1000 miles between Borno Province and Zungeru necessitated the establishment of a Freed Slave Village, including a home for children, in Borno Province in 1904. Similar Freed Slave Homes are claimed to have been opened in other provinces,\textsuperscript{578} but these were temporary collection centers for the Zungeru home. Lugard’s change of approach was also in keeping with the policy of “development along native lines” as it was aimed at ensuring that the rescued children took their place in society as Africans instead of imbibing European values through missionary contact.

Lugard knew that the institutional care of the children was not going to be a “lucrative” business, and he had hoped for assistance from the “private philanthropy” of

\textsuperscript{576}NAI CSO 26/2/11660 Benin Province: Annual Reports, 1923, 25.
individuals as distinct from charitable organizations\textsuperscript{579} which he feared might want to use it to project their religious ideals and become involved in the policies of the institution. However, it was the Rebecca Hussey Charity (of which Lugard was a trustee) and St. Giles Trust that came to his rescue by contributing funds for running the home. These were supplemented with funds from the administration and the fees paid for the marriage of the female inmates.

The Zungeru home started with 193 persons (64 adults and 129 children) under a European female supervisor and her African staff. The home at Marifoni Liberty Village outside Maiduguri in Borno Province was under a Medical Officer and started with 142 inmates, made up of 112 children below 11 years of age, 19 girls aged between 12 and 20 years, and 11 adult women. The children in the home were given a basic education in the English language, the three R’s, domestic work, gardening, and trades like carpentry, tailoring and needlework. In addition, some were apprenticed to government departments as well as fostered to families, including those of European officials, as servants.\textsuperscript{580} Conditions in the freed slave homes and villages were poor. Inhumane treatment was reported to be meted out to inmates, while the quality of food and water was so bad that high mortality, especially among the children, was frequently reported.\textsuperscript{581} Sylvia Leith-Ross, who observed the home in Zungeru in 1907, described it as “a rather sad little place.” \textsuperscript{582}

Inmates of the Borno Freed Slave Village, also known as Liberty Village, were initially paid a weekly stipend, but shortly after opening this was reduced by half and members were allocated land for farming to help them become self-sustaining. The expectation was that with time, the self-sustaining adults of Liberty Village would be able to adopt the children in the home, after which it could be closed and the administration freed of the financial burden.\textsuperscript{583} A similar policy was applied in Zungeru from 1904. The homes were to be a temporary measure to be phased out since such institutions had no place in the peasant or “development along native lines” policy.

In view of the financial burden it placed on the government, Lugard’s successor, Edouard P. Girouard, established a commission to report on the economic and social implications of continuing the homes. Due to the homes’ inability to make the inmates self supporting, the commission recommended government withdrawal from running the homes and their handover to voluntary agencies. Their training was deemed incapable of preparing inmates for “native life”, and their inmates were still perceived as slaves by the local community because they performed unpaid work for the government.\textsuperscript{584} When it was closed, the adult inmates of Liberty Village in Borno were left to their own devices, while the children were moved to Zungeru and handed over to the Sudan United Mission (SUM). The SUM used the children to establish the Lucy Memorial Freed Slave Home in Rumaisha in 1908 that was supported by an annual grant from government until it was closed down in 1925.\textsuperscript{585} In addition, Christian missions were encouraged to establish

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\textsuperscript{584} Graham, \textit{Government and Mission Education in Northern Nigeria 1900-1919}, 29.
\textsuperscript{585} Virginia A. Salamone and Frank A. Salamone, \textit{The Lucy Memorial Freed Slaves Home}, Lanham, University of America Press, 2008, 1.
freed slave homes, while the government reverted to the policy of fostering children to missions and responsible individuals when their parents or communities could not be located. Adults were left to fend for themselves. This policy remained in the place through the 1920s and 1930s when slavery was reported to have largely died out.

**Orphans, Abandoned Children, and Rescued Victims of Intended Infanticide**

Apart from freed slave children, who were usually brought under government custody by the courts, there were other categories of children for whom the Native Children’s Ordinance of 1917 did not make provisions. These were usually orphans or the intended victims of customary practices of passive euthanasia, regarded by colonial officials as infanticide, who had been rescued by missionaries or colonial officials. Early missionaries took these children under their personal care, but as numbers increased some missions established child welfare centers and orphanages, the earliest being the Sacred Heart Hospital, Abeokuta, which opened in 1895.

The major problem was that the missions had inadequate funds for the care of the rescued children and the government, which had criminalized the practices of the “infanticide” of children with deformities and from multiple births, had no policy of caring for such children. Consequently, the care of such children was left to local initiative. The missions tried to find local converts to care for such children or negotiate government assistance in caring for these children in their homes and orphanages.

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586 Multiple births were taboo in some communities like the Igbo, Ibibio, Efik, Ekiti Yoruba and so on while children born with some abnormalities like teeth, supernumerary fingers, emergence with the legs instead of the head and so on were forbidden by the Igbo and children whose mothers died during childbirth were rejected or buried along with their mothers by the Birom and some Yoruba groups. The practice of abandoning the children to die has been described as Passive Euthanasia. See Robert W. Nicholls *An Examination of Some Traditional African Attitudes towards Disability*, Durham, NH, Institute on Disability, 1993 IEEIR Monograph 53, 38.
Onitsha, the CMS missionary nurse, Miss Mary Elm, was able to negotiate the freedom of a chief convicted for twin “infanticide” in exchange for a local Native Authority council contributions supporting the establishment of a home for such Igbo twins in the 1900s.\footnote{Misty L. Bastian “The Demon Superstition”: Abominable Twins and Mission Culture in Onitsha History” \textit{Ethnology: An International Journal of Cultural and Social Anthropology}, Vol. XL, No.1, Winter 2001, 19.} However, the missions were only able to establish few homes for such children.

Where the missions were unable to establish such a home and the man on the spot was sympathetic, there were possibilities of government assistance. One such instance was that of the Igbo of Ogwashi-Uku in Asaba Division of Benin Province where the Native Administration established a home in 1924 to “promote the suppression of twin murder.”\footnote{Sessional Paper No 1 of 1928, Paper laid on the Table of the Legislative Council-\textit{Annual Report on the Southern Provinces and Colony of Nigeria for the year 1926}, 3.} The approval for establishment of such a home was easy because it was run at virtually no cost to the government. The fathers of the twins were made responsible for feeding their wives, who stayed in the homes to care for their twins under the supervision of the Native Authority,\footnote{Sessional Paper No 1 of 1928, Paper laid on the Table of the Legislative Council-\textit{Annual Report on the Southern Provinces and Colony of Nigeria for the year 1926}, 3.} while the community built and maintained the home with local labor and materials. The home was only a temporary measure and usually housed the mothers and twins for one year, just long enough, it was believed, to help convince local people that such children were harmless to their families and communities. It was hoped that once the communities accepted coexistence with children from multiple births, the home could be closed.
The colonial state also had no policy towards orphans. This might have been due to the absence of child adoption laws in Britain until the 1920s and the lack of precedents to rely on in dealing with this problem. Although the Native Children (Custody and Reformation) Ordinance of 1917 stated that a mandate “may be issued” for “any child who is an orphan or is deserted by his relatives” or “any child who has been neglected or ill-treated by the person having the charge or custody of such child” and stipulated that for any child under mandate “any expense which may be incurred in respect of the maintenance of such child during the period of such detention shall be paid out of general revenues of Nigeria,” the government cautiously implemented this law and gradually limited its application. By the 1920s the government rarely issued mandates and slave children freed by order of Native Courts were left to “follow their inclinations” or were “restored to their relatives.” Since the ordinance was no longer implemented, one Rev. T.L. Suffill of the SUM in 1938 applied for the adoption of some of the children, but the Crown Council advised against issuing any mandate for such purposes because it would obligate the government to bear the financial cost. As a result, the government went to extreme lengths to find relatives and communities of origin of these children and destitute adults to take responsibility for their care. Hence the government annual report repeated yearly that,

The family or clan is still a very vital force and its members look after and support one another in sickness, old age and other misfortune. For the same reason no provision is required for orphans all such considered as part of the family of either

592 NAI CSO 21 N322 Nassarawa Province: Annual Report, 1920/1, Returns of Freed Slaves.
their mother or father according to whether the tribe is matrilineal or patrilineal and, in the later case whether or not the husband has paid the bride price.\textsuperscript{594}

Care for Destitute Adults, Disabled Persons and Other Socially Excluded People

The banishment in some communities of people suspected of practicing witchcraft or sorcery and mothers of multiple births continued in the early colonial period as a result of the administration’s inability to effectively enforce its prohibition against this practice. One reason for the inability to enforce such prohibitions was that such practices were often enforced by the very indigenous institutions through which colonial authorities locally ruled. Given the powerlessness of those who were the objects of such practices, the banished often had little choice but to migrate to urban centers where they could live in anonymity and beg.

In addition, the changing disease environment, in part caused by improved rail and road communication and increased labor migration, was reported to have increased the incidence of new and old diseases. One report on the demographic situation in 1930 noted that,

If the native population is stationary or even on the decrease, it is due to not so much to the tremendous mortality among the infants, but to the widely increased spread of plagues, many of them of only recent introduction, which now sweeps across the country year after year, causing untold hardship and innumerable deaths; while before the opening of the country to roads and railways the plagues were confined to small areas, now with ever moving native population vast areas are annually affected.\textsuperscript{595}


This eyewitness account of the spread of these diseases in the 1930s is corroborated by the retrospective view of Akiga who stated that,

… when the white man came, the Tiv began to travel about and mix with Chamba, Dam, Hausa, and Akporo peoples amongst whom the disease [gonorrhea] was rife, and not only mix but intermarry with them… When the Tiv intermarried with their neighbors they also copied their promiscuous habits… In this way the disease began to spread…But where it was most common was in the villages of the chiefs, and in those which were near to Hausa settlements; and the people who more than any others were the cause of its spreading were the whiteman’s carriers and road workers. These were young men, the great majority of whom were unmarried. When they received their pay, they spent it on food and women.  

Large-scale migrations and the new concentration of populations in work places and urban centers helped spread disease. A survey of leprosy in Southern Nigeria in 1921 showed it to be endemic in the Eastern Provinces, but by the 1930s it had become also widespread in the Western Provinces. Other diseases, such as yaws and syphilis, and disease carrying insects like jiggers were also reported to have spread more widely.

In addition to those disabled by leprosy and lunacy discussed above, other diseases caused disability as did workplace injuries. Employers had little enforceable responsibility to mitigate the disabilities suffered by their employees despite the amendment of the Master and Servant Law in 1929 that required employers to pay compensation for injury arising from work.

The state had no policy with regards to destitute disabled adults - the physically incapacitated, the blind, deaf, dumb or those disabled by age. Such were neither seen as endangering the health of European officials nor as a source of potential public

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596 Rupert East (Translated) Akiga’s Story: The Tiv Tribe as seen by one of its members, 354-6.
598 Talbot, The people of Southern Nigeria: A sketch of their history, ethnology and languages with an abstract of 1921 Census, Volume IV Linguistics and statistics, 9, East (Translated) Akiga’s Story: The Tiv Tribe as seen by one of its members, 353.
disturbance as were lepers and violent lunatics. Such individuals were left to the care of their “native social organization.” However, the social and economic changes discussed in chapter two made it increasingly difficult for their families and communities to address the needs of their disabled members who increasingly turned to begging. Begging started to be witnessed among some peoples who did not formerly engage in this practice, while in the Eastern Provinces, it was also reported that deformed children were being sold off.

The government had expected the missions to assist with care of the disabled and that other philanthropic organizations would emerge to supplement this care as has happened in Britain. But the missions concentrated more on how to use their limited resources to win converts than to meet the needs of the disabled. There were exceptions. The Salvation Army and Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) did work with the destitute and aged. The Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), which took charge of the Freed Slave Children’s home in Rumasha, inherited some disabled children and is recorded to have commenced the teaching of the deaf and dumb amongst them who in turn taught others. They were able to do this because of the subvention they received from government for the upkeep of the freed slaves.

Given the generally low level of involvement of the Christian missions in caring for destitute adults and the disabled, the central government increasingly pushed their care onto the local administrations through a policy of repatriation of such persons to

their Native Authorities of origin. The Native Authorities were also required to pay the cost of such repatriation. This policy was sanctioned by Section 79 of the Township Ordinance which empowered the police to arrest and repatriate vagrants. But enforcement was difficult because neither the police nor the government were willing to bear the cost of custody and transportation. As a result, the policy of repatriation was largely applied only to destitute adults who were unable to pay their hospital bills.602

The care of such destitute adult persons depended on the disposition of the local administration. For instance, when the Benin Native Administration volunteered to care for paupers who were not of Benin origin in 1935, the District Officer objected. Many destitute and disabled adults - especially of Northern Nigerian origin - roamed the streets of the cities as beggars. It was only in Benin Division that the Native Administration established a camp on the outskirts of Benin City under the charge of a caretaker to feed destitute adults. This was reported to have cost the Native Administration the sum of £50 in 1934.603 Otherwise, in other parts of the colony and protectorate, they were left to roam the streets and beg for alms. In Northern Nigeria, where the majority of the beggars in the cities originated, the matter was raised at the Residents conference in 1935, but no policy emerged. Thus, begging by destitute adults increasingly became a way of life and the numbers involved continued to swell the streets of the urban centers.

602 NAI BP 874 Pauper Patients- Medical Officer, Benin City to Resident, Benin Province, 1/08/1931, 1 and Secretary, Southern Provinces to Resident, Benin Province, 21/09/1934, 2, NAK, MAIPROF File 3204 Pauper Patients: Repatriation of and NAI, Comcol.1, File 69 Unemployed and Paupers, Repatriation of.
603 Ibid.
The Colonial State and Treatment of Emergent Poverty in the Rural Areas

As discussed in chapter two, the lives of the rural population were transformed by colonial rule and the establishment of the colonial political economy. One aspect of this transformation was the creation of new forms of rural poverty. It also resulted in increased migration to urban areas which threatened the political stability of the colonial regime. These new social problems could not be addressed through the indigenous institutions of social welfare, which had been weakened by the same causes. Thus, the colonial regime intervened with measures and schemes aimed at maintaining productivity and preserving peasant society. This section examines some of the causes of rural poverty and the measures taken to address it.

Food Shortages, Droughts, Famines and Pestilence

The early period of colonial rule was characterized in rural areas by problems of drought, famine, pestilence and epidemic diseases. As I have argued in chapter two, these problems were often exacerbated by the imposition of colonial rule and its policies. In addition to the social dislocation directly caused by violent conquest, particular colonial policies including the abolition of slavery and mass desertion of farms by slaves, the diversion of farm labor by the colonial state, food requisitioning for feeding colonial troops and the collection of taxes and tribute in food combined to create food shortages. This occurred in Benin City District and Ibadan Division in the Western Provinces of Southern Nigeria that were reported to be experiencing food shortages as a result of drought and increased labor requirements for public works as early as 1905-1909.604 In

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Northern Nigeria, which experiences only a short rainy season to grow its staple grain crops, it only required occasional drought conditions or pestilence for such food shortages to be transformed into famines. Famines allowed diseases to assume epidemic proportions that killed both humans and livestock in large numbers. Famines became recurrent in Northern Nigeria, killing tens of thousands of people. These developments, in turn, created obstacles to the achievement of the colonial objectives of increased agricultural export production.

The responses of the different levels of administration and officials varied, but they all exploited the famines to pursue colonial objectives. The Colonial Office viewed famine as caused in part by the “proverbial laziness” of the Native and advised that it be exploited to press the victims to work for food. This was the classic British policy of exploiting famine and the plight of victims to pursue its own objectives of solving labor problems as had earlier been done in similar situations in Ireland and India. Lugard’s administration in the period 1900-1906, as Weiss has argued, sought to use famine to seek additional funds for his administration and when this effort failed, he lost interest in famine relief and rationalized that “the experience of hunger will stimulate the people to cultivate larger areas.” To drive home this policy of increasing production, in the face of a famine in 1908 that forced the people to sell their children to buy food in

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Adamawa Province, the administration collected taxes in full without providing any relief whatsoever to survivors.\textsuperscript{610} The limited relief that existed was provided on the initiative of the “man on the spot” in some localities, such as in Zaria Province under Assistant Resident Barclays, in which the victims were engaged by the Native Authority in public works and paid in food.\textsuperscript{611}

Despite the occurrence of two major famines, no policy for famine prevention was put in place during the first two decades of colonial rule. Weiss has argued that the India Famine Code that was employed to some extent in other British African Colonies was not employed in Northern Nigeria because of its limited strategic importance to Britain.\textsuperscript{612} The poor infrastructure existing in the region and a fiscal policy that put a low premium on African welfare contributed to the colonial regime’s laissez faire policy towards famine. Since, it was believed that it was the “habitual laziness of the native” that caused food shortages and the colonial state’s objective was increased productivity, any assistance to the colonized was feared to be inimical to colonial objectives. This was attested to by one colonial report that stated that providing any form of relief would make “the native … come to depend on the government for assistance.”\textsuperscript{613} This had to be avoided in order to ensure that the objectives of increasing productivity and financial self-sufficiency were achieved.

In response to the pressure of cash needs to meet their obligations to the state and other needs, farmers expanded production of export crops. This reduced food production

\textsuperscript{613} Cited from a 1931 report on Famine Relief in Watts, Silent Violence: Food, Famine and Peasantry in Northern Nigeria, 320.
and increased vulnerability to political or climatic crises. Such occurred during the First World War when the requisition of food for soldiers fighting in Cameroun combined with labor diversion for the war effort, drought and crop failure to create famine in 1914. This famine known as Yuwan Malali resulted in the death of tens of thousands from hunger before the arrival of inadequate and tardy relief.\textsuperscript{614} This famine, according to Watts, not only “served as a trigger for the rupturing of peasant reproduction” but was “a watershed in the incorporative process”\textsuperscript{615} of commodity production that subsumed local productive activities under British merchant capital.

It was only after the First World War that the central administration started to pay attention to addressing the issue of famine. This may have been due to the fear of a declining population and its impact on agricultural productivity. Governor Clifford suggested the creation of grain reserves as an interim measure pending the formulation of a lasting policy, but in the famine prone Protectorate of Northern Nigeria local officials adhered to a laissez faire approach.\textsuperscript{616} They argued that the cost of establishing reserves would pose a budgetary problem. As a result, they only a focused on reporting crop production and rainfall statistics, while the provincial administrations dealt locally with famine in the absence of central coordination.\textsuperscript{617} Local officials like G.B. Webster, the Resident of Sokoto only started requesting funds to establish a grain reserve in 1922 after

\textsuperscript{614} Ibid, 290.
\textsuperscript{615} Ibid, 294 and 297.
\textsuperscript{616} Ibid, 303-5.
\textsuperscript{617} Well digging and irrigation work were started in 1920, but were restricted to a few places in Sokoto Province. The Irrigation work was poorly funded by the Native Authority and without the support of the central government it deteriorated and failed to impact on the food situation. Robert W. Shenton, “Nigerian Agriculture in Historical Perspective: Development and Crisis, 1900-1960” Michael Watts (ed.) State, Oil, and Agriculture in Nigeria, Berkeley, I.I.S., University of California, 1987, 38.
yet another local famine,⁶¹⁸ to prevent further migration and consequent loss of tax revenue.

Eventually a compromise policy was reached establishing seven days’ grain reserves in each town.⁶¹⁹ This was to prove inadequate when another famine hit the Northern Provinces in 1927. This famine, which affected especially the northernmost provinces of Sokoto, Kano, Borno, Zaria, Bauchi and Benue was caused by failure of rains, increased cultivation of export crops, and reduction of farm acreage in response to the imposition of the “taki” system that assessed tax on basis of acreage. This famine proved less devastating than that of 1914 because of relative availability of food, greater migration, and the availability of employment in food surplus areas. It also led to increasing differentiation of peasant producers as those less fortunate migrated or worked locally on the farms of the better off, thus neglecting their own farms and consequently becoming more dependent on wage labor and borrowing.

The 1927 famine led to the formulation of a famine policy that left relief to the local Native Authorities and gave them powers to prohibit food export and import. It also provided for central government intervention in the event of a Native Authority’s incapacity.⁶²⁰ The control of food exports and imports within and between provinces could worsen famine, as was the case in 1932 in Niger Province when a localized famine afflicted Kontagora Division which had no reserves. Appeals to other divisions in the

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⁶¹⁸ NAI, CSO 26/1, File 06475 Vol.1, Famine: Northern Provinces- G.W. Webster, Resident, Sokoto Province to the Secretary, Northern Provinces, 10/109/1922, 2-5.
⁶¹⁹ NAI CSO 26/1 File 06475 Vol.1 Famine: Northern Province -Secretary, Northern Provinces to The Chief Secretary, Lagos, 24/01/1927, enclosed Précis of Replies from Residents, 32-3.
province were rebuffed with the excuse that their own food reserves were small and needed.\textsuperscript{621}

Most post-1927 famines were localized, except that caused by a locust invasion that was widespread across the southern Northern Provinces and some parts of the Southern Provinces in 1930. The locusts had entered Nigeria through Oyo Province where there were reports of minimal damage. However, a sharp increase in prices occurred in Oyo Division and the administration provided no relief to the affected population.\textsuperscript{622} The administration made no contingency plans for combating locusts and only commenced planning for trapping locusts after they had arrived and caused damage.

In the Northern Provinces, the damage caused by locust invasion was more severe because of the open nature of their grassland vegetation which enabled the locusts to move more freely. The administrations in Northern Nigeria were more proactive in combating the locust, but the methods employed were unsuccessful because the chemicals utilized were reported to be effective only on the larva\textsuperscript{623} and not the locust swarms that did extensive damages to crops. Famine relief measures were employed in some cases but largely failed to mitigate the deaths, debts and losses that worsened the poverty of many peasants who were never able to reconstitute their household reproduction units and were forced into migrant or local wage labor. The ensuing food shortages and malnutrition made people more vulnerable to debilitating diseases.

\textsuperscript{621} Ibid, 27.
Nutrition, Agriculture, Soil Erosion and Welfare Schemes

The colonial regime’s ability to increase revenue hinged on increased agricultural productivity, which was understood to be related to the health and welfare of the rural population. This concern led to the introduction of various schemes that were intended to address these issues directly or indirectly.

Most of these schemes were initiated as a response to directives from the Colonial Office. A key problem such schemes faced was the lack of coordination of the various arms of the Nigerian colonial administration. In the case of welfare, the Chief Commissioner of the Eastern Provinces complained in 1939 that, “I do not consider that we have as yet made any real effort to coordinate the aim and policy of our social services. We think departmentally rather than governmentally” and suggested that “in these circumstances coordination of policy is the first essential. Given an agreed policy it should not be difficult to translate it into local action.”624 In Oyo Province the Resident, Mr. Ross, wrote that “The Agricultural Department is so exclusively departmental and Administrative Officers are so definitely discouraged from assisting the department in propaganda that the problems concerning agriculture are not discussed with the Resident.”625 Similarly, J.R. Mackie, the Director of Agricultural Department complained that “the whole history of my department since 1920 shows that almost every scheme which involved work among the farmers has been opposed or obstructed.”626 This lack of coordination was to persist throughout the colonial period and beyond.

626 Quoted in Robert Shenton, “Nigerian Agriculture in Historical Perspective: Development and Crisis, 1900-60” in Michael Watts (ed.) State, Oil and Agriculture in Nigeria, 37-8.
Nutrition Improvement and Research Schemes

Research on nutrition in Nigeria had a curious beginning. It was only initiated as a result of a passing mention of Nigeria in a meeting concerned with Empire wide malnutrition problems.\(^{627}\) At a meeting in the Colonial Office of the Sub-Committee on the Mineral Content of Natural Pastures of the Civil Research Committee (CRC), one Dr. Rutherford, a member of the sub-committee, made passing mention of the use of *Lobi* (natron) in feeding livestock and humans in Nigeria.\(^{628}\) Nigeria was commended to the committee as a subject for nutrition research on the grounds of its size, diverse vegetation, ethnic groups, food culture, and its large number of livestock which were seen as qualities representative of the West African group of colonies.

Research, primarily in Northern Nigeria, which involved the investigation of both animal and human diets, started in 1926. The Civil Research Committee and the Colonial Office employed a South African, Dr P.J. Du Toit, to undertake research with the support of the Nigerian Government. Du Toit’s research showed the Veterinary Department to be grossly understaffed, with only two officers in its twelve years of existence, and concentrating on the controlling of Rinderpest, which decreased the livestock population to a point insufficient for meeting local nutritional needs. He recommended the

\(^{627}\) As a result of the post First World War realization Britain’s vulnerability to shortages of food and agricultural raw materials, a research project on the mineral contents of natural pastures and their effects on animal products and nutrition of livestock was started in Scotland. This project aroused interest in alternative sources of these products within the empire. The empire wide research that started in the Falklands and then in Kenya showed a correlation between the malnutrition of nursing mothers and the high rate of infant mortality among the cattle keeping African population.\(^{627}\) Nigeria, Sessional Paper No 5 of 1927, Paper laid on the table of the Legislative Council, Subject: Report on Livestock Problems in Nigeria by Dr. P. J. Du Toit, Veterinary Research Laboratory, Onderskoop, Pretoria, South Africa, February, 1927, 16.

\(^{628}\) NAUK CO583/143/9 Nutrition Investigation in West Africa-Copy of a note of discussion between Mr. J.E.W. Flood, Dr G.J. Rutherford and Mr. A.F Herming (Asst Secretary, Committee of Civil Research) on the possibility of instituting a Nutrition investigation in the W.A group of Colonies.
recruitment of more veterinary staff and an increased focus on trypanosomiasis and other diseases in livestock in order to increase the animal population and address the nutrition deficiency in the population. Though mineral deficiencies in animal pasture in Nigeria could not be established with certainty because of the migratory character of the Fulani cattle rearers, it was directed that research be conducted into the nutrition and diets of the cattle owning Hausa and Fulani. The purpose of this investigation was to establish the relation between milk deficiency in livestock and infant mortality among native women. Du Toit’s report showed that meat and milk were insignificant in the people’s diet because of poverty.

A new nutrition investigation was subsequently undertaken by Dr. McCulloch, a Pathologist of the Medical and Sanitary Department, in the Katsina area of Northern Nigeria. His findings, including his clinical observations of three years prior to his two years intensive investigation, were that dietary supplies of nutrients were less than optimum for growth, maintenance of health and reproduction. Diet was of poor quality and deficient in proteins and fats and had an excessive quantity of carbohydrates, sodium potassium, carbonic acid and silica resulting in birth defects, poor lactation of nursing mothers, stunted growth, low weight and poor resistance against diseases leading to deaths in high numbers in the event of epidemics. He recommended an increased supply of fresh milk through the abolition of the Jangali (cattle tax) within a certain radius of towns as means of reducing cost, increasing the supply of edible leaves through

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630 Ibid
establishment of forest reserves and nurseries for their production, export of groundnut oil instead of groundnuts to facilitate production of groundnut flour for the supply of protein for local consumption, and discouragement of the native salt industry.632

The validity of McCulloch’s recommendations was disputed by the Agricultural Department and the Lieutenant Governor of the Northern Provinces. They viewed *jangali* as an incentive to increase milk supply and the local crushing of groundnuts as economically unviable and thus decided that the local supply of milk, groundnut cakes and oil should be left to supply and demand.633 McCulloch’s suggestions were subsequently rejected by the government, which argued that increased education, the introduction of a suitable diet for schools, and the teaching of nutrition would be sufficient to improve nutrition and health.634 Though further investigations were ordered by the government, and financial assistance sought from the Empire Marketing Board, the nutrition of the populace was sacrificed to the interests of British industrial capital and the government need for revenue.

Poor nutrition among the Hausa and Fulani as well as other colonized groups was not the result of custom as some officials argued. It was a product of changing social relations. Food shortages involved not only a reduction of the quantity but the variety of food as people increasingly opted for cheaper, easily available and cultivable foodstuffs. Imported rice, used as famine relief, was found to be the cause of widespread beri beri in

633 NAI CSO 26/3 File 23544 Vol. I, Nutrition and Dietetics Research- Director of Agriculture to Chief Secretary to Government 30/07/1930, and Secretary, Northern Nigeria to Chief Secretary to Government, 6/01/1931.
634 Ibid, Director of Medical and Sanitary Services to Chief Secretary to Government, 19/02/1931, 180.
Northern Nigeria and particularly in the prisons which experienced epidemic outbreaks.635

In the Southern Provinces, a report by Dr. Fitzgerald Moore of the Medical Department in Opobo had noted in 1930 increasing cases of defective vision that eventually led to blindness in school children caused by deficiencies in the food in boarding houses. The problem was investigated in 1933 by Dr. McCulloch after he had made a case for starting dietetics research and establishing a committee in the Southern Provinces similar to the Animal health Committee and Dietetics Committee that he had established in the Northern Provinces. McCulloch’s investigation among school pupils in Calabar and Ogoja Provinces confirmed the prevalence of hypovitaminosis syndrome amongst school children. This was caused by protein and vitamin deficiencies in their food which consisted largely of cassava and cocoyam. His report recommended the use of “vegetable milk” and school gardens to provide vegetables.636 Shortly after this report, Dr. W.B. Johnson, the Director of Medical and Sanitary Services drew attention to the work of Dr. Alfred Clark who had researched the diseases arising from the toxic effects of the consumption of yams in the Caribbean colonies which he felt might be of relevance to understanding the hypovitaminosis syndrome in the Southern Provinces. Johnson was able to secure funding from the Medical Research Council to support Dr Clark’s research on the yam eating peoples of Nigeria in 1934. Clark’s investigation established a correlation between the consumption of cassava and cocoyam and Pellagra or the Pellagroid disease of albuminuria that resulted from the consumption of tubers.

635 Nigeria: Annual Medical and Sanitary Report for the year 1927, 33-4 and NAI CSO 26/1 File 06475A Vol.1 Famine: General –Ag. Secretary, Northern Provinces to The Chief Secretary to Government, 21/09/1920, 93.
containing cyanide on the liver and recommended a prohibition on eating them.\textsuperscript{637} Dr. P.S. Selwyn-Clarke, Deputy Director of Health Services, who was asked to advise on the report, recommended further investigation of the tubers by other local pathologists to validate Dr. Clark's report. He agreed that education would help encourage the people to eat a balanced diet and desist from eating toxic tubers, but concluded by drawing attention to the fact that:

No educational effort against malnutrition will have the slightest effect in this class of person (daily paid labor in government service) whilst he remains unable financially to carry out the advice on diet given to him. It is hardly necessary for me to point out that an increase in daily wage will result in better food, less ill-health and money spent on drugs and hospitals, increased efficiency and a greater purchasing power to the individual, with its inevitable effect in bringing about a still further improvement in trade and in government revenue.\textsuperscript{638}

The administration disputed the view that laborers would use such an increment to buy a balanced diet and argued that they already earned more than most people in their communities. Following Clark’s report, a Dietetics Committee was established for the Southern Provinces and its first meeting concentrated on how to promote a balanced diet. Little else was done to address malnutrition.

It was not until the Colonial Office’s request for information on nutrition and the dietary problems of the colony in 1937 that interest in the matter was revived. The administration could only report the commencement of propaganda and education, propose further investigation, and the experimental provision of a daily meal in selected schools in Lagos to see if it would improve the children’s physique.\textsuperscript{639} These proposals were not fully implemented. When the Economic Advisory Committee interviewed the

\textsuperscript{637} NAI CSO 26/3 File 23544 Vol. IV Nutrition and Dietetics Research, 465-518.
\textsuperscript{638} NAI CSO 26/3 File 23544 Vol. III Ag. Director of Medical Services to Chief Secretary to Government, 24/09/1936, 394.
Director of Medical Services on what was being done about nutrition problems, he informed them that mixed farming and the work of the dietetics research were being undertaken, but also expressed fear that lack of coordination would limit success as “the activities of all those departments (Agriculture, Veterinary, Forestry, Medical) are so scattered that it is very difficult to get us working on one line.” When, in 1938, members of the Legislative Council asked what was being done about the malnutrition problem, the official response was that, compared to Ceylon and South India, malnutrition was not serious among children in Nigeria. It was also noted that children were being examined in the welfare clinics and their mothers advised, pamphlets on balanced diets were printed and distributed, routine examinations were being done in schools, children were being encouraged to grow vegetables, an experiment on a small group of children with milk supplement was in progress, and diets were being followed in government schools. By late 1938 the Medical Department reported that, due to a shortage of personnel, it could not spare an officer for dietetics and nutrition research. Thus the issue of improving nutrition was consigned largely to propaganda. People continued to feed on the nutrient deficient and toxic cassava and cocoyam. These were crops that had been increasingly adopted for food during the colonial period because of their low labor requirements and their easy adaptation to soils depleted of fertility by the “soil mining” occasioned by land shortage.

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640 Ibid, Economic Advisory Council, Committee on Nutrition in the Colonial Empire, Stenographic Notes of the evidence of Sir Walter Johnson, M.B, F.R.C.S., Lately Director, Medical and Sanitary Services, Nigeria given before the committee at its second meeting, held on 24th February, 1937 at 11.30a.m., 442.
641 NAI CSO 26/3 File 23544 Vol. IV Reply by the Chief Secretary to Government to Question No.12 by the Honourable The Second Lagos Member, 541.
642 Ibid, Director of Medical Services to Chief Secretary to Government, 20/09/1938, 595.
Co-operative Societies Schemes and Rural Producers

The Agricultural and Veterinary Departments initially did little to improve nutrition because this was not their *raison d’être*. The Veterinary Department was established to assist the effort of developing the hide and skin trade, to which nutrition concerns were incidental at best. Between its establishment in 1914 and 1926, it had only two staff in charge of a land area of 281,782 sq. miles containing an estimated three million cattle, two million sheep, and over five million goats in 1930. It only started to address control of rinderpest in 1924 after epidemics had ravaged cattle in 1914, 1917 and 1920 along with annual localized outbreaks of this and other diseases.  

The Agriculture Department on the other hand had been established at the promptings of British cotton interests in the Southern Provinces in 1910 and in the Northern Provinces in 1912. Although, the Agriculture Department had no clearly defined overall policy until 1945, its activities from the late 1910s, under O.T. Faulkner, centered on establishing “model farms” and research stations to study farming methods suitable for promoting agricultural products, particularly cotton, of vital interest to the British, produce inspection and the marketing of export crops. In spite of its seeming non-interventionist policy, the Department increasingly got involved in trying to promote farming systems aimed at permanent cultivation for soil and forest conservation purposes, and increasing yields, particularly of export crops. The problem of food shortages,

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famine and pestilence did not attract much attention from the Agricultural Department until the 1920s when the Director became involved in the planning of famine relief.  

As was the case with both hides and skins and cotton, much of the impetus for the intervention of the Department in peasant cocoa production was at the insistence of British capital. Prior to the establishment of the Agricultural Department, cocoa producers had organized themselves in various groups like the Agege Planters Union, the Egba Farmers Union and the Ibadan Agricultural Society aimed at the production of high quality fermented cocoa and the direct marketing of produce to overseas buyers instead of African middlemen and European firms. They sought government support for improved quality production and criticized both government and the Agricultural Department for their laxity towards quality control and the marketing of their products. Though the poor quality of cocoa and need to teach farmers how to prepare it for export were the stated reasons for the Agricultural Department’s entry into cocoa preparation and marketing in 1922, the farmers’ organizations engagement in direct export, which deprived the colonial firms of a share of the market and reduced their profit margins, was probably the key reason for intervention.

The Agricultural Department started to organize the farmers into groups who pooled their resources to build cocoa fermentation-drying houses and market their cocoa. These farmers’ groups, known as cocoa fermenting/marketing societies, sprang up in large numbers in the Western Provinces in the 1920s and formed the nucleus of the future

646 NAI CSO 26/1 File 06475 Vol.1 Famine: Northern Provinces.
647 Shenton, “Nigerian Agriculture in Historical Perspective: Development and Crisis, 1900-60” in Michael Watts (ed.) State, Oil and Agriculture in Nigeria, 38.
cooperative societies. The fermentation and drying houses were initially built with funds sourced from the Native Administrations which were recouped through deductions after sale. Through this involvement in the sales of cocoa, the Department bypassed the African middlemen and encouraged the subscribing farmers to sell their produce to colonial firms rather than engage in direct marketing overseas. This denied the farmers an alternative market and helped subordinate the subscribing farmers to the colonial firms. This, in turn, encouraged some African producers to establish parallel organizations independent of the Department to continue direct marketing overseas. Independent organizations like the Ibadan Planters Association were affiliated with the West African Cooperative Producers Limited founded by the Gold Coast economic Nationalist Winifred Tete-Ansa. This independent movement had political objectives as well as economic nationalist aspirations that provoked the hostility of the government and European firms, contributing to its early demise.

The depression and drastic fall in the price of commodities made competition for control of produce fiercer. More unemployed Africans entered into the produce trade bringing more tricks to exploit peasant producers. The African buying agents’ duplicity in this trade not only resulted in the use of loan advances and indebtedness to establish a hold over the peasant farmers, but also undercut the colonial firms and threatened their profit margins. When the oil palm producers embarked on a hold-up of produce and a boycott of colonial firms in the Western Provinces, and when a similar development took place among cocoa farmers in Gold Coast, the government intervened through the

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encouragement of the formation of peasant cooperatives. Though it was claimed that this was done to protect the peasants from exploitation by middlemen, indebtedness and concomitant poverty, this action benefited the colonial firms as the cooperatives were used to make the produce of peasants readily available to the firms at fixed prices.

The Cooperative Societies’ organization was extended only to the producers of export crops like oil palm and rubber to the exclusion of food crops. In 1935 a cooperative ordinance was promulgated along with the appointment of a registrar. The new cooperative laws prohibited any other organization from affixing the word “cooperative” to its name and put all cooperatives under government control, thereby criminalizing African competitors. The government’s control led to the withdrawal of some members of the early cooperatives from the societies and a decline in membership in parts of western Nigeria. In the Eastern Provinces, it was difficult to intervene as the peasants did not take readily to oil palm plantation agriculture in spite of the Agricultural Department’s propaganda work. It was only when E.F.G. Haig, the first Registrar of Cooperatives, went to campaign in the Eastern Provinces in 1935 after the enactment of the Cooperatives Ordinance that some cooperatives sprang up, particularly among plantation owners. But according to Haig these plantation cooperatives had failed by the late 1930s because of lack of staff to assist them. However, it was the low number of plantations and failure of government to assist the plantation owners in times of falling prices that largely accounted for the failure of the producers’ cooperatives. Thrift and

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654 Ibid, 50-51.
credit, and thrift and loan societies were more popular among the peasants and salaried workers respectively. Earlier practices of indigenous thrift and savings had been exploited by warrant chiefs to embezzle peasants’ savings.\textsuperscript{657} Since the new societies were under government control, producers believed that government would protect their savings.

The idea of cooperatives did not take hold in the Northern Provinces. Some of the Provincial Residents blamed this on the peasants who were alleged to be so foolish as to allow traders lure them into indebtedness that deprived them of resources to form co-operatives or alternatively argued that they were so rich as not to need such societies.\textsuperscript{658} The reality was that peasant indebtedness was more widespread in the Northern Provinces on account of higher incidence of taxation which led to the mortgaging of standing crops to village heads and middlemen traders.\textsuperscript{659}

The co-operatives societies were initially simply organized with simple rules and low membership fees that attracted sizeable number of peasants numbering 6277 in 1934/5.\textsuperscript{660} But with strict reorganization in 1935 and mandatory purchase of shares in addition to the subscription fees imposed, the rate of subscription slowed down. The cooperatives eventually began to be patronized largely by the few peasants who could

\textsuperscript{659} Shenton, The development of Capitalism in Northern Nigeria, 102-4.
\textsuperscript{660} NAUK ,CO 213/1 Report on Nigerian Agriculture by Mr. F.A. Stockdale- Colonial Advisory Committee of Agriculture and Animal Health, C.A.C.270 Report By Mr. F.A. Stockdale, Agricultural Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on his Visit to Nigeria, Gold Cost and Sierra Leone, October,1935-February 1936, London, Colonial Office,1936, 13.
afford the various fees required to join and participate.\textsuperscript{661} The high interest rate of 15% on loans, as well as the corrupt practices of some of the secretaries, further discouraged membership. As a result, there were 111 societies with a membership totaling only 7306 in the cocoa producing Western Provinces in 1939, a year in which they were responsible for marketing of only 5.24% of cocoa exports.\textsuperscript{662} As a result, poor peasants, including some cooperative society members, remained at the mercy of the middlemen traders and moneylenders that the cooperative societies were meant to shield them from.

The problems of the cooperative societies was not unconnected with the refusal of the colonial state to assist the rural poor beyond the preservation of their indigenous organizations and institutions as the basis of their supposed self-sufficiency. The earlier suggestion of the Agricultural Department to grant loans to peasants to improve their production activities, in the absence of agricultural banks and collateral, was turned down by the conference of Residents of Southern Nigeria in 1929. The Governor, Graeme Thompson, concurred that “the grant of loans for private purposes from public funds was a bad precedent and would lead to further demand for advances for trading in general and other private purposes.”\textsuperscript{663} Another recommendation to establish a Cooperative Bank which government would assist with a loan was also turned down because government claimed that it could not afford it and because Sir Frank Stockdale, the Agricultural Adviser to the Secretary of State for Colonies, argued that cooperatives should be financially self-sufficient.\textsuperscript{664}

\textsuperscript{662}Ibid and Adeyeye, The Co-operative Movement in Nigeria: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, 43 and 55.
Mixed Farming Schemes

Government had rejected loans or assistance to peasant farmers and cooperatives at the same time that the Northern Provinces were using Native Authority revenue to grant loans to support the mixed farming program initiated by the Agricultural Department. This program, initiated in 1928, was another version of the permanent cropping agricultural system which the Agriculture Department viewed as a solution to the perceived agricultural development problems of Nigeria. The Agriculture Department and the colonial establishment believed that the various shifting cultivation or rotational bush fallow systems of farming in Nigeria were primitive, destructive of vegetation, wasteful of labor and time, and less productive than permanent cultivation. The Department, and its counterpart the Forestry Department, continuously experimented with various methods of trying to impose permanent cultivation practices on peasants. One of these was mixed farming.

Mixed farming entailed tilling the soil with a wooden plough and oxen that also provided manure to fertilize the soil. This was done on a land area that was farmed permanently on a rotational basis instead of the much detested shifting cultivation system. It was initially restricted to the far Northern Provinces because of their

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666 The Forestry Department introduced the Taungya or Chenna system of agro-forestry to integrate peasants’ shifting cultivation agriculture into its Forest Reservation and reforestation programmes. Though it was to enable land hungry peasants access to land (which had earlier been appropriated from them for forest reservation) for food crop production in the Forest reserves, it enabled the department to gain access to free labour for its reforestation programme was resented by the peasants. NAI BP 1308/1 Taungya Farming in Sapoba Reserve, NAI CSO26/2 File 12601 Vol. X Plateau Province: Annual Report.1932, 69 and R.F. Clarke Butler-Cole “Forest Farming (Taungya Plantations) in Benin, *Farm and Forest*, Vol. IV, No.3,1943, 23.
trypanosome-free environment. The mixed farming experiment began with the Emirs and
the leading members of the Native Administrations who were better placed to invest in
oxen and ploughs and repay the Native Administration loans (repayable in two years) that
were used to encourage participation. Though the number of participants is reported to
have increased from 3 in 1928 to 692 in 1935 and 1668 in 1938, out of a population of
over 10 million, even these insignificant figures cannot be relied on because they were
published in the government’s external propaganda reports. More telling is the fluctuation
in the number of participants in different provinces. For instance, in Sokoto Province
eleven and fourteen participants withdrew in Gwandu and Sokoto Emirates respectively
in 1936 and the total number of participants fell from 32 in 1936 to 28 in 1938 before it
was found that the western and eastern parts of Sokoto Emirate, which had most
participants, were not suitable for ox-drawn ploughing. A serious problem was the
inadequacy of staff for extension work to support the project. The program seems to have
been only reluctantly embraced by both European officers and some of the participants.
For instance, Mr. Blackwell, Resident of Niger Province, expressed doubts about the
program because of its cost, which he argued the Native Administrations would be unable
to shoulder if there was no regular funding from the central government. He also feared
that the increased food production envisaged would further lower prices and reduce the
income of the peasantry. Some of the Emirs and Native Authority officials embraced
mixed farming to keep themselves in good standing with the European officers or to

People of Nigeria for 1938, Lagos, Government Printers, 1939, 43. K.M Buchanan and J.C. Pugh, Land
and People in Nigeria: The Human Geography and Environmental Background, London, University of
669 Iyela, Colonialism and Famines in Niger Province 1900-1945: A Study of an aspect of Colonial
increase their prestige in the eyes of the peasantry. Though Mustapha and Meagher have argued that it was the need to maintain the social order of the Emirate system, on which indirect rule rested, that restricted the number of participants, attempts were made to attract peasants’ participation. The Native Authorities did provide oxen and ploughs in some localities for rental at one shilling per day in Sokoto Province. However, according to Tibenderana, peasant farmlands were too small for such farming. Also, the seemingly small sum of one shilling was unaffordable for most peasants. Thus mixed farming proved unable to neither solve the peasant welfare problem nor contribute to improving the worsening food situation for peasants.

In some of the southernmost provinces of Northern Nigeria, and in southern Nigeria, the same policy of replacing shifting cultivation with permanent cultivation system was pursued. Various schemes were initiated from 1928 through which mucuna, or green manuring, was to be introduced and popularized among peasants to increase production of both export and food crops. But these experiments and schemes largely failed because of the additional labor needed for planting the mucuna and the necessary constant weeding. Moreover, the monoculture it promoted could not meet peasant needs. By the mid-1930s these experiments were being abandoned because green manuring and constant weeding improved neither soil fertility nor yields. The Agriculture Department consequently resorted to its cure all of mixed farming that was to be introduced into the trypanosomiasis infested southernmost parts of Northern

673 Ibid, 298-301 and Nigeria, Annual Report of 1930, Agricultural Department, 12.
Provinces, and later the Southern Provinces, by means of trypanosomiasis resistant cattle imported from Gold Coast.674

The proposal to introduce this scheme to the middle belt of Nigeria was introduced by Sir Frank Stockdale, the Colonial Office’s Chief Agricultural Adviser and Vice Chairman of the Colonial Agricultural Committee. Reports of his visits to Nigeria between 1935 and 1936 noted the failure of past agricultural experiments in the middle belt and its continuing deforestation, while also noting that the successful integration of mixed farming into the agricultural systems of the far Northern Provinces was resulting in increased food and export crop yields for its practitioners.675 He therefore recommended mixed farming in line with the Committee’s ongoing attempts to tackle soil erosion, nutrition, and population problems through an Empire-wide integrated development policy.676 The mixed farming scheme in the middle belt was still in its experimental stage in Ilorin where the cattle were being acclimatized and trained when the Second World War broke out in 1939. A major problem with the scheme, as Gbasha has noted, was the fact that the Native Authorities lacked the resources to purchase the number of cattle required for the scheme to make any impact.677

The mixed farming scheme was not even extended to all the Northern Provinces. Plateau Province, for instance, had no Agricultural Officer and no effort to improve agricultural productivity was made there until 1937. When an Agricultural Officer was

675 NAUK ,CO 213/1 Report on Nigerian Agriculture by Mr. F.A. Stockdale- Colonial Advisory Committee of Agriculture and Animal Health, C.A.C.270 Report By Mr. F.A. Stockdale, Agricultural Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on his Visit to Nigeria, Gold Cost and Sierra Leone, October,1935-February 1936, 16-17 and 30-32.
sent, he was assigned to help with export ginger production and the introduction of American maize. This was done in the face of reports that the area was plagued by soil erosion and depletion. The Agricultural Department was more concerned with social control over the farmers and improving agricultural raw material production than peasant welfare or addressing food shortages.

Given the lack of coordination and the over-riding concern with increasing production of export crops, the welfare of the rural populace worsened. In the face of declining soil fertility and crop yields together with low prices for exports that were insufficient to pay taxes, peasants increasingly migrated to urban areas to seek employment.

**Urban Poverty and Welfare: The Problems of Wage Labour and Unemployment**

Partly as a result of the “development along native lines” policy, European colonial officials began discriminating against the African educated elite who had held positions on terms of relative equality with Europeans before the last decade of the nineteenth century. Africans were placed on a different and lower salary scales than their European counterparts, earning less than the lowest paid European. Africans who had high levels professional training and qualified for positions similar to those of Europeans were reduced to “intermediate grades” with lower pay and benefits, while those with lesser educational qualifications were restricted to auxiliary clerical positions and barred from promotion to higher offices. The African professionals in the auxiliary grades were regarded as part of the African elite by virtue of their education and earnings, as well as

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679 NAI CSO 26/1 File 0990 Vol. II, Revision of African Staff Salaries - President and Others, Nigerian Civil Service Union to Chief Secretary TO Government, 21/11/1921, 16-17.
their capability of establishing private practices with the potential for accumulating some wealth.

The Africans with low educational qualifications in government service were wage workers and were internally differentiated on the bases of earnings, sources of earnings, and conditions of service, which also formed the basis of their social and political relations with the government and, in part, amongst themselves. Though official distinctions do not seem to have existed in the early period, by the 1930s government redesignation had resulted in three official categories of workers. These were: (a) African clerical staff earning £48 and above whose salary were included in the annual estimates and who were entitled to paid leave and pensions; (b) African employees paid from open votes who were not entitled to pensions or to make contributions to the provident fund, and entitled to short leaves with pay and sick leave without pay at the discretion of their Head of Department if they earned less than £72 per annum; and (c) “engaged persons’ paid at daily rates who enjoyed no benefits.680

Though some of the staff paid from the open votes earned more than the £48 floor of the clerical staff (a), it was the latter who comprised the upper echelon of African wage workers in the colonial administration because of their permanent employment conditions and other rights and entitlements. Yet, despite their seemingly privileged status among the wage workers, their economic and social conditions deteriorated from the 1880s on because of attitudinal changes among European colonial officials. In response, in 1912 these clerical workers formed the Nigerian Civil Service Union in

Lagos (NCSU) with branches established in Port Harcourt and Kaduna. NCSU membership numbered 161 in the Southern Provinces in 1919.\textsuperscript{681} Despite the increased cost of living following the First World War, their wages remained unchanged from 1906 to the post-First World War period with only a three percent raise in 1921.\textsuperscript{682}

NCSU members or clerks were considered “small fry” among the Lagos elite.\textsuperscript{683} However, according to Nina Okonkwo, they were “elitist and conservative” and showed little “concern for the lower echelon of the civil service”\textsuperscript{684} In the early years of colonial rule many were from Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast or returnees from Brazil. Partly as a result of their alien status, they were mainly interested in retaining and protecting their positions and distanced themselves from nationalist politics or militant trade unionism. They were primarily concerned with their own promotion\textsuperscript{685} and viewed their clerical work as a stepping stone to better jobs and professions in 1920s Lagos.\textsuperscript{686} They employed petitions and moderation in their relations with the governing establishment and this strategy was usually rewarded with the promotion of a few members of the executive of the NCSU to “European positions” in the 1920s. Assured of their pensions and retirement to their hometowns within and outside Nigeria, they cared little about the welfare and environment of the people among whom they worked. They were further alienated from workers in the lower echelons by their close contact with European staff to whose positions and lifestyles they aspired.

\textsuperscript{682}Okonkwo, “The Nigerian Civil Service Union, 1912-1922” \textit{Protests Movements in Lagos, 1908-1930}, 42.
Except for Lagos and a few other large towns, initially the housing of Europeans was not very different from that of African clerks in terms of the materials used for construction. Thus, European officials were not spared the ordeal of poor housing. The housing of lesser African staff was, however, worse. In and outside Lagos, a few houses were built as clerk quarters with modern amenities in some towns and in the Sabon Gari of Northern Nigerian towns. The location of these houses segregated the clerks from the local population. The Railway Corporation and a few government stations provided housing for certain categories of essential services workers. The nature of operations of the railways and government mines, which required its workers to be readily available, necessitated the early provision of housing for some workers. The remaining government employees had to provide their own housing.

In the first decades of colonial rule the population of urban centers increased dramatically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Population 1921</th>
<th>Population 1931</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>99,690</td>
<td>126,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibadan</td>
<td>238,387</td>
<td>387,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kano</td>
<td>49,938</td>
<td>97,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enugu</td>
<td>3,170</td>
<td>12,959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Harcourt</td>
<td>7,185</td>
<td>15,201</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


687 According to Rex Niven, “the standard of official accommodation was deplorable” including those in Lagos with seventy years of colonial rule and officers were even paid a “bush allowance” for inhabiting such houses. Rex Niven, *Nigerian Kaleidoscope: Memoirs of a colonial servant*, 5-6. It was worse in the Provinces and was so terrible in Sokoto Province that the Director of Medical Services considered “the standard of housing provided by government as the lowest in any province he has visited” and as a safeguard he recommended in the case of Argungu and Birni Kebbi that “officers should not spend more than six months at a time at those stations.” NAI CSO 26/2 File 03456 Vol. XII Sokoto Province: Annual Report, 1939, 31.
This high rate of urban growth led to an increased demand for housing. Aided by colonial regulations that restricted the use of local building materials to prevent fire and other hazards, the price of building materials shot up immediately during and after the First World War thus reducing the rate of building houses.\footnote{688} In response, the government established a committee on housing in 1923 which reported that the government could not provide housing for all its employees and recommended that housing for African staff should not be “constructed by government out of public funds.”\footnote{689} Despite this recommendation, the government still built a few houses in various stations that numbered 258 quarters for Europeans and 477 for Africans between 1926 and 1929.\footnote{690} An African Staff Housing Scheme was also instituted for Africans who earned £200 and above. However, this was not begun until 1927 and progress thereafter was very slow.\footnote{691} Between 1927 and 1937, only 144 individuals, made up of 112 central government, 28 railway and 4 Lagos Town Council workers, received advances from the African Housing Scheme to build houses under leasehold (102) and freehold (42). All of these were in Lagos.\footnote{692}

The few Africans who benefited from government housing schemes belonged to the upper echelon of the African civil servants. These clerks lived in government

\footnote{688} T.O Okoye “Historical development of Nigerian Housing Policies with reference to Housing the Urban Poor” Phillip Amis and Peter C. Lloyd (ed.) \textit{Housing Africa’s Urban Poor}, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1990, 74.  
\footnote{691} NAUK CO 583/176/10 Proposed Building Society-R. H. Rowe, Commissioner of Lands and Chairman, Lagos Executive Development Board to The Chief Secretary of Government, 21/10/1929 and R.H. Rowe to Mr. Clauson, 29/08/1930, 3.  
\footnote{692} NAUK CO 583/222/19 African Staff Housing Scheme- Letter signed by 67 African Staff (Government clerical and technical ) earning £120 but less than £200pa through President NCSU to Chairman, Board of Management, African Staff Housing Scheme, 26/01/1937, 16.
quarters, built their own houses, or lived in rented houses of three and four bedrooms. Because of the shortage of housing and the cultural ethos requiring the well to do to assist members of the extended family and community, some of these government officials had to accommodate, in addition to their immediate families, other relatives and fellow hometown members who had no accommodation of their own in towns.

In many towns, social amenities like piped water, electricity and sewers were inadequate or lacking. A Lagos pipe borne water expansion scheme was discontinued in the 1910s because of opposition to high water rate charges. When bubonic plague broke out in 1924 the administration responded by establishing an Executive Development Board that engaged in some slum clearance, but a proposed sanitation system was abandoned because of the inter-war economic crisis and never revived.693 Though sanitation laws existed in many towns, their content depended on the town’s designation, which was largely determined by the size of the European population.694 Where sanitary services were provided, these served mainly the European quarters. In Benin Division in 1940, over half of the sanitary laborers worked in European quarters inhabited by fewer than hundred Europeans, while the other half served the rest of the Division with a population of over 150,000 spread over 4000 square miles.695 In many towns, sanitation work and inspection was restricted to markets, schools and public water pumps. The few sanitary inspectors available for other duties concentrated on inspecting water containers for mosquito larvae and used their position to extort bribes from those on whose property

694 They were categorized into 1st, 2nd and 3rd class townships.
they located storage infractions. A report on Ibadan by Ward-Price, the Resident of Oyo Province, stated that after over forty years under colonial rule in this city with a population of over 400,000 there was no “pipe born water supply, except, of course, to the houses of Europeans, though the people have been begging for this amenity for years, and can afford to pay the interest on the loan.” He further complained of people digging for water in river beds in the dry season resulting in water borne diseases such as amoebic dysentery, guinea worm, gastro-intestinal tract and skin infections that were the major ailments treated in the hospital.

It was in such unsanitary conditions that the lower echelons of the African workers in government service lived. These categories of workers, who either received their wages from departmental votes or were designated as engaged persons, constituted the majority of Nigerian workers in government service. The Railway Corporation, which was the largest employer, had only 9.9% or 2,348 permanent staff out of a total of 23,640 staff in 1930 and 10% or 1,891 permanent staff out of a total 18,923 staff in 1936/7. As shown above, they had fewer privileges and rights than the African clerks in government service. Though some of these wage workers earned more than the lowliest of clerks, their earnings, positions and future with the government were very precarious and could be eliminated by cuts in departmental votes on which their earnings and positions depended. These lower level employees of the government, particularly wage workers in essential services like the railways, Public Work Department and government mines, endured poorer housing facilities and overcrowding. For instance, the

accommodation provided for a few government miners in Enugu consisted usually of “a row of rooms 12’x12’x10’ separated by partial partitions and topped with corrugated roofs. They were insufferably hot during the day and held an average of 5.5 people. The overcrowding violated Igbo (and western) marital norms by requiring children and parents to share a common sleeping space.”

The government workers paid from departmental votes and those regarded as engaged persons were only a little better off than wage workers in the private firms who lived in work camps built in barracks style. Labor camp housing was built with local building materials (mud, bamboo, wood and thatch) with mud floors that were at best whitewashed. Legislation designating firms employing a sizeable number of laborers as Labor Health Areas under The Labour Ordinance No.1 of 1929 required the provision of a healthy residential environment subject to sanitary health inspection. But for reasons that remain unclear, the mines of Northern Nigeria were excluded from this law. Many of the firms and even the Public Works Department (PWD) fared little better in regard to housing conditions long after this legislation was enacted. The Medical and Health Department complained of non-compliance but took no action.

By the mid 1930s some of the labor camps had improved in Southern Nigeria as cement floors, pipe borne water and latrines began to be introduced. These camps, especially in the mining and timber industries and plantations, attracted squatters that made them overcrowded and unhygienic. The mining camps were in most cases dens of

700 Carolyn Brown “We were all Slaves”: African Miners, culture and resistance at the Enugu Government Colliery, Portsmouth, NH, Heinemann, 2002, 187.
vice, and were described as ‘a source of spread of venereal disease and cerebro-spinal meningitis’ as well as “unlikely places for fostering family life.”

Many workers in the private sector were also without any benefits. Their jobs were very precarious and vulnerable to the slightest downturn in the economy. They lived in poor housing built haphazardly in older sections of cities or in villages on the outskirts of the new towns. There were no social amenities in these unplanned, unregulated settlements. In the new town of Port Harcourt, the Commissioner of Land suggested in 1927 that such adjoining villages be brought under planning to prevent haphazard development and the Town Planning Officer made the same suggestion in 1928. Both were ignored. The result was the gradual development of slums in these adjoining villages. Much the same took place in Lagos, Jos, and other towns.

To address the growth of unregulated slum settlement, R.N. Rowe, the Commissioner of Lands, proposed the establishment of a Building Society to provide houses in new areas with the government’s provision of a startup grant and funding from the Colonial Development Fund to supply building materials and create employment in the UK. The government neither provided the funds nor secured funding from the CDF. As a result, slums continued to grow leading to congestion and providing breeding grounds for plague and other epidemic outbreaks. By 1931 the Port Harcourt slum known

704 NAUK CO 583/176/10 Proposed Building Society-R.H.Rowe, Commissioner of Lands and Chairman, Lagos Executive Development Board to The Chief Secretary of Government, 21/10/1929 and R.H. Rowe to Mr. Clauson, 29/08/1930, 7.
as the “Elder Dempster labourers’ lines” was reported to “remain in their entirety overcrowded and a menace to the health of the community.”

The shortage of houses left most workers at the mercy of private landlords who charged exorbitant rents. Attempts to control rent through legislation in Lagos in the early 1920s were attacked by the African members of the Legislative Council and by the press which argued that the legislation limiting rent increases to 50% was discriminatory against African landlords who had to pay the 100-200% increase on pre-WWI prices of imported building materials charged by European merchants. The government repealed the legislation in 1926. Rents continued to increase and by the late 1930s and it was observed by a government report that “The amounts demanded or paid are out of proportion to the housing provided.” The report went further to claim that of the average government worker salary of £72, one-sixth was spent on rent. Another report, which did not use averages, showed that African workers in junior ranks with families spent between £18-30 per annum on rent representing about 33% of their wages. Many workers resorted to sharing rooms. In Lagos, one Salubi squatted with a kinsman whose room was shared with three others and a girlfriend. Such overcrowding increased health problems for the workers.

The health of the emergent workers was further imperiled by poor nutrition. Higher remuneration from cash crops diverted labour and land from food production with

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resultant shortages and high costs in urban centers. As a result, the lower echelon of urban workers subsisted on cheap and nutrient poor food such as *garri* (grated cassava). A report on Lagos in 1918 observed that “the greater part of the people were underfed” and that the majority of workers “scarcely know what meat or fish is, and have to go content on ‘Gari’ soaked in water”.\(^{710}\) A similar state of affairs was reported for Ibadan, Benin, Enugu, Zaria and Kano in 1920.\(^{711}\) The effects of the poor nutrition were manifested in various diseases in the 1930s and particularly those associated with high dependence on starchy cassava and cocoyams in Southern Nigeria. Some workers had to be subsidized by their rural based families who sent food when possible. But imported food and clothing items, the prices of which continually increased, could not be so subsidized.

The working and social conditions of the African wage workers were worsened by British attitudes and policies towards African workers. The British experience of the difficulties in creating wage labour where other alternatives existed, coupled with racist views of Africans as lazy and only seeking wages to accomplish a set end, caused them to come to regard African as “target workers”. This view was expressed in an official memorandum to the International Labour Office (ILO) which asserted that “The native of Nigeria has no objection to wage earning but hates the idea of being reduced to the condition of a permanent wage earner” and argued that “… the motive force for working for a wage is generally in order to acquire some luxury or satisfy a desire: a wife, clothes,

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paying off a debt.” Since Africans were expected to work for only a short time, they were paid low wages as a means of lengthening the time required to achieve the targeted sum of money. The Colonial office sanctioned this policy, issuing a directive in 1905 that “… every effort ... be made to keep the rates of wages as low as possible.” The wages of African workers in government service remained stagnant over the period 1894-1921. Indeed, Helleiner argues that “wage rates did not increase much over the 40 year period from 1900 to 1939.

When the Nigerian Civil Service Union (NCSU) complained about the situation in 1914, Governor Lugard replied that they were better paid than their counterparts elsewhere. When European officials agitated for a war bonus and salary review, the NCSU demanded the same with the result that European officials received between 60 and 100% increases while the Africans got between 20 and 30%. The agitation of NCSU for equality of treatment with Europeans was rebuffed and the NCSU was threatened with a reduction since it was argued that the cost of living had fallen by fifty percent.

Hugh Clifford, Governor of Nigeria, in a confidential memo to the Secretary of State for Colonies, advised that,

It is not in the African boys’ own interest that he should receive such high emoluments, representing considerably more than a minimum wage, immediately on leaving school. It means that he is in a position to cut himself off from parental

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715 Okonkwo, Protest Movements in Lagos, 1908-1930, 41.
716 NAI CSO 26/1 File 0990 Vol. II, (Revision of African Staff Salaries)-Chief Secretary to Government to NCSU Lagos, 4/04/1922, 62-6 and Chief Secretary to Government to NCSU, Kaduna Branch, 30/05/1922, 99.
controlled prematurely to set up an establishment of his own. The resultant evils have from time to time formed the subject of adverse comments by African parents.\textsuperscript{717}

Low wages were part of indirect rule and aimed at keeping young workers under parental and customary control. Their wages were not expected to support families since they were regarded as target workers with no family obligations. It was argued by the administration that “the wives of wage earners and of those on low salaries are petty traders and their profits are sufficient to pay for their own food and that of their children”\textsuperscript{718}

The low wage regime remained in force through the depression of the 1930s to the Second World War.\textsuperscript{719} The depression of the 1930s provided the government and Native Authorities an excuse not only to retrench positions, but to also cut wages. These cuts were not restored until during the Second World War. The remuneration of those in government service, was according to the NCSU, “not a living wage” in 1939.\textsuperscript{720}

If low wages served to make wage labour unattractive to peasants, the low returns to agricultural labour had the effect of requiring continuous increases in production to realize enough money to pay taxes and meet other cash obligations. Since peasants could barely meet their obligations, earning low wages was at times an alternative to rural poverty and this propelled migration to urban areas to seek employment. By the end of the First World War there was already an unemployment problem in many areas, especially with the demobilization of the carriers and soldiers who had fought on the Camerounian and East African fronts. Increased unemployment further reinforced the

\textsuperscript{717} Quoted in CSO 26/2 File 28715/S.18, Vol. III NCSU to Chief Secretary to the Government, 19/09/1941, 266.
\textsuperscript{719} NAI CSO 26/2 File 28715/S.18 Vol. I, Memo to Governor, 17/6/1939, 59-60.
\textsuperscript{720} NAI CSO 26/2 File 28715/S.18 Vol. II NCSU to Chief Secretary to Government, 8/02/1941, 177.
low wage policy as did the casual character of employment. Those inhabiting areas around production centers like mines and concessions had the tendency to take employment to augment their income at wages lower than permanent workers. This was most common in the Plateau mines and in the Benin timber industry.\textsuperscript{721}

The wage situation was no better in the private sector. Most agricultural plantations, mines and lumber concerns initially employed chiefs as contractors who in many instances treated their conscript labourers like slaves and pocketed their wages with resultant desertions.\textsuperscript{722} Though by the early 1920s most private employers had adopted voluntary recruitment, they also used foremen as local contractors to recruit labourers. The wages paid varied by locality and mode of recruitment and type of contract. Private sector wages were at par or slightly higher than those paid by government but were in most cases paid at the end of long-term contracts that varied from three to nine months. However, a study of the tin mines showed that there was a substantial fall of between 33\% and 43\% in wages paid between 1926 and 1938.\textsuperscript{723} Missionary agencies employed religious ideology to keep wages low. Long-term contracts and lump sum payments were used to ensure long-term service. A major consequence of the low wage regime was the inability of all categories of workers to meet their family obligations, housing needs and nutritional requirements.

The recovery of the economy in the mid-1930s increased prices of imported goods as did a 1934 increase in duties imposed on imports. This had a knock-on effect on the prices of domestic produce, goods and services. The most greatly affected were food and urban housing.

The workers were also aggrieved by their discriminatory treatment, not only in relation to Europeans, but also in comparison with other African colonies. Africans in government service had their positions continuously re-designated and welfare benefits diminished from the 1920s on (especially after the salary revision that followed the First World War) to reduce government expenditure. A comparison of the conditions of service of the categories of employees paid from departmental votes and those categorized as engaged persons with other colonies in West Africa in 1931, made at the request of an African member of the Legislative Council, showed that Nigeria had only recently improved the terms of vacation and sick leaves and that Sierra Leone had relatively better conditions. Apart from frequent re-designations, there were also continuous demands for increased educational qualifications for employment at a time when efforts were being made to restrict access to education. Some with higher educational qualifications were offered work at lower wages than had been formerly associated with the positions in question. The frequent changes in qualifications were among the main issues unions addressed after they were registered in the late 1930s.

Workers responded in various ways to poor wages and working conditions. As noted above, the literate African clerical staff had formed the Nigerian Civil Service

724 NAI CSO 26/1 File 06568 Vol. II (Definition of African Employee)- N. Thomas to Chief Secretary to Government 13/01/1932, 195 and Governor to Chief Secretary to Government, 27/01/1932, 196.
725 NAI CSO 26/2 File 28715/S.18 Vol. II Conditions of Service of Local Staff- NCSU, Lagos to Chief Secretary to the Government, 08/02/1941, 176-179
Union in 1913 to press for improvement of their working conditions and the elimination of racial barriers to higher positions in the service. Since they were largely recruited from other colonies, they did not concern themselves with local politics and feared dismissal and replacement by Europeans. However, their union provided an example for other categories of African workers.

The majority of Africans designated as “employees” and “engaged persons” in lower echelons of government service and in private and voluntary agencies lacked any organization to agitate for better conditions of service. They endured these conditions of service without promotion, increments, pensions, sick leaves, allowances or compensation for injuries or death. It was only with pressure from the International Labour Organization (ILO) that legislation providing for compensation from injuries and the designation of Labour Health Areas was enacted in 1929, but enforcement was selective. Atrocious working conditions persisted in many places, and in some cases flogging was used to enforce discipline.

Desertion was one response to poor conditions and low wages, as were theft and sabotage. Some engaged in trading and money lending to supplement their wages, while others became indebted. These latter activities violated civil service regulations and were punishable by dismissal.

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726 Okonkwo, Protests Movements in Lagos, 1908-1930, 41.
727 NAI BP 350 Timber Labourers: Complaint of non-payment of Wages- General Secretary, Ibo Timber Labourers Union to Resident, Benin Province, 13/2/1946, 45.
729 For details of these activities see NAI CSO 26/1 File 03257 Training (sic-Trading) by African Staff through Dependents 1922-51 and NAI CSO 26/3 File 28755 Vols. I and II Indebtedness of Public Officers.
As early as the 1890s, however, government labourers had wielded the strike weapon to press home their demands for better conditions.\footnote{Hopkins, The Lagos Strike of 1897: An Exploration in Nigerian Labour History” Past and Present, No. XXXV, December 1966.} It was to be increasingly used by other categories of workers from the late 1910s on to resist oppressive practices in their work places.\footnote{Brown, “We were all Slaves”: African Miners, Culture and Resistance at the Enugu Government Colliery, 149-154 and 163-169.} Strikes, or threats of strikes, were often met with reprisals in the form of transfers, denials of promotion, dismissals and imprisonment to discourage further resistance. Aggrieved workers also formed self-help associations which employed letter writers to write petitions on their behalf. When the depression made employment more precarious and conditions of work further worsened some of these self-help associations became trade unions. There developed a multiplicity of unions in various work places based in part on status or occupation. For instance, the Railway Corporation alone had five unions in the early 1930s: the Nigerian Railway Native Staff Union, the Nigerian Mechanics Union formed in 1932 by semi-literate and illiterate daily paid and apprentice employees, the Railway Workers Union, Railway Station Staff Union, and Railway Locomotive Drivers Union.\footnote{M. A. Tokunboh, Labour Movement in Nigeria: Past and Present, Lagos, Lantern Press, 1985, 27-8.}

The formation of unions did little to change the colonial administration’s attitude towards labour. However, pressure from the ILO, the fear of politicization of unions, and the Labour Government’s own ideological sympathy for trade unions led the Colonial Office under Lord Passfield to direct that colonial administrations recognize trade unions in order to guide them toward responsible ends in 1929.\footnote{NAI CSO 26/1 File 03571 Vols. I-IV, Information Relating to Conditions of Industrial Life and Labour and Wogu Ananaba, The Trade Union Movement in Nigeria, New York, African Publishing Corporation, 1970, 21-2.}
It was the Copper Miners Strike in Northern Rhodesia of 1935 that forced the Colonial Office to start pressing the Nigerian administration to establish a labour department. The administration argued that Nigeria was a peasant society and had no need for such an office for which it lacked funds.\textsuperscript{734} Meanwhile, worsening labour conditions drove the emergent unions and individual workers to employ lawyers to petition the administration against violations and seek improved work conditions. They also threatened strike action.\textsuperscript{735} When the renewal of the depression in 1938 threatened greater labour militancy, the colonial administration started registration of trade unions, passed laws regulating them, and began consideration of a review of wages. Official recognition spurred union growth and the struggle for better conditions.

\textbf{Emergent African Elite responses to African Welfare}

The welfare of Africans fell largely on the family; this was particularly the case with regard to members of the wage earning elite. Indigenous kinship values obliged the elite to care for members of their nuclear and extended families or face social chastisement. This role of the elite is illustrated by a petition of the Nigeria Civil Service Union that stated:

When considering the African cost of living it is necessary to bear in mind that in Nigeria there is no free education, unemployment dole, old age pension, Widows and Orphans pension scheme, insurance and such other social schemes as exist in Europe. The social needs of the African life demands that he should assist unemployed relatives by housing, feeding, and clothing them and their children and even paying their poll tax thus saving government the expenditure of thousands of pounds every year in poor relief as is the case in Europe.\textsuperscript{736}

\textsuperscript{734} Anne Phillips, \textit{The Enigma of Colonialism: British Policy in West Africa}, 142  
\textsuperscript{735} Ananaba, \textit{The Trade Union Movement in Nigeria}, 21  
\textsuperscript{736} NAI CSO 26/2 File 28715/ s.18 v 7, I, African Staff: Revision of Salaries, Revision of Sessional Paper No.19 of 1935- General Secretary, Nigeria Civil Service Union to The Chief Secretary to the Government, 19/09/1941, 261.
In addition to trade unions, organized interest groups rooted in community, ethnic and sub-ethnic identity emerged in Lagos from the late nineteenth century on to tackle issues of interest to Lagosians or among their compatriots in the interior. These were mostly led by professionals and big merchants with, at times, the support of chiefs. Some of the issues that motivated the formation of such groups were health, education, social services, religion, chieftaincy matters, and disagreeable policies of the colonial government. As already noted, one such group, the Ladies League, was used by Sir William MacGregor in his campaigns to reduce infant mortality and address the welfare needs of the poor between 1899 and 1902.\footnote{Raymond E. Dunnet, “The Campaign against Malaria and the Expansion of Scientific Medical and Sanitary Services in British West Africa, 1898-1910” \textit{African Historical Studies} Vol. 1, No. 2, 1968, 182.} Around 1908 the People’s Union also emerged to protest the imposition of the Lagos water rate.\footnote{Okonkwo, “The Lagos Water Rate Protest 1916 and 1993: A Case of history repeating itself” \textit{Protests Movements in Lagos, 1908-1930}, 10.} Some of these elite led groups gained a measure of government recognition, and became a springboard for nomination of their members to the Legislative Council\footnote{Ibid, 11.} where they used their influence to promote measures to increase African welfare.

Identity based organizations were formed by those who claimed membership or origin in particular ethnic groups, clans, villages, or towns to collectively address problems of common interest. Some of these were organized on the basis of pre-existing kin groups or age grade organizations that had been transplanted to an urban colonial setting by literate and illiterate workers to assist them in overcoming the challenges and problems of the social conditions and their stranger status in colonial towns and work...
places. The indigenes of the urban centers also formed their own ethnic or township associations with similar aims of addressing the problems of the social welfare of their members.

The inadequacy of employment, basic amenities and social services and opportunities in Nigeria made access to these highly competitive and drove people to exploit kinship and ethnic connections to secure access to them. As well, colonial firms, often left recruitment of staff to trusted employees in the name of security. According to Barbara Akinyemi, Africans holding store managers positions paid security deposits as a condition of employment and, since they were responsible for any losses, were allowed to recruit their subordinates from their families or tribes to ensure the security of goods and money in their custody. This practice provided employment and welfare benefits for kin and co-ethnics through nepotism and ethnic discrimination.

Ethnic group competition and discrimination also were reinforced by the colonial administration that created ethnic enclaves and used ethnic belonging as a basis of recruitment and participation in local administration. These ethnic based administrations discriminated against the literate or western educated members of the community who, in particular instances, became displeased with government by colonial officials and chiefs. It was in one such circumstance that the *Egbe Agba O’ tan* emerged in Ibadan in 1914 that later was transformed into a pan-Yoruba group that contributed funds towards the building of the West African Students Union hostel in London in 1930. By the 1920s many such associations going by the names “Improvement Union,” “Welfare

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Association,” or “Brotherly Society” and organized on the basis of lineage, community, village group, sub-ethnic or supra-ethnic group had sprung up.

These associations not only looked after the temporary accommodation, employment, financial assistance and burial of their members in the towns, they also awarded scholarships, built schools, dispensaries, churches, roads and water supplies in their communities of origin. Some also built halls for their meetings and schools for their children in the places to which they had migrated. For example, the Owerri Igbo and Onitsha Igbo built such halls, and the Igbo Unions built schools for their children in Northern Nigerian cities. According to Brown, these lineage and ethnic associations, known as Nzuko among the Igbo, were the bases of the trade unions formed in the Enugu Government Colliery in the early 1920s.

The literate members who led these ethnic associations brought the leadership experience gained through their agitation for improved social welfare conditions into nationalist organizations in the 1930s. One such nationalist group, the National Youth Movement (NYM) was to take up the issue of unemployment that had developed into a major social problem during the inter-war depression.

**Unemployment**

Unemployment, which had become a gradually growing problem in the first decades of colonial rule, became a major issue during the inter-war depression. The

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744 Brown, “*We were all Slaves*”: *African Miners, Culture and Resistance at the Enugu Government Colliery*, 150-154.
colonial regime continuously changed recruitment qualifications and procedures as it embarked on massive retrenchment. In addition, the crisis driven mergers and restructuring of European firms led to a rationalization of jobs creating further unemployment.

Unemployment among literate and semi-literate youth had started earliest in areas such as Benin where English speaking government schools were first established. Egharevba complained of his inability to secure a clerical job with his standard six qualifications in Benin City in 1916 and had to travel to Warri and Owerri Provinces to secure employment.\textsuperscript{745} By the 1920s unemployment, particularly among school leavers had become more widespread. The unemployment problem was exacerbated by government measures to control access to government owned schools. As already discussed, one such measure, ostensibly designed to improve standards, entailed expelling pupils on account of age and academic performance was widely employed in the 1920s. Sokoto Province reported that its schools had improved because of “The reduction in the numbers of the boys in the bottom forms,”\textsuperscript{746} while the Government School, Ibadan, reported that “By judicious weeding out of unsuitable materials in the senior classes the Headmaster has improved the standard of work there… nothing but the best material should pass on to this stage and that it is useless to persevere with overgrown youths whose mental development has reached the limit of its capacity.”\textsuperscript{747} In Benin Province government schools, pupils labeled as “backward and useless boys” were

\textsuperscript{746} NAI CSO 26/2/ 12518 Vol. VI, Sokoto Province: Annual Report, 1928, 45.
expelled to make room for “more promising materials.” In addition, increased fees in both government and mission schools forced pupils into withdrawal because of their inability to pay. Since there was no provision for rehabilitation of such expelled pupils, they became unemployable. Being unemployable, some resorted to crime.

Unemployment was most marked in the urban centers and especially in Lagos that had a large floating population of migrants from the hinterlands in search of employment. The Resident of Lagos Colony reported in 1927 that,

A number of persons appear before me from time to time who are unemployed and without means. They have usually drifted into Lagos from the Protectorate. Having no homes they are in danger of falling into had (sic) [bad] hands or being compelled to steal and assuage hunger. From the health point of view they are in danger and at the same time a danger to the community.

The Resident recommended repatriation and that the provincial administrations take measures to prevent these unemployed paupers from returning to Lagos. A major issue in official consideration of such repatriation was the cost of their maintenance and transportation. The Senior Commissioner of Police opposed this recommendation, arguing that the criminal elements among the unemployed were too few to constitute a danger and that it would require a legal declaration of such people “as undesirables of established bad character” under section 79 (3) cap. 57 of the law for them to be repatriated.

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750 The correlation of western education and crime was attested by the Resident, Owerri Province that “….there is the ever-growing class of semi educated who live by their wits and their parasitic activities …the increase of semi-literates appears to go pari passu with the increase of the number of such persons convicted of crime.” NAI CSO 26/2 11930 Vol. II Owerri Province: Annual Report 1926, 16.
751 NAI COMCOL 1/CC69, Resident of the Colony to Secretary, Southern Provinces, 13/05/1927, 1.
752 NAI COMCOL 1/CC 69, Ag. Secretary, Southern Provinces to Resident of the Colony, Lagos, 9/07/27, 3 and Senior Commissioner of Police, Lagos Colony to The Resident, Colony, 2/9/1927, 4 and The Resident of the Colony to Secretary, Southern Provinces, 5/9/1927, 7.
With the worsening of the problem during the depression, unemployment, especially in Lagos, had to be addressed. In 1931, the Secretary, Southern Provinces, requested that the Residents of the provinces offer solutions to the problem of their unemployed subjects in Lagos and how best to assist them to secure employment in their home provinces. The Resident of Benin Province maintained that those in Lagos were not likely to return to the “unexciting life of farming”, and would only drift elsewhere if repatriated. Under pressure in Lagos, the Governor set up a committee, this included some Africans, to help find solutions to the problem. The committee received memoranda from various individuals and organizations and organized registration of the unemployed in Lagos for three days in April 1935. 4000 were registered and information on 3944 persons showed that 2180 of the unemployed were born in Lagos, while 1764 came from the provinces, that 1018 had standard six certificates or above, 1475 had below standard six, 1451 were illiterates, 221 were unclassified, and 969 had never been employed, of which, 492 came from the provinces.

The committee rejected public submissions recommending that the unemployed be granted financial assistance, public works be instituted, or industries established to absorb them because such measures, the committee argued, would necessitate further taxes that would damage the economy and increase unemployment. It agreed with the suggestion to establish an independent labour bureau which the Lagos Branch of the Nigerian Youth Movement undertook to organize at no cost to the government. In 1936 the NYM Bureau sent a list of 68 unemployed individuals, of which ten were unskilled,

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753 NAI BP 1289 Resident, Benin Province to Secretary, Southern Provinces, 24/11/31, 4.
to the Resident, Benin Province, but was informed that there were no jobs for them.\textsuperscript{755}

The bureau was disbanded soon thereafter.

The committee also recommended settling “never employed” youths on a self-financing farming scheme.\textsuperscript{756} This recommendation meshed with government agricultural education schemes in schools and the “Back to Land” propaganda instituted by government during the depression. The administration tried to persuade young school leavers to take up farming as a solution to increasing unemployment. But this policy was futile. According to Ward-Price, former Resident of Oyo Province:

\begin{quote}
High officials make speeches to persuade youngsters to go back to the land, but their rhetoric falls by the wayside, because it shows no grip of the real position. The duties of an ordinary farmer are numerous and uninspiring, demanding hard work under exhausting conditions. Special knowledge, gained from long experience of the land to be cultivated, is also required.\textsuperscript{757}
\end{quote}

In the event, the recommended agricultural settlement scheme was not implemented because of cost.

The Lagos branch of the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) also took an interest in the youth unemployment problem and established an After-Care Committee in 1937. The After-Care Committee is reported to have received moral assistance from officers of the Education Department and heads of missions. Its “chief function \[was\] … to maintain interest in young people leaving school in order to render every possible assistance in seeing them suitably settled in life.”\textsuperscript{758} The Committee initially sought and compiled information on pupils about to complete elementary and secondary school, advised them

\textsuperscript{755} NAI BP 1289 Unemployment in Lagos; Re-Resident, Benin Province to Secretary, Southern Provinces, 24/11/1931, 3.
\textsuperscript{756} Nigeria: Sessional Paper No 46 of 1935, Paper laid on the table of the Legislative Council: Report of the Committee appointed by His Excellency the Governor to enquire into the question of Unemployment, 4.
\textsuperscript{757} H.L Ward-Price, Dark Subjects, 243.
\textsuperscript{758} NAK File MSWC 1338 “Our Young People leaving School” Daily Times, 24/11/1945, (Page 11 of file)
on career choices, looked for prospective opportunities and vacancies for their employment or apprenticeship in both government and private firms, and more importantly, attempted to redirect them to agricultural or manual labour work in the provinces. In its 1938 report, the Committee recorded that it had advised 400 young people of whom 181 were attending school and 144 were school leavers in Lagos. Of these, only 41 were assisted in getting placements with 20 securing employment, 1 taking up farming, 20 finding apprenticeships, while 97 were either unemployed or untraced and 6 had returned to the provinces. The bulk of those who could not secure employment or apprenticeships were reported to be products of unassisted substandard schools or to have migrated from the provinces.\textsuperscript{759} The Committee blamed parents for not advising schoolboys on career choices or discouraging their wards from taking certain jobs in which the parents themselves were not interested. It was also critical of African clerks who brought boys from the interior as house servants in exchange for payment of their fees in substandard schools and the unwillingness of master craftsmen to pay their apprentices allowances. After this initial work, little was heard of the Committee until after the Second World War.

The administration in the provinces was also engaged in encouraging young school leavers to go into farming.\textsuperscript{760} Greater emphasis was now given to agriculture in schools in accordance with the agricultural education scheme drawn up by the Department of Education and approved by the Colonial Office.\textsuperscript{761} Sokoto Province

\textsuperscript{759} NAI ComCol. 1 File 2784 Report submitted by the After Care Committee on the matter of ex school elementary II and above, 11.
\textsuperscript{761} NAUK, CO 583/222/16 Memorandum by the Director of Education: Agricultural Education Scheme April 1937, 12.
started a one month training course for school leavers to re-orient them to village life. However, many could not cope with a return to the village and farming and there is some suggestion that the attempt to do so led to a high death rate among them.\footnote{Tibenderana, \textit{Sokoto Province under British Rule 1903-1939}, 225.} The Owerri provincial administration experimented with a trades apprenticeship scheme while the pupils were still in school, but the numbers involved were small, only ten boys out of a school population of over 15,000 pupils in 1938.\footnote{NAI CSO 26/2 /11930 Vol.XV Owerri Province: Annual Report 1938, 19.} Such solutions had little impact as the number of school leavers continued to swell.

Many school leavers eschewed the farming life not only because of the drudgery or their lack of farming knowledge, but the very poor remuneration. A recent examination of the returns to agriculture in comparison with other occupations in Benue Province in the 1930s showed that wage labour was more rewarding earning 15/2d per month or £9:2/-d per annum working 2,496 hours a year, while a peasant farmer and his family expended 15,856 man hours per year for a paltry £13:6s: 4d per year. This latter sum, after deducting all expenses, was insufficient to pay the taxes of all the adults in the farming unit.\footnote{Pius Terna Gbasha “Agriculture and Rural Society in Nigeria: A Study of Colonial Agriculture among the South Tiv 1914-1960” M.A. \textit{Dissertation}, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, 1989, 287-289.}

Both school leavers and poor peasants sought alternatives to agriculture in the urban centers. Even at the height of the depression, when it was expected that some migrant labourers would return to rural life, not only did they remain in the cities but their population continued to increase. In Port Harcourt, it was observed that,

\begin{quote}
There has been much unemployment, but the rural worker once he has forsaken the farm for the unstable conditions of urban wage labour does not easily return home. A considerable number however of casual labourers have left the township owing to reductions in staff, ...the so-called Elder Dempster labourers lines
\end{quote}
remain in their entirety, greatly overcrowded and a menace to the health of the community.\footnote{NAI CSO 26/2/11930 Vol. IX, Owerri Province: Annual Report, 1930, 64.}

In the face of increasing unemployment, it was observed that many of the workless, particularly school leavers, “wander about the town with nothing really to do and make a precarious living”\footnote{NAI CSO 26/2/12723 Oyo Province: Annual Report, 1927, 35.} or “drift aimlessly up and down … live a precarious or mysterious life doing little good either to themselves or to their country.”\footnote{NAI CSO 26/2/11930 Vol. IX, Owerri Province: Annual Report, 1930, 6.}

To “wander” may well have been a euphemism for touting, which was often associated with the illegality and crime to which unemployed school leavers turned on account of expulsion or inadequate educational qualification.\footnote{The correlation of western education and crime was attested by the Resident, Owerri Province that “….there is the ever-growing class of semi educated who live by their wits and their parasitic activities …the increase of semi-literates appears to go pari passu with the increase of the number of such persons convicted of crime.” NAI CSO 26/2 11930 Vol.II Owerri Province: Annual Report 1926, 16.}

Since the majority of the unemployed school leavers were juveniles, their situation began to be understood as a problem of juvenile delinquency.

\section*{Prostitution}

Another social problem that arose in connection with unemployment and delinquency was urban prostitution. Although engagement in courtesan practices between marriages was known in pre-colonial times among the Islamized Hausa,\footnote{Mary Smith, \textit{Baba of Karo: A Woman of Muslim Hausa}, New York, Frederick A Praeger Publications, 1964, 63-5 and 136.} courtesan practices and prostitution do not seem to have existed elsewhere. With the transformation of the rural economy and mass migration, lack of access of women to land for agricultural export production, liberalization of divorce, consequent loss of customary
control over women, and restricted educational and employment opportunities open to them, women migrated to areas of population concentration.

The migration of single women was further enhanced by the colonial firms’ practice of contracting the recruitment of women to provide services in labour camps, providing the possibility for some of these women to augment their earnings through prostitution. The presence of these women in the labour camps was critical to the firms in establishing control over migrant male labour. Many of the women who engaged in prostitution were from land short areas such as Igbo land, Urhoboland and Igbiraland, areas that were not engaged in cash crop production like the Tiv areas, Idomaland, the Cross River basin, parts of Hausa land such as Sokoto, and areas surrounding mining and timber concessions.

By the 1920s prostitution had become widespread and the subject of reports and complaints made by various individuals and communities. Though laws existed criminalizing the practice, colonial officials gave various excuses for not enforcing them. The Senior Commissioner of Police of Lagos Colony argued that prostitutes were “a very difficult class to deal with living as they do, as a general rule, under the protection of some man in return for a share of their immoral earnings, while considerable difficulty is experienced by the Police in obtaining necessary evidence to enable them to proceed

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against these women as common prostitutes.” When a complaint was made about prostitution in the Benin timber industry in 1927, the Acting Resident replied that, “To attempt to arrest the oldest profession in the world is what I consider ridiculous, unless disease is rampant amongst the unfortunate and public decency is violated.” During the depression female children were reported to have been recruited and or bought for use as prostitutes in some of the Eastern Provinces. The disguising of child prostitution as infant betrothal or marriage was claimed to make the detection and prosecution difficult. In Northern Nigeria, a suggestion was made that the problem of prostitution could be checked by taxing those who practiced it. However, as the administration did not want to be seen as sanctioning the trade, officials were directed to tax women only on their earnings from sources other than prostitution.

By the early 1930s Nigerian prostitutes had migrated to Cameroun, Fernando Po and Gold Coast to join their Nigerian males who had obtained employment in those colonies. Though the League of Nations had an interest in the problem of trafficking in women and children for prostitution and demanded annual reports on the subject, none seem to have been submitted by the Nigerian government. The migration and trafficking of women to other colonies became a source of concern to the administration in the

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774 NAI BP 56/27 Ag. Resident Benin Province to District Officer, Benin Division, 27/04/1927, 4.
776 NAK MinProf 1, file 16597 Taxation of Women- R. F. P. Orme, Secretary, Northern Provinces to Residents, 7/06/1939, 6.
Eastern Provinces because of fears of depopulation, a fall in agricultural productivity and a consequent loss of tax revenue in some parts of the Cross River basin.\textsuperscript{779}

In general, however, the issue of prostitution was not taken seriously by the colonial administration until the Second World War when reports in the international press led to the embarrassment of the British Government which ordered an inquiry.\textsuperscript{780}

By this time prostitution had become a widespread, and for a few, a lucrative trade. It also created a new source of income for some adults who exploited children both as pimps and prostitutes. The involvement of children in prostitution, particularly during the Second World War, became a second perceived source of the problem of juvenile delinquency.

**Juvenile Delinquency and the Establishment of Reformatories**

Long before the depression, the problem of juvenile involvement in undesirable activities had occupied the minds of African elites in the urban centers. As early as 1911, the barrister Charles Sapara-Williams had made a case in the Legislative Council for the establishment of a reformatory for minors in Lagos, but the government viewed the institution as unnecessary as there were very few recidivists. The repetition of this proposal in 1915 by Richard Henshaw, a member of the Legislative Council representing Calabar, and another in 1920, were met with promises of future consideration.\textsuperscript{781} Even the Chief Justice was reported to have enquired if there was a reformatory for

\textsuperscript{779} Naanen “Itinerant Gold Mines”: Prostitution in the Cross River Basin of Nigeria, 1930-1950” *African Studies Review*, 60

\textsuperscript{780} 780 NAI IjeProf 4, Traffic in Women and Children-File J.687 Governor of Nigeria to Secretary of State for Colonies, 9/07/1942, 8.

\textsuperscript{781} NAI CSO 26/1/09173 Vol.I, Boys Industrial Home for Juvenile Offenders 1923-1944-Secretary Southern Provinces to The Chief Secretary to Government, 23/03/1923, 1.
implementing the Native Children’s (Custody and Reformatory) Ordinance (1917) in 1921 and received a negative reply.

The government’s position was based on prison conviction records, but these only reflected serious criminal acts requiring capital punishment such as murder or the theft of large sums of money or highly priced items whereas many cases of juvenile delinquency never went to court or merited conviction. Thus the records of juvenile offenders on which the government based its decision were slim -149 convictions in Southern Nigeria in 1910 without any recidivism.\textsuperscript{782} In the main, European officials’ interaction with Africans was limited,\textsuperscript{783} and many of the former did not know the problems the latter faced in their communities. But these problems were well known to those such as Sapara-Williams and Henshaw.

From its inception the colonial government had shown little interest in the establishment of formal institutions to deal with such problems. This reluctance was not unconnected with the cost of establishing and running such institutions. However, it was also related to the colonial policy of the conservation and utilization of the pre-existing social institutions to hold back the forces of social dissolution. Where this was seen as failing, the colonial regime improvised short-term measures at minimal cost. Police and prisons remained the main government institutions before 1932.

By 1922 the police and magistrates became so overwhelmed with the increment of juvenile cases in Lagos -140 in 1922, nearly quadruple the 41 in 1911- that they requested that the Salvation Army consider the establishment of a children’s reformatory. In turn, in 1923, the Salvation Army sought government assistance in running “an

\textsuperscript{782} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{783} Ward Price, \textit{Dark Subjects}, 218-219.
industrial home” for training the children in crafts in Lagos. This request prompted government interest in finally supporting the establishment of a reformatory home. Certain objections were raised initially by some officials who feared that the Salvation Army might use the home to propagate its doctrine to the detriment of other Christian denominations and who argued for the continued reliance on the African family system to control juveniles. It was decided that juvenile offenders from outside Lagos whose families could be traced were to be repatriated and handed over to their families. However, given the existence of juveniles whose families could not be traced and a number of recidivists who seemed to have become immune to frequent whipping and parental control, it also was decided that a small reformatory should be established.

The Salvation Army justified its proposal on the grounds that it had experience in such work by way of the similar reformatories it ran in Kenya and Ceylon and that its home would be open to government inspection. Its proposal was sanctioned by the Colonial Office as presented and begun on an experimental basis. The Salvation Army provided the staff and ran the home on its own principles, while the government bore the entire cost of construction, furnishings and equipment, staff salaries and passages, and the cost of the upkeep of inmates who were to be given some education and training in carpentry, other trades, and who, as a by-product of their training in agriculture, would produce a portion of their own food. Initially, it was proposed that during the experimental period the home would cater for twenty inmates but this was later increased to between forty and fifty.

784 NAI CSO 26/1/09173 Vol. I, Ag Governor to Chief Justice, 19/04/1923, 17 and Chief Justice to Ag.Governor, 9/06/1923, 20.
785 Ibid, Governor Hugh Clifford to Secretary of State for Colonies, 27/02/1924, 55-60 and Colonial Office to the Officer Administering the Government of Nigeria, 11/04/1924, 62.
The resulting Boys Industrial Home, Yaba, was declared an Institution with a Board of Visitors and opened in August 1925 with eight boys. This increased to 11 at the end of 1925, 21 in 1926, and 44 in 1928 with inmates originating from Ibadan, Ife, and Calabar in the Southern Provinces and one from Katsina in the Northern Provinces. By 1929, the home had exceeded its capacity and its location was considered no longer appropriate for reformation work. It did not have sufficient land for expanding food production as part of its agricultural education training, and it was feared that the houses and markets that had been built close by might distract the inmates. Consequently, in 1929, magistrates were stopped from sending further inmates pending a decision on the Home’s future.

With the onset of the inter-war depression a decision on the expansion or relocation of the home fell into abeyance. Also, the mode of funding the home was changed to a fixed annual grant that was cheaper than the former payment per child. Housing of homeless children was prohibited to reduce the inmate population and costs. Due to the lack of places for them in the Home, children convicted of crime were to be whipped and sent back to the streets. One Police Magistrate reported his frustration that a boy found guilty of stealing was sentenced to only six strokes of the cane after which he was discharged into the street to possibly develop into a hardened criminal. He further observed that,

A large number of juvenile offenders passes through my hands, but owing to limited accommodation at Yaba, I do not as a rule recommend anyone for detention there who has not been previously convicted. It often happens that first offenders are being neglected by their parents and have got out of hand. In such

cases detention at a home is extremely desirable, but for the reason given above this is not possible.\textsuperscript{787}

Since there were no institutions for homeless children in Lagos, the so-called “waifs and strays” and convicted children beyond parental control continued to populate the streets and dark corners of Lagos and other urban centers. This was in contravention of the Native Children’s Ordinance that required government to take them under mandate. By the 1930s juvenile criminal activities had become a major cause of insecurity and concern to the public.\textsuperscript{788}

It was a directive of the Colonial Office, following its conference in 1930 on the treatment of juvenile offenders, that finally made the establishment of government juvenile institutions in Nigeria unavoidable. The directive, which included guidelines for formulating laws on juvenile offences, requested that colonial governments promulgate new laws regarding the treatment of juvenile offenders, shield the trials of juvenile offenders from public view, establish juvenile courts, provide juveniles with separate places of judicial custody, employ the use of parole for first offenders, and provide annual statistical information on juvenile offenders in each colony.\textsuperscript{789}

The Attorney General and the Administrator of Lagos Colony agreed to the implementation of the directive, but noted its financial implications in the context of the depression. However, the Lieutenant Governors of both the Northern and Southern Provinces viewed the implementation of the directive as unnecessary because the issues it

\textsuperscript{787} NAI CSO 26/1/09173 Vol.IV, Ag Police Magistrate, Ebute Metta to The Chief Registrar, Lagos, 26/09/1934, 463.
\textsuperscript{789} NAI CSO 26/03791,Vol.1,Treatment of Juvenile Offenders- Lord Passfield, Secretary of State for Colonies “Circular” to The Officer Administering the Government of Nigeria,11/09/1930, 23.
raised were, in their view, only applicable to the slum situations of the industrial cities of Europe and not to the Nigerian situation where the Native Courts and chiefs were handling such issues without problem or resort to the Supreme and Provincial Courts. 790

Their views were belied by the reality that indigenous institutions of juvenile social control in urban areas were failing. Indirect evidence of this failure is provided by the fact that Kano Province established a Juvenile Prison in 1933 791 and that Sokoto Province had experimented with a Borstal Institution in 1927-8 that was closed due to cost and the inmates lack of in indigenous craft work. 792 In the Yoruba areas, by the late 1920s, Ibadan had already become notorious for its Jaguda (youthful pick-pockets) while the cocoa trading centers were buzzing with young touts. 793 These were also reported to be a problem in Enugu and Calabar in the Igbo and Efik areas.

The Governor concurred with his Lieutenants’ arguments as to why the Colonial Office’s directive could not be acted upon. He pleaded that the economic depression made the implementation of the directive difficult and requested that, rather than legislation, an administrative approach be adopted by passing rules and instructing the officers concerned to perform their duties in the spirit of the ordinance. 794 Subsequently, the Native Children (Custody and Reformation) Ordinance was amended in 1932 to accommodate the Colonial Office’s directive. However, despite this amendment, the

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790 NAI CSO 26/03791, Vol. I Secretary, Northern Provinces to The Chief Secretary, Lagos, 24/12/1930, 28-9 and Secretary, Southern Provinces to The Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, 17/04/1931, 53-5.
794 NAI CSO 26/03791, Vol.1 Donald Cameron, Governor of Nigeria to Secretary of State for Colonies, 26/06/1931,62 and Secretary of State for Colonies to Governor of Nigeria, 2/09/1931, 73.
government continued to refuse to cater for homeless children under mandate in violation of its own laws (Native Children 3, subsection b i, ii and vii). While the government was still making excuses for its inaction Major Mabb, the Director of Prisons, Southern Provinces, built a home for juveniles in Enugu Prison on his own initiative and reported in 1935 that,

> I realized some years ago that Juvenile delinquency would become a problem in Nigeria, and that when it did arrive, it would develop quickly and although no funds were available for the establishment of an institution at that time, I worked out my scheme for the Enugu Industrial School, so that we should be able to accommodate a certain number while arrangements were being made for further accommodation. Had I not done so the situation would have been difficult. There is not the slightest doubt that the problem has arrived, and during the next few years’ accommodation will be required for a large number of boys.

The Enugu Industrial School was built with bricks produced by the free labour of prisoners. It was meant for thirty inmates when it was completed in 1932, but a block for an additional thirty was completed in 1933. Its opening was welcomed by administrators who proposed sending the excess juvenile convicts from other Southern Provinces to Enugu. But the Governor argued that difficulties might arise from sending what he described as the “gutter snipes” of Lagos to Enugu where they might become a corrupting influence on local juveniles. He also had misgivings over the cost, writing that, “At the moment Government is not in a position to commit itself to any considerable increase in expenditure on the care and maintenance of juvenile delinquents.” He preferred the use of non-government institutions.

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796 Quoted in NAI CSO 26/1/09173 Vol. IV, Secretary, Southern Provinces to The Secretary to the Government, Lagos, 5/06/1935, 487.
798 NAI CSO 26/1/09173 Vol. IV, Ag Chief Secretary to the Government to The Secretary Southern Provinces, 5/07/1935, 502-3.
The move to send convicts to Enugu was also initially opposed by the Salvation Army which objected to sending juveniles to prison institutions where corporal punishment was practiced and where little was done to reform inmates. But the problem of delinquency had become so great in Lagos that it was decided that boys would be sent from the Salvation Army Home in Lagos to Enugu in the absence of funds for expanding or rebuilding that Home. At the same time, the Salvation Army was approached to consider establishing an institution for girls. Almost certainly, this request was connected with the increasing number of female juvenile delinquents and the related problem of child prostitution that was thriving in Lagos.

Conclusion

The establishment of colonial rule in Nigeria came with the enactment of laws and measures to check the disintegration of the society and emergence of the social problems associated with capitalist development in Britain. However, the colonial administration’s prohibition of customary practices deemed repugnant to the British sense of justice created populations that needed to be taken into care. Thus, even though the “developing the undeveloped estate” ideology of the early period of colonial rule had little place for institutions that addressed the social welfare problems of the colonized, the establishment of some such institutions was necessitated. It was the colonial prisons, which in addition to their primary function as punitive institutions, that filled this need. They were used to cater for non-convict lunatics with violent dispositions who constituted a threat to the rest of society. The two lunatic asylums that were ultimately

established were inadequate and the care of their inmates was little better than those incarcerated in prisons. The leper asylum and Freed Slave Children’s Homes and Villages were closed in the early years of colonial rule.

The central factor in the colonial administration’s treatment of social issues affecting Africans was its reliance on the indirect rule system and the indigenous institutions of family and community as exemplified by the House Rule Ordinance in Southern Nigeria and the use of families to care for rescued slave children under mandate. Few Native Administrations established institutions to care for the poor or socially excluded. This policy was not unconnected with the colonial administration’s racist ideology that viewed Africans as qualitatively different and without need for European style welfare institutions.

Colonial Nigerian interventions in African social welfare came largely as a result of pressure from external sources and particularly from the Colonial Office, which was itself under pressure from the League of Nations, the International Labour Office and similar external sources. Such pressure was resisted and often circumvented by the colonial administration on grounds of lack of funds. Since the colonies were meant to be self-financing and the Colonial Office was parsimonious with its grants, interventions remained largely at the level of research while directives often were not implemented. As a result, the social welfare situation of the colonized worsened. It would be empire wide rebelliousness and impending conflict in Europe that would drive the British Government to attempt to restore loyalty of its subjects through the promise of improved conditions that would finally prompt planning for serious interventions in African welfare, but promised action would have to await the conclusion of the Second World War.
CHAPTER SIX

TINKERING WITH WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT BEFORE AND DURING WORLD WAR TWO

Colonies must make as big a contribution as possible: to that end we want to organize colonial trade so as to bring in more revenue.

Malcolm Macdonald, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1940, in NAUK, CO859/19/16 Social Services Department Activities in War Time-Notes on Colonial Development and Welfare, 61.

I consider that it would be dangerous to attempt to proceed with the provision of modernistic social security facilities on anything akin to Beveridge principles as, in practice they would only be available to that very small proportion (less than 1%) of the population which is dependent for its livelihood upon wage earning … There is a distinct risk that by providing compensating economic advantages, any extensive schemes of social security may result in the people modifying their customs and abandoning their traditional restraints.

Arthur Richards, Governor of Nigeria, 1945, in NAUK CO 858/246/1 Social Insurance, Nigeria-Arthur Richards, Governor of Nigeria to Secretary of State for Colonies, 17/04/1945, 1.

Introduction

The period after 1935 witnessed changes in both British and the Nigerian colonial administrations’ policy and attitude towards African poverty and welfare. This was the culmination of a process that had started in the 1920s but had been slowed down by Britain’s domestic politics. From the period of the depression, seething political restiveness and economic crisis across the Empire began to be manifested, and this drove the Colonial Office to attempt to address poverty in the Empire. Though Nigeria was not the main centre of the crisis, it reverberated in Nigeria in the withholding of oil palm produce in Benin and Ondo provinces during the depression, in the abortive cocoa holdup of 1937-38, the Nigerian Motor Transport Union strike of 1937, the rise of militant unions, and anti-tax agitations in some Eastern Provinces. These sent signals to the
administration that something needed to done. Governor Bourdillon responded with petitions to the Colonial Office for both changes in economic policy and political reforms. The petitions coincided with the CO’s negotiation of funding for the colonies to stem restiveness in the Empire and the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. The need to ensure the loyalty of the colonized during the war in the face of Germany’s anti-colonial propaganda garnered quick approval for the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940. This chapter examines the responses of the Colonial Office and the Nigerian administration to the increasing restiveness of the period, policies towards ameliorating worsening social conditions, the impact of the Second World War on social welfare, the politics of social welfare policy implementation, and these policies’ actual impact on social welfare.

Prelude to Development Planning and Welfare: Colonial Development Act 1929-1939

Prior to the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940, it was the Colonial Development Act of 1929 that constituted the most important imperial response to the inter-war depression. The 1929 Act was the culmination of earlier attempts to mobilize the colonies to ensure steady supplies of agricultural raw materials and food for Britain. Various policies, measures and committees had been established towards achieving those ends, but conflicting political interests slowed down their realization. It was only the election of 1929 and the unanimity of all parties on finding a solution to Britain’s economic problems, especially the crisis of British unemployment, that motivated the enactment of the Colonial Development Act of 1929. This Act made available the paltry
sum of £1 million to be administered by a committee which would consider an annual disbursement either in the form of a grant or loan (with defrayment of interest of loan during the first ten years) for the development of infrastructure or agricultural or industrial projects that would stimulate demand for British goods and thus generate employment in Britain. 800

The Nigerian colonial administration responded cautiously to the Act, the passage of which coincided with the realization by the Nigerian colonial administration of the need for increased agricultural production in Nigeria. Agriculture in Nigeria was facing a crisis of production that was threatening the Nigerian administration’s revenue. Hitherto, the policy of the colonial administration had been guided by the principle of “development along native lines” and financial self-sufficiency based on a balanced budget as prescribed by the Colonial Office. The administration’s revenue was generated mainly through direct taxation and custom duties on trade, which were both dependent on peasant agricultural production. Changes in prices, output and quality of produce impinging greatly on government revenue. As the government maintained a non-interventionist policy with regard to agriculture, export crop production had expanded in the form of the absolute surplus product of peasant producers. According to Shenton, this “hinged on the mobilization of formerly non-commoditized sources of labour or only partially commoditized sources of labour and goods for the reproduction of labour. Yet such a process by its very nature had economic, spatial, and temporal limits, and it is clear that by the worst years of the depression some regions involved in export crop

production had reached these limits.\textsuperscript{801} In addition to the earliest cocoa producing districts and the wild oil palm collecting areas, which reached their production expansion limits,\textsuperscript{802} increasing reservation of forests in some areas, and expansion of education placed further limitations on both land and labour respectively.

The fall in prices of agricultural products during the depression reduced the administration’s revenue and created political and administrative problems. The government was already saddled with loans incurred for the development of the infrastructure necessary for the expansion and evacuation of peasant produce. Any decrease in revenue threatened the government’s ability to meet its loan payments and run the administration.

In spite of the urgency of the situation, the indebtedness of the Nigerian administration caused it to adopt a cautious approach towards the loans offered under the 1929 Act. Of the various submissions made by the technical departments, groups of Provinces, and organizations, only the re-grading and relaying of Minna-Kaduna Railway line was considered worthy of submission to the Colonial Office. The initial application for the defrayment of the 5% interest on the loan for the re-grading and relaying of Minna-Kaduna Railway line was approved for five years only,\textsuperscript{803} instead of the ten years possible under the 1929 Act. As a result, the Nigerian Legislative Council and Government rejected the offer. In response to the cautious approach of Nigeria and some other colonial governments, the Colonial Office clarified and broadened the scope of the

\textsuperscript{802} Shenton “Nigerian Agriculture in Historical Perspective: Development and Crisis, 1900-1960” Michael Watts (ed) \textit{State, Oil and Agriculture in Nigeria}, 39 and 44.
\textsuperscript{803} NAI CSO 26/3 File 23668 Vol. III Colonial Development Fund: General Paper and Estimates- Memo 15/04/1930, 158.
Act to include non-remunerative projects that would assist the economic development of the Empire including health and scientific research on the methods and practices of agriculture, industry, marketing, communication, production machinery and natural resources and requested further submission of proposals. Numerous proposals were subsequently put up for funding, but only projects related to the development of infrastructure capable of increasing trade and projects on health and nutrition (which were deemed critical to increased production) were approved as attested by tables below:

**Expenditure for assisted schemes (in £) financed with both CDA and Nigerian funds**

**(TABLE 2)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schemes</th>
<th>1930-1</th>
<th>1931-2</th>
<th>1933-4</th>
<th>1934-5</th>
<th>1935-6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Railways</td>
<td>18,422</td>
<td>10,500</td>
<td>21,721</td>
<td>13,100</td>
<td>16,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Scholarship</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition Research</td>
<td>1,969</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsetse Fly Research</td>
<td>1,075</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternity Training centres</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2,876</td>
<td>4,694</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training centres for Sanitary Inspectors</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5,455</td>
<td>1,219</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispensaries for NAs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,515</td>
<td>4,652</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulances (10)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,626</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leprosy Settlements</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research on Schistosomiasis and guinea worm</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>1,534</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitary Improvements</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>2,469</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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**Grants to 1938 (TABLE 3)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completed schemes</th>
<th>Grant type</th>
<th>Amount Received (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition research</td>
<td>Full Cost</td>
<td>3,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsetse Fly research</td>
<td>Full cost</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public health improvement</td>
<td>5/6ths of total expenditure</td>
<td>40,057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Services</td>
<td>Half the expenditure on ground</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organization of Aerodromes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(up to £51,000)</td>
<td>51,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Uncompleted Schemes**

| Veterinary Scholarships    | Nigeria’s contribution was double the grant | 1,926               |
| Agricultural Scholarships  | Nigeria’s contribution was double the grant | 2,002               |
| Ilorin Stock Farm          | £3,400 on condition that the recurrent cost of the scheme was met by Nigeria | 2,538               |
| Sleeping Sickness Service  | Funding up to £19,000 a year for five years Provided Nigeria supplied the balance under The scheme of £11,000 per annum | 7,500               |


The CDA was of little benefit to Nigeria and according to Falola:

By the time the CDA was terminated in 1940, Nigeria accomplished very little. True to its primary goal, the loan money was spent on a limited number of projects…. Of the £330,000 received, the sum of £114,450 (or 34.7 percent) was granted to pay the interest on loans for the construction of the Minna-Kaduna railway, £51,000 funded the organization of ground facilities for air services, and £95,000 facilitated research and treatment of sleeping sickness. Agriculture received £3,400 to encourage mixed farming and another £1500 on Tse Tse fly research, while the rest went for other small expenses.

The CDA loans further increased Nigeria’s debt burden by encouraging the government to take loans for some schemes that would not have been embarked on without the promises of the Act. In addition, the governments were compelled to embark on schemes and guarantee part of the funds as a condition for approval of CDA funds for implementation.\textsuperscript{806} This policy increased government expenditure.

The funded projects did little to increase employment in Britain, enhance the social welfare of the colonized populace, or increase their output.\textsuperscript{807} Only a paltry sum was devoted to agriculture. The research and treatment of sleeping sickness, which might be thought to have been directed at enhancing health and agricultural productivity, turned out to be directed more at the mainly European health needs of tin mining interests. The European mining prospectors were concentrated in the mining areas and their health needed to be safeguarded while the health effects on the African population were only incidental. The insignificance of the CDA to meeting the welfare needs of Nigerians was summarised by the Resident of Abeokuta Province who showed that the inhabitants of that Province enjoyed only 0.1d of the 0.34d that the CDA allotted per person in the empire. He concluded his evaluation by demanding a fairer share of the funds for the people of his province.\textsuperscript{808} Given this miserly funding and its inconsequentiality to the welfare of Africans, the socio-economic situation in Nigeria worsened.

\textsuperscript{806} Governor Bernard Bourdillon cited the example of being compelled to build six second rate aerodromes, instead of fewer first rate ones at less cost. Bourdillon“Colonial Development and Welfare” \textit{International Affairs}, 371-2.
\textsuperscript{807} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{808} NAUK 583/244/18 Infant Welfare Work in Abeokuta Province-I.W.F Tods, Ag. Resident Abeokuta Province to Secretary, Western Provinces, 19/07/1939, 4.
Post-Depression Changes in British Welfare Policies and Colonial Office Attitudes

Towards Welfare in the Colonies

The CDA did little to solve Britain’s unemployment problem\(^{809}\) that worsened during the course of the depression. This problem pressured the British government to consider policies that would create greater employment opportunities and provide facilities for building community life in depressed areas.\(^{810}\) It also resulted in the limited reform of social welfare to assist the unemployed, the extension of unemployment insurance to agricultural workers, contributory pensions for widows and orphans, and the introduction of old-age pensions in the 1930s.\(^{811}\) These policies were representative of an increasing compassion and concern for the various categories of the poor and the increasing realization of the need to improve the entitlement rights of citizenship irrespective of social status. This realization was to culminate in release and acceptance of the Beveridge Report by the British government in 1942 that would come to form the basis of the post-war welfare state in Britain.

According to Lewis, elements in the Colonial Office came to share these concerns, especially in the light of the contributions of the empire made during the First World War. Lewis points to the creation of a Social Services Department within the Colonial Office as evidence of this change in thinking and argues that these developments “grew out of a set of bureaucratic traditions which were peculiar to the

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colonial office” and were “the inevitable consequences” of the doctrine of colonial
trusteeship.  

In addition, however, the Colonial Office also became increasingly conscious of
the critical role of African welfare to increased production of agricultural exports and
other primary goods. This resulted in the recruitment of specialists and experts and the
establishment of committees designed to bring scientific knowledge to bear on this and
related issues. These experts and committees undertook research and made
recommendations on improving social services, particularly health, and proposed
measures aimed at improving both welfare and productivity. A key work was Hailey’s
African Survey, released in 1938. Hailey maintained that a central problem facing the
colonies was the lack of coordination of social services departments and argued for
greater cooperation among the departments as well as the coordination of their activities
towards welfare ends. In making this argument Hailey was much influenced by what he
saw as the success of the “betterment programmes” that arose out of experiments in
Nyasaland and that came to form a model for similar integrated approaches in the West
African colonies.

Colonial Office concern with African welfare was further spurred by external
influences. Since the early 1930s, Britain had been put on the defensive by the League of
Nations Mandate Commission, other international organizations, and voluntary agencies
concerned with the welfare of women and children in the mandated territories and
colonies. One example of such scrutiny occurred in 1939 when the League of Nations
released its report on Nutrition in the Territories under Mandate and Colonies. In

2000, 23.
response, the Colonial Office quickly released its own report in 1939. This report attributed malnutrition to poverty and the lack of means of subsistence among the majority of Africans and recommended the improvement of access to greater resources amongst the people.\textsuperscript{813}

An additional driving force of the greater British concern over colonial welfare arose out of competition from her imperial rivals. In the late 1930s, the protectionist trade policies of Britain towards her colonies drew the ire of other powers particularly Germany, the U.S.A. and Japan, who sought a share in the produce and markets of the colonies. Though Britain’s share of its tropical colonies’ import trade increased only slightly during the 1930s,\textsuperscript{814} it was nonetheless valuable and any losses would have seriously worsened British economic problems.\textsuperscript{815} Germany’s increasing demand for the return of her former colonies was matched by criticism of poor management of British colonies. There was also serious fear that German propaganda might cause disaffection and revolt in the colonies.\textsuperscript{816}

German propaganda aside, there existed an objective basis for British fears of growing disaffection and revolt in the colonies. The copperbelt strike of 1935 in Northern Rhodesia was followed by the produce hold-ups in Ghana and Nigeria in 1937, and a motor lorry workers’ strike in Nigeria in 1938. However, these pale when compared to the West Indies wide disturbances of 1938, which were serious enough to necessitate the establishment of a Royal Commission of Inquiry.

\textsuperscript{813} Jan Kuhanen, Poverty, Health and Reproduction in early Colonial Uganda, Joensuun, University of Joensuun Publications in Humanities, 2005, 322.
\textsuperscript{814} Havinden and Meredith, Colonialism and Development, Britain and Its Tropical Colonies, 1850-1960, 191.
\textsuperscript{815} Nigeria for instance was the largest importer from Britain among the colonies.
\textsuperscript{816} Haviden and Meredith, Colonialism and Development, Britain and Its Tropical Colonies, 1850-1960, 193.
These various pressures compelled the Colonial Office to revisit the Colonial Development Act of 1929 and to accept Hailey’s 1938 recommendation that “if the pace of internal development is to be quickened, it can only be the result of assistance in the form of free grants from the imperial powers which control them.”\(^{817}\) The result was the drawing up of what would become the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 (CDWA). This new Act, the funding for which was halved at the outbreak of WW2, was to annually provide more money, specifically £500,000 for research and £5 million for projects and services in the colonial empire.

Despite the inclusion of the term “welfare” in the title of the CDWA, a main objective of the Act, the improvement of trade between the colonies with Britain, remained the same as its 1929 predecessor. Malcolm Macdonald, Secretary of State for the Colonies and initiator of the CDWA, made this clear when he stated that the “Colonies must make as big a contribution as possible: to that end we want to organize colonial trade so as to bring in more revenue.”\(^{818}\) That the welfare of the people of the colonies was incidental was made clear by the debates that surrounded the title and purpose of the CDWA. The Treasury Department disagreed with the inclusion of the word “welfare” in the proposal and likened it to putting the colonies on “dole”, while the Colonial Office employed the war and the propaganda value of the inclusion of the word “welfare” in the title to convince the Treasury and Parliament to grant approval.\(^{819}\) MacDonal further assured the Treasury that the amounts proposed in the CDWA were

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\(^{818}\) NAUK, CO859/19/16 Social Services Department Activities in War Time-Notes on Colonial Development and Welfare, 61.

“not likely to be reached in practice for sometime to come and might never be reached at any time during the war” and that even with the addition of normal grants in aid would not exceed the amount proposed. MacDonald insisted on announcing the CDWA on the same day as the publication of the Royal Commission Report on the West Indian Riots not only to blunt the Report’s criticism of the colonial administration but also to give effect to the propaganda value of the CDWA. The promulgation and implementation of the Act during the war, as attested by the private correspondence of some of the most important actors involved in framing the Act, was to help “achieve minimum relief required to alleviate distress” and “to ensure quiet and contentment and maintenance of morale” during the war.

The Impact of the War on Nigeria’s Development and Welfare

Before the outbreak of the war there was already a growing restiveness of the population of Nigeria especially with the renewed onset of depression in 1938. The Governor, Bernard Bourdillon, was so disturbed by the situation that he petitioned the Colonial Office to seek new measures that would address the poverty, deteriorating welfare situation, and finances of Nigeria. Bourdillon criticized the 1929 Act and asserted that its impact was negative because “the form of assistance which the fund was designed to give in the case of major schemes was one which the colonies most in need of development could not really afford to avail themselves”. He stated further that “even in the case of minor schemes, to be financed by direct grants or loans, the manner in which

820 NAUK, CO859/19/16, Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for Colonies to Sir John Simon, 11/10/1939, 73 and 98.
821 NAUK, CO859/19/16, Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for Colonies to Sir John Simon, 11/10/1939, 74.
822 Quoted in Falola, Development Planning and Decolonization in Nigeria, 37.
the scheme was administered placed the poorer colonies at disadvantage."³⁸²³ He argued that Nigeria could not utilize the funds given its poor financial state and indebtedness which stood at £75,000,000 in 1936 on which the government had paid full interest on the public/private debts at 4.69 percent. Of the 5s10d “income earned from true taxation” in 1936-37 “per head of population … which was a record year for Nigeria in the matter of customs receipts, approximately 1s7d … goes on public debt services, nearly four pence on military expenditure, and about six pence on pensions and gratuities, leaving the modest sum 3s5d per head of the population to spend on administration, the maintenance of internal security, and social and developmental services.” The debt had been incurred on communication and other services necessary to bring export produce to market. Bourdillon claimed that “the British tax payer has received at least full value for this expenditure” and that of the “total grants in aid from the Colonial Development Fund an appropriation to compensate the Niger Company, (for the assumption of its mineral rights) is approximately £6 million.”³⁸²⁴ Even the bulk of the pension received by colonial officers was expended in the UK with Nigeria being the largest purchaser from UK spending £2million per annum though small in proportion to her population.

Bourdillon viewed all these developments, along with the policy of financial self-sufficiency and the miserly foreign investment, as contributing to the poverty of Nigeria which was being worsened by soil erosion and deforestation. He concluded by advocating the subordination of the policy of financial self-sufficiency to maintenance of an accelerated rate of social and economic progress, stoppage of further payment of mining royalties to the Niger Company successor UAC, financing of developmental

³⁸²⁴ Ibid, 33.
capital works without immediate remuneration with direct grants or loans, accepting responsibility for agricultural, forestry and veterinary, geological survey and cooperative departments and the establishment of a commission to visit Nigeria and draw up a ten year programme of work for these departments in collaboration with the Nigerian government.

In another follow-up memo, he recommended the forceful introduction of European style plantation agriculture and forced cultivation and imposition of new farming methods on peasants to increase production for export and revenue. In spite of the identification of poverty and some of its major causes, he shied away from identifying the role of the colonial firms in manipulating prices to their own advantage and their export of profit without investment in the economic development of the colony. Bourdillon had earlier embarked on some of his revenue generating and production enhancement schemes. He had cut the salaries and pensions of workers and increased duties on imports in addition to directing that soil erosion surveys for land rehabilitation in the provinces be conducted. His petition and proposals were not replied to probably because of the ongoing preparatory work on a new Colonial Development Act. When the Second World War broke out in September 1939, the whole situation changed for the worse.

When the Second World War broke out in the midst of the renewed economic depression Africa became of strategic importance as a supplier of essential war needs, a staging post for the prosecution of the war, and was itself a war theatre. As a result a Minister of War was posted to the Gold Coast to coordinate Britain’s wartime needs in

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West Africa. The Colonial Office directed the colonial administrations to engage in propaganda among the colonized to ensure their support, loyalty and sacrifice for Britain’s war effort in return for promises of “freedom” and development. In addition, the colonial administrations were directed to generate additional revenue for the war through increased taxes, to maintain the existing level of social services, continue with the existing social and development expenditure, and contribute in various ways to prosecution of the war.\textsuperscript{826}

The colonial administration in Nigeria embarked on a recruitment drive for military personnel, mobilized to provide for the requirements of the various military organizations established in Nigeria, raised money for the “Win the War Fund,” sold saving certificates, and facilitated interest-free loans and donations of money from the Native Authorities for the war effort. A public relations office was established along with the opening of reading rooms and radio services for propaganda purposes. Chiefs were mobilized to cajole their people to donate money, enlist in the army, maintain loyalty to the British, and to increase production of goods and services to meet war needs. These various measures were reinforced by the Emergency Power Defense Act of 1939-1940 that empowered the administration to take any action deemed fit to assist British war efforts.

The immediate consequence of the outbreak of the war for the people of Nigeria was the scarcity and high prices of some essential imported items. This arose from the insecurity of shipping, reduction of shipping space, decreased production of non-military war goods, and diversion of foreign exchange earnings to procurement of military needs.

\textsuperscript{826} NAUK CO 859/19/16 Malcolm MacDonald, S Secretary of State for Colonies to Sir John Simon, 11/10/1939, 75
These shortages forced many colonial firms to close some of their stores and retrench their employees,\textsuperscript{827} thereby worsening unemployment. Though military recruitment created employment opportunities, illiteracy and poor health debared many while the risky nature of military service made it unattractive to others. There were complaints in many places that too few people were enlisting and reports of high rates of desertion.\textsuperscript{828} However, there was a large turnout in the densely populated and land-short Igbo-dominated Provinces of Onitsha and Owerri, with the latter accounting for 20,000 men and twenty-five percent of tradesmen and non-combatant.\textsuperscript{829} But even this was insufficient to solve the problem of high unemployment and migrancy in the province.

\textbf{War, State and African Social Welfare}

Just as the bombings that led to evacuations of East London drew attention to the appalling conditions of the British poor,\textsuperscript{830} the approach of war elicited criticism of British social services in the colonies as conditions became more widely known through British troops stationed there. The Medical Officer in Sokoto Province described “the standard of housing provided by government as the lowest in any province he had visited,” while conditions in “Argungu and Birnin Kebbi led him to recommend that Officers should not spend more than six months at a time in those stations.”\textsuperscript{831} Rex Niven, Resident of Borno Province observed that “The Americans were horrified to find

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\textsuperscript{827} NAI CSO 26/2 File 12723 Vol. XV, Oyo Province, Annual Report, 1940, 12.
\end{flushright}
that we had no running water in our houses."\textsuperscript{832} Even Governor Bourdillon had to appeal for something to be quickly done about the situation before foreigners started publicizing the deplorable state of social development in the colony.\textsuperscript{833}

Although the CDWA had been enacted and applications for funding requested, its implementation lagged. And while Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald directed that the colonies should continue the provision of social services during war time,\textsuperscript{834} his wartime successor, Oliver Stanley, warned that each colony should only aspire to the level of welfare its revenue allowed. \textsuperscript{835}

The enactment of the CDWA brought to the fore the problems of the definition and delineation of the boundaries of social welfare. Social services came to be defined as consisting of education, medical and health services as well as agriculture, forestry and veterinary services. The latter three were viewed to be critical to increasing production and thus the income necessary for individual improvement. As has been earlier argued, various attempts at coordinating these services such as the “betterment” programmes had faltered for organizational reasons and the lack of funds. During the war the departments involved in social services continued to function largely independently of one another in the implementation of their individual programmes.

A major problem caused by the war was the shortage of technical personnel. The few remaining staff were diverted from welfare work to increasing production for the war

\textsuperscript{833} NAUK CO859/8/16 Colonial Development and Welfare Act: Legitimacy of grants for the purpose of improving conditions of Service of Government Servants- Governor Bourdillon to Lord Moyne, 24/10/1941, 1.
\textsuperscript{834} NAUK CO 859/19/14 Social Services Department Activities in War-Time
effort. Thus, despite the knowledge that water supply was key to health in Sokoto Province, the well digging work by the Geological and Public Works Department was diverted to assist the military, while soil erosion measures and experimental farming with irrigation were discontinued.\textsuperscript{836} Personnel problems were widespread. In Oyo Province, where there was increased demand for education, the lack of teachers precluded new schools.\textsuperscript{837}

Another major problem was the shortage of funds and materials. Forestry work was suspended in Owerri Province as a result of shortage of funds.\textsuperscript{838} In Sokoto Province, rural dispensaries were reported by Medical Officers to be non-functioning because of lack of funds and transport.\textsuperscript{839} Public Works Department activities were restricted in Benin Province in 1940, and by 1945 the Department still lacked the personnel, equipment and materials needed to function.\textsuperscript{840} Sokoto Province had no Forest Officer from 1940, with the work of forest reservation being continued by African NA staff.\textsuperscript{841}

In the face of these difficulties, activities to promote increased agricultural productivity were given priority. Mixed farming schemes were vigorously, if problematically, promoted in the Western Provinces. In Benin Province, the District Officer of Benin Division observed that the dependence of the mixed farming scheme on cows for production of manure excluded the poor since only the rich could afford them and advised the inclusion of more readily available goats. In spite of this observation, the Agricultural Department promoted cow “kraaling” in Ishan and Kukuruku Divisions and

\textsuperscript{836} NAI CSO 26/2 File 12518 Vol.XIII Sokoto Province: Annual Report, 1940, 4.
\textsuperscript{837} NAI CSO 26/2 File 12723 Vol.XVI Oyo Province: Annual Report, 1945, 27.
\textsuperscript{838} NAI CSO 26/2 File 11930 Vol. XV, Owerri Province: Annual Report, 1940, 14.
\textsuperscript{839} NAI CSO 26/2 File 12518 Vol.XIII Sokoto Province: Annual Report, 1944, 7.
\textsuperscript{840} NAI CSO 26/2 File 14617 Vol.XIII Benin Province: Annual Reports 1940, 10 and 1945, 94.
\textsuperscript{841} NAI CSO 26/2 File 12518 Vol.XIII Sokoto Province: Annual Report, 1940, 4.
imposed its funding on the Native Authorities. The kraaling scheme failed because the rich farmers who bought the cows largely invested in them for prestige reasons rather than for their manure. They refused to pay for kraaling their cows and the scheme did little to increase agricultural production.

A similar fate befell other agricultural schemes. A Farm School scheme was initiated in which unemployed young school leavers were to be used to introduce mixed farming in Oyo Province. It attracted only six to twelve school leavers yearly. In 1944, only nine applications were received and recruitment was extended to Ondo Province which yielded only a further six applicants. Of the few who enrolled, some dropped out early, while others were reported to have had “no inclination to do manual work” leading to their dismissal. Those who completed the training did not take to farming because their parents were reported to have been “opposed to their children taking up farming after they have been to school.”

Agricultural teachers’ training, green manuring, and ridge cultivation schemes introduced in the Western and Eastern Provinces during the war also faltered. Only seven of the over two hundred schools in Benin Province sent one teacher each to the Moor Plantation to join the handful from Oyo Province for agricultural teacher training. The green manuring and ridge cultivation schemes attracted only few farmers. The majority were indifferent because they maintained that there “was still plenty of land and … see no reason for altering … farming methods.”

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A few schemes did achieve increasing acceptance. These were mainly the food and fruit cultivation schemes, particularly those involving rice, citrus, poultry and pig farming. These were geared towards increasing agricultural production for the military and for export. However, small farmers benefited little because of the high cost of labour bid up by other export crop production and non-agricultural activities. In Oyo Province food crop production was said to be an unpopular vocation because of its low relative returns. As a result of inadequate labour for food production, shortages and high prices of foodstuffs persisted.

The effects of the war were further worsened by the fall of France, the establishment of Vichy French governments in Africa, and the loss of the Far Eastern colonies of Britain to the Japanese in 1942. Nigeria was surrounded by French colonies with Vichy administrations, and its northeastern border area became a staging post for the war. Britain also increasingly turned to Nigeria as a source of war and domestic consumption goods such as rubber, palm oil, sisal, tin and so on formerly gotten from the Far East. To this end, wartime emergency regulations were reinforced by the Nigerian Defense Regulation of 1942 that increased the powers of the administration to employ coercion to increase production of essential war needs.

The Nigerian Defence Regulation permitted the reintroduction of forced labour and the introduction of compulsory farm production. The Provinces of Northern Nigeria were given quotas of labour to supply to the Plateau tin mines to meet production targets. The Native Authorities were permitted to apply force to meet their quotas. However, by July 1942 only 8,000 forced labour conscripts of the 32,000 requested had been received in the mines. Poor wages, poor and inadequate food and accommodation resulted in

846 Ibid, 28.
evasion, desertions and deaths.\textsuperscript{847} Various measures, including threats of imprisonment, were subsequently taken to increase the number of conscripts and keep them in the mines. Women were conscripted to accompany the men to the mines. The District Officer of Gusau Division confirmed that conscript labourers “don’t go with their wives. In practice prostitutes are sent, and when such is insufficient, widows or in several cases that have come to my notice, grass widows are ordered to accompany them by the District Heads.”\textsuperscript{848} Thus the colonial state abetted prostitution to boost production. The conditions of work of these conscript labourers were atrocious. The mining companies did not adhere to the agreements reached with government to provide the conscripts with free accommodation, food, and medical care and to supplement their meager wages. Government turned a blind eye to non-compliance until forced labour was ended in 1944.\textsuperscript{849}

Compulsory exploitation of privately owned African plantations was also enforced. The owners of idle plantations were compelled to work them or be prosecuted, while their plantations might be seized and handed over to others who could exploit them for a fee. Many rubber and oil palm plantation were taken over in Benin Province.\textsuperscript{850} When the owners complained of excessive exploitation that threatened to damage their


\textsuperscript{850} See details in NAI BP 2287, Rubber Trees taken over by Government for alternative Tapping.
trees, they were told that “it would not matter if every tree of this specie (*futura elastica*) were tapped to death.”

Little of the potential benefits from the relatively high world prices of agricultural produce were realized by producers. This was partly because the government fixed the prices of these products, controlled their marketing and, with its private European agents, skimmed off much of the potential profit. Riots over low prices and agitation for price increases erupted in parts of the Eastern Provinces. When the government refused to increase prices, people resorted to increasing production of food crops over which the government and firms had little control. The government responded by placing restrictions on the movement of food that resulted in food shortages in some areas and more riots. With the military competing for foodstuffs, the prices skyrocketed.

The precarious food situation and widespread shortages especially in the export crop producing areas and mines combined with demands of the military and the need to save scarce foreign exchange to force the government to take an increasing interest in food crop production. For example, rice seedlings were distributed, practical demonstrations of rice cultivation were provided for farmers and rice mills were established in Ishan Division of Benin Province to increase food production.

High prices have created the impression of an era of wartime prosperity among farmers in the mind of some scholars. But the benefits remained restricted to the few who were able to pay the high price for labour to increase production and to middlemen

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851 NAI ID 744 Rubber Production, Papers concerning, 15.
853 NAI BP 4013 Rice Production- G. Bryce, Director of Agriculture to Secretary, Western Provinces 10/11/1941, 46.
traders engaged in black market activities and profiteering. The majority were actually further impoverished and increasingly unable to meet their social obligations. Migrations increased, especially to the urban centres, the cash crop producing areas and military camps. The major victims were women and children trafficked to these locations by various agents including the government. Children were employed at starvation wages in the rubber and timber industries of Benin Province. Women and girls were trafficked to Lagos and various military locations for prostitution, while male children worked as their pimps. Many ethnic unions decried the trafficking of women and child prostitution. Media reports brought it to the attention of British Parliament before the colonial administration considered taking action. Child prostitution and juvenile delinquency were key issues that spurred the creation of a Social Welfare Department.

**Planning “Betterment” Programmes and Post-War Development and Welfare, 1939-1945**

When it came to issues of social welfare, the Nigerian colonial administration had shown little initiative. Most policies dealing with African social welfare were initiated at the insistence of the Colonial Office. The “betterment” programme introduced in 1939 was a case in point. The “betterment” programme was begun in East and Central African colonies to help discourage “individualism”- a euphemism for detribalization or “denationalization” - and to stem urban migration and stimulate increased agricultural productivity. In East and Central African colonies, low productivity was traced to

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856 NAI BP 2163 Measure against Prostitutes- Child Prostitution in Lagos, Report by D.E.Faulkner, Colony Welfare Officer, 1/7/1943, 10, NAI BP 1959 Traffic in Girls to the Gold Coast and NAI CSO 26/2 File 15211, Legal Action taken against Prostitutes in Nigeria.
malnutrition and environmental problems and a joint committee of the various departments concerned with such issues was formed to coordinate and cooperate in the implementation of policies to solve these problems. This approach to native welfare had been developed in Nyasaland and was implemented as an Empire wide programme by the Colonial Office. Hailey, in his *African Survey*, had also pointed out the need for government departments concerned with welfare services to enter into cooperation with each other and private voluntary agencies to tackle African welfare problems. It was a combination of the Nyasaland Native Welfare Committee’s work and Hailey’s recommendation that informed the then Secretary of State for Colonies, Malcolm MacDonald’s, directive “that the West African dependencies might, with advantage consider the institution of similar committees.”

When this directive was received by the Nigerian government, it reacted in various ways. One major issue that was raised when the directive was circulated in Nigeria for comment was the funding of the betterment programme. Residents in the Western Provinces and Zaria Province in the north observed that without a funding commitment, discussions of betterment would be a mere academic exercise. Mr. C.G. Shute, the Chief Commissioner of Eastern Provinces, on the other hand, maintained that there had been a lack of coordination of governmental policies with regard to African welfare. Shute was very critical of the past policies of the Nigerian administration and

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857 NAK SNP 31415 Development and Welfare Board/ Provincial Development Committee, Members of- Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for Colonies to Governor Sir Bernard Bourdillon, 23 May 1939, 1-2.
858 NAK SNP 31415 Resident Zaria Province to The Secretary, Northern Provinces, 30/04/1940, 31. E.G.Hawkesworth, Secretary, Western Provinces to The Chief Secretary to the Government, 12/08/1940, 93 and Secretary, Eastern Provinces to The Chief Secretary to the Government, 3/09/1940.
accused officials of thinking and acting departmentally instead of governmentally. He alleged that,

We have not planned the life of an African child from cradle to the farm. We have yet to learn how best the land can support him, what are his dietetic deficiencies and how they can best be supplied, the proper balance between forestry and agriculture, the manner in which he and his fellows can best organize themselves for the better production and marketing of their produce. Yet we are surprised when he embarks on a safe if mediocre clerical career and we call him lazy and superior when he declines to go back to the land.\(^{859}\)

He recommended the establishment of a Native Welfare Committee, modeled after Nyasaland’s, comprised of the heads of social services departments (education, medical and health, agriculture, and forestry), the three Chief Commissioners, the Commissioner of Cooperatives, Commissioner of the Colony, and the Officer in Charge of Labour Duties. The Committee would have a secretary appointed from the Nigerian Secretariat and also have the power to co-opt representatives from the chambers of commerce and mission bodies. He further suggested that the Committee should meet before or after Legislative Council meetings and its agenda should be drawn up by the Chief Secretary to the Government.\(^{860}\)

When the directive came up for discussion in a meeting with the Governor, the Director of Agriculture suggested the establishment of a central coordinating committee. The Director of Forestry advised the appointment of a liaison officer with expertise in rural development to assist with coordination.\(^{861}\)

These suggestions were not supported by the Chief Commissioner of Northern Provinces. The Chief Commissioner of Northern Provinces communicated the content of the meeting to his Residents and requested their opinion on the establishment of a central

\(^{859}\) NAK SNP 31415 Chief Commissioner, Eastern Provinces to the Secretary, Northern Provinces, 2/8/1939, 10.
\(^{860}\) Ibid.
\(^{861}\) NAI CSO 26/3 File 42403 Development and Coordination in Nigeria: Collected Notes- Extract from 35817 “Provincial Development Committees” J.R. Mackie, 11/04/1940, 4.
committee and appointment of a liaison officers. Since the Chief Commissioner of Northern Provinces included his own arguments against parts of the proposals in his memo to his Residents, he was only subtly eliciting their support for the rejection of such coordination. The Northern Provinces had enjoyed a high level of autonomy before Governor Bourdillon’s administration and resisted any external interference. Hence it was not surprising that the Residents rejected the proposal for liaison officers. As a result, the Secretariat was assigned the coordination of the central committee, while the provinces were directed to establish provincial committees. This procedure enabled the Northern Provinces to avoid supervision and control by the central administration and maintain much of their autonomy.

Implementation of betterment was still being considered when the Second World War broke out. The Residents of the Northern Provinces established provincial committees that held meetings and identified projects, but there was no agreement about goals and objectives, how projects would be coordinated, or even the name of the committees.862 The Eastern and Western Provinces did not immediately establish committees,863 and the Chief Commissioner of the Western Provinces advised the postponement of all new schemes until after the war.864 A key reason for the non-establishment of committees in the Eastern Provinces and their non-performance in the Northern Provinces was the lack of funds. The Nyasaland Native Welfare Committee had

862 NAK SNP 31415 Development and Welfare Board- See various memoranda from Residents.
863 NAI CSO 26/3 File 41008 Advisory Committee on Economic Development and Social Welfare-Notes for the First Meeting and Agenda by T. Hoskyns-Abrahall, Chairman and Ag Chief Secretary to Government, 2/08/1943, 35A.
864 NAI CSO26/3 File 36644/S.5 Colonial Development Fund: Schemes Proposed by Chief Commissioner, Western Provinces-Secretary, Western Provinces to The Chief Secretary to the Government, 5/04/1940,17-18.
operated with funds generated from “the capitation fees paid by employers of labour and labour recruiters.” No such source existed in Nigeria.

The Nigerian government was still struggling with how to fund implementation of betterment programmes when the British Government enacted the CDWA. Governor Bourdillon welcomed the CDWA with high hopes and immediately applied for a grant for the development of a rice production scheme, establishment of veterinary training school to boost food, meat, dairy and hide and skin production, and funds for improving the salaries of workers. Arguing that these projects would contribute to improving African welfare, he directed the Chief Commissioners, Residents and members of the Legislative Council to quickly draw up schemes capable of bringing about growth, increasing income, and facilitating the provision of social amenities.

The CDWA proposals were still being formulated when the Colonial Office directed colonial governments to commence planning for post-war problems and particularly the resettlement of demobilized soldiers. In response, the Executive Council of the Nigerian government established a committee to advise on the issue of post-war problems, resettlement of demobilized soldiers, and development issues. This committee, in turn, recommended the establishment what came to be the Advisory Committee on Economic Development and Social Welfare, chaired by the Chief Secretary to Government, whose members were the three Chief Commissioners, the heads of the Labour, Agriculture, Forestry, Public Works, Education Departments,

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867 NAK KanProf 3657 Post-War Problems- Summary of Proceedings –Residents conference 1941: Examination of Problems which may arise after the War, 5.
Medical Services and Veterinary Services with an additional one European and two African members of the Legislative Council. The Advisory Committee was “to consider, coordinate and make recommendations to Government … with particular reference to finding employment for demobilized soldiers.”\(^{868}\)

It was proposed that the Committee’s first meeting in August 1943, … compile and maintain records of all post-war works and schemes, with a view not only to determining the employment for ex-soldiers that they may be expected to provide, but also establishing a central source at which information may immediately be supplied at any time upon what … Government proposes to carry out as post-war planning and reconstruction.

In addition, it was to prepare proposals for new schemes if found necessary and also consider reception and disposal of demobilized soldiers and continuance of wartime controls over production and industry.\(^{869}\) When the meeting was eventually held, it was presented with an agenda and memorandum prepared by Mr. T. Hoskyns-Abrahall, the Chief Secretary to the Government, that listed and proposed an agenda consisting of: (1) settlement of ex-soldiers, (2) rural land planning and development (land utilization-reservation and intensive agriculture and soil degradation-erosion control), (3) land settlement - population redistribution, improved agricultural practice making farming more attractive through marketing and land settlement schemes, (4) Irrigation schemes, (5) town planning, (6) rural water supplies, (7) greening of inhabited areas through tree planting, (8) sanitation - rural/markets, (9) development of local industries (10) improvement of local markets, dairy production scheme, and mineral development. The meeting endorsed and recommended this programme to the Chairman, adding that

\(^{868}\) NAI 26/3 File 41008 Advisory Committee on Economic Development and Welfare- Chief Secretary to Government to Members, 13/05/1943, 4-5.
\(^{869}\) Ibid, Secretary, Advisory Committee on Economic Development and Social Welfare to Director of Agriculture and others, 25/06/1943, 16.
Provincial Committees should be established that would have both advisory and supervisory functions. It also resolved that rural land planning and development should be addressed by individual provinces and implemented through appropriate technical departments and the Chief Commissioners without the centralization of coordination.

Irrigation was not considered to be immediately economically remunerative and so its implementation was deferred. The preparation of a proposal for a dairy industry was assigned to the Heads of Veterinary, Agriculture and Forestry Departments who were to work in consultation with the provincial committees. Urban land planning was to be examined by the Medical and Public Works Departments; mineral development was delegated to Geological Surveys and the Mines Department, while soap, wool, tanning, fishing and woodwork were identified as local industries that needed to be developed.

The Committee also assigned itself the task of preparing proposals for schemes, analysis of their costs, and ascertaining projects that could be funded by the CDWA and Nigerian government in the post-war period pending the release of British government’s proposed assistance estimated, though no official details were yet available, at £850,000 out of the annual £5m.\(^{870}\)

Similar meetings were held in the provinces to draw up schemes on cooperation, development and resettlement issues. In the Northern Provinces, which established Provincial Development Committees, the emphasis was largely on rural development schemes. In 1940, an attempt at inter-departmental and inter-provincial cooperation on the lines of Nyasaland African Welfare Committee was made. A conference on rural planning in Kano brought together representatives of the three Northwestern provinces of Katsina, Kano and Sokoto. It examined the problems of population, vegetation, erosion, erosion,

\(^{870}\) Ibid, The Work of the Committee by T.Hoskyns-Abrahall, 02/08/1943, 29A.
soil fertility, water, cash crop agriculture and their effects on welfare. Kano Province even planned a replication of the Anchau scheme in Ringim District in spite of a lack of matching funds. It was only in 1944 that the Western and Eastern Provinces started to establish development committees that proposed schemes for rural and urban areas with emphasis on health, education, water and electricity.

Before the Advisory Committee on Economic and Social Development could meet again, its initiator, Governor Bourdillon, left office. His successor, Sir Arthur Richards, was not enthusiastic about working with the Acting Chief Secretary to Government, Hoskyns-Abrahall’s Secretariat, which he described as inefficient, nor with unofficial African members who he claimed represented only sectional interests. The demand for representation on the Committee by the trade unions was refused because it was feared that they would leak official secrets to the public and make no meaningful contribution. The Committee was disbanded in 1944 on the grounds that, with its members scattered all over the country, it was unwieldy. In its place, a smaller official committee was convened. This was made up of the newly appointed Development Secretary, Mr. F.E.V. Smith, an agricultural biology specialist, as

871 NAK KanProf 6218 Kano Provincial Development Committee, Rural Development: General Correspondence- Proceedings of a Conference on Rural Planning held at the Residency, Kano on 28th and 29th March, 1940, 7-10 and NAI CSO26/3 File 42716 Rural Development: Sokoto, Katsina and Kano Frontiers Region- Ag. Secretary, Northern Provinces to The Chief Secretary to the Government, 10/07/1943, 1.
872 Anchau Scheme was a comprehensive rural development project that grew out of Tse-Tse Fly eradication program in Anchau district around the Tin mining area of Zaria Province in the 1930s. It entailed the clearing of Tse –Tse infested vegetation area, relocation and building of new and planned laid out villages and their involvement in soil survey, agriculture with manure, livestock breeding, local craft production and education, The project was undertaken by a team of European doctors supported by technical staff seconded by government and ample funding from the CDF1929 and Nigerian government. Noel Hall, “West African Development” African Affairs, Vol.44, No.177, Oct.1945, 160-164.
873 NAUK CO 583/275/3 Notes of a meeting held on 2nd November, 1944, 3.
874 NAI CSO 26/3 File 41008 Memo by Sir Arthur Richards, 20/7/1944, 81 and NAI CSO 26/5 File 43753 Central Development Board- Governor to Secretary of State for Colonies, 6/03/1945, 12b.
875 NAI 26/3 File 43753 Memo to Governor Richards, 30/4/1945, 17 and Ag. Chief Secretary to the Government to Ag. Secretary General, Trade Union Congress of Nigeria, 10/05/1945, 18.
chairman, with the Financial Secretary or his representative, the Director of Public Works, and the three Chief Commissioners as members. The Chief Commissioners were directed to constitute Regional Development Committees that could include unofficial members.\textsuperscript{876}

Shortly thereafter, a Development Adviser, Professor Noel Hall, was appointed by the Colonial Office for the West African colonies and attached to the War Minister’s office in the Gold Coast. His duties were to advise on and vet proposals for recommendation to the Colonial Office for approval. Hall’s report on his inspection visit of Nigeria revealed that there was a gross inadequacy of data for planning, a dearth of communication facilities, and a shortage of staff and materials. In addition, officials and colonized Africans held juxtaposing positions on the priority of development needs. The officials prioritized in order of importance clean water, medical and health and education while the Africans held in order of importance education, medical and health, and clean water. Hall advised the Governors to frame their development proposals around schemes that were of special interest to Native Authorities, facilitated political stability, and had both direct and indirect benefits with universal applicability and replicability in other colonies. He stressed that it would be proposals with these qualities that would attract CDWA assistance.\textsuperscript{877}

At the same time, a Development Branch was established in the Nigerian Secretariat to facilitate the initiation and implementation of development schemes. Area committees were to be set up in groups of provinces and Development Officers appointed to implement the directives of the Development Branch and transmit development

\textsuperscript{876} NAI CSO 26/3 File 41008 Memo -In executive council, 22/12/1944, 87.
\textsuperscript{877} NAI CSO 26/3 File 41557 Planning and Development General: Development Adviser for West Africa-Development Plans and Procedure: Draft Paper by the Development Adviser, June 1944, 60-70
proposals from the provinces. Problems arose not just over unavailability or inadequacy of funding for proposed schemes, but from the conflicting views of officials on the terms of the funding. For instance, Mr. F.E.V. Smith, the Development Secretary, who was believed to have a strong influence on the Governor Arthur Richards\textsuperscript{878} was of the view that,

\[\text{\ldots it may not be necessary to have continued provision of funds from H.M.G. as it is desirable to avoid any suggestion of perpetual spoon feedings. Many schemes may be better dealt with by long term loans and this system would give a greater sense of responsibility to the colonial population. H.M.G. could however, provide some of the initial capital or investigation expenditure and its guarantee to maintain scheme during lean years would give all the confidence necessary for a bold development policy and permit of plans being made accordingly.}\textsuperscript{879}

This view echoed the new thinking in the Colonial Office, expressed by the Secretary of State for Colonies Oliver Stanley, that welfare should be tailored to the financial capability of the colonies.\textsuperscript{880} However, this new line of thinking conflicted with the expectations of some officials and Africans that the CDWA should provide funds to implement welfare programmes and establish physical and social infrastructure.

By 1945, when the war came to an end, the betterment programmes and post-war development and resettlement schemes were yet to be formulated. Not much had been achieved in terms of execution of 1940 CDWA schemes. Of the £850,000 proposed for Nigeria, only £479,855 was received, of which £230 000 was spent on dredging, £104,000 for workers’ housing at Enugu, £50,000 for airports and roads, £50,700 for veterinary training and £12,000 for geological survey work. According to Falola, the

\textsuperscript{878} Rhodes House, Mss. Afr.S.825, File 421B, John Holt Papers, J.F. Winter, District Agent, John Holt & Co. Lagos to H.J. Rawlings, Administration Department, Liverpool, 22/2/1945,
\textsuperscript{879} NAI CSO 26/3 File 41008 F.E.V. Smith, Development Secretary-Agenda Item No.1: Development plans, 30/6/1944, 72.
money received was only slightly greater than the £409,255 Nigerians contributed to the Win the War Fund and, in any case, most of the schemes were geared towards the war effort.\textsuperscript{881} The numerous meetings and proposals generated by the various committees during the war were to be revised later in preparation for post-war development.

\textbf{Mass Education and Community Development as Aspects of Colonial Social Welfare during the War}

Another Colonial Office scheme for African welfare received by the Nigerian administration during the war was embodied in the Report of the Adult and Mass Education Sub-Committee of 1944 titled “Mass Education in African Society.”\textsuperscript{882} The report was the culmination of the work of the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies.\textsuperscript{883} The scheme’s goal was to address the problems of migrancy and “detribalization” that were seen as hindering the increase in agricultural production. This initiative to promote adult education and community development was not new. The idea had been articulated earlier in a 1935 report of the Committee that advocated the use of adult literacy to promote the “betterment” of Africans. As discussed above, betterment was to be achieved through the combined work of the education, health and agriculture departments and the use of their expert knowledge to promote better use and protection of land for increased agricultural productivity.

The 1944 report entailed a scheme that was aimed at instilling a sense of commitment to “community” in Africans. This sense of community was to be achieved through the promotion of literacy and the participation of Africans in activities designed

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\textsuperscript{881} Falola, \textit{Development Planning and Decolonization in Nigeria}, 39-40.
\textsuperscript{882} NAK SNP 17, File 36861, Secretary, Northern Provinces to Residents, 24/07/1944, 22.
\textsuperscript{883} This Committee had since inception worked consistently to reorient colonial education to serve the interest of colonialism by promoting integration of education with agricultural product.
to improve their community. This new scheme, which focused on education, was to be coordinated with the activities of other social services agencies including agriculture and health.

African communities were claimed to be undergoing disintegration and polarization caused by economic change and western education. It was argued that these had produced a dangerous state of “partial development”. The solution was to help people adjust and thus to restore social cohesion in the community.  

Apart from the objective of increasing agricultural productivity, the scheme and report had other underlying political objectives. The report had been drafted at the instigation of Arthur Creech-Jones, who later became the Labour Government’s Secretary of State for the Colonies. According to Sivonen, Creech-Jones feared that:

… rapid changes produced by economic and social force within the Empire created restless activity and legitimate political ambition. According to Creech Jones legislation applying to economic difficulties demanded close collaboration between people and governments. The problem of direction must be admitted if repeated obstructions and disorder were to be avoided in certain colonies.  

The underlying political aim and objective of the report was to steer African communities towards pursuits that were:

… worth sustained effort…secured through the leadership from among the people themselves, but it must be not be forgotten that wise leadership is not likely to emerge and take effect in a community that has not learned to discriminate between the true leader and the plausible self-seeking misleader. Instances are not unknown of the astute adventurer exploiting for his own ends people lacking experience whom he professes to lead. The surest form of protection for a people in such circumstances consists in the development of their own power of criticism and discrimination. If that development is to be effective there must be provision in mass education to secure freedom of discussion and criticism, and there must be opportunity for extending the range of knowledge relevant to the changing

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conditions. Free discussion in itself is valuable but it is not a substitute for being well informed. (my emphasis)

The “self-seeking misleader” and “astute adventurer” were euphemisms for emergent western-educated nationalists of various shades. The fear of the emergence of African anti-colonial agitators had for long influenced British colonial policies. The dissemination of leftist and anti-colonial ideas before and during the war further heightened this fear. It was also feared that the war itself would throw up more “misleaders” or “adventurers” from amongst the demobilized soldiers who might not easily fit back into their communities after exposure to new ideas abroad. Adult or mass education was to provide a level playing field that would mitigate the advantage of the western-educated over the illiterate peasant population. This would be achieved through providing the illiterate peasant with some level of literacy and opportunities for participation that would enable them to remain influential in their communities. As well, the “community development” aspect of the scheme was also a means of mobilizing unpaid labour for projects that facilitated increased agricultural production.

The Colonial Office directive on Mass Education was distributed in Nigeria along with a memorandum titled “Reflections” written by Mr. Davidson, Director of Education in Nigeria. Davidson’s memorandum argued that the implementation of mass education could only be done from above because of the inadequacies of existing educational facilities. He opined that this would entail the employment of many Europeans, a measure that he feared would be unpopular with educated Africans who sought to be the

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only decisive voice of Africans in the colonies. He recommended propaganda, a survey of the existing personnel, structures and materials, training of personnel, production of necessary and relevant literature in the dominant vernacular, acquisition of broadcasting and film materials, and the use of Provisional Education Boards, Provincial Economic and Welfare Boards, the Nigerian Union of Teachers and tribal associations for implementation. Davidson advised against the participation of trade unions because, given the history of their development in Nigeria, they were “unlikely to play a prominent part” and that the “the approach from above would be more effective and … assistance from below would follow.”

Both the directive and memorandum were received by local officials with mixed feelings. Many of the District Officers and Residents drew attention to the likely difficulties of dependence on unpaid volunteers, the hostile attitude of peasants to education, and the lack of operational materials and funds. Serious problems were envisaged in the Northern Provinces where the literate population in roman script was too small to be useful. The reality of this problem was evidenced by the fact that all of the Northern Provinces produced only two Middle IV graduates in 1943. Both the Chief Commissioners of the Northern and Western Provinces, in spite of their misgivings, recommended the commencement of implementation. They viewed the scheme as an aspect of rural development that should begin in areas that had the material preconditions

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889 Ibid., E. W. Thompstone, Resident, Borno Province to The Secretary, Northern Provinces, 11/10/1944, 60.
for potential for success.\textsuperscript{890} Like previous schemes and directives received during this period, implementation was to wait until after the war.

Schemes similar to the mass education had been undertaken before and during the war. For instance, Mr. Chadwick, a District Officer in the Eastern Provinces, who was later to be celebrated as a model practitioner of mass education and community development, claimed that he started his community development work before he saw the circular on mass education.\textsuperscript{891} As well, many Nigerian communities had initiated and engaged in self-help schemes that they believed would enhance the social welfare of their communities. Such self-help schemes, initiated by local communities independently of the colonial administration had often been denied official support. For instance, in 1922 the elders of Oghada in Benin Division had taxed themselves to provide funds for the building of a school in their community and then sought additional government funds and approval. But their request was denied as the District Officer claimed there were no funds to employ teachers. Worse still, the Native Administration was not permitted to establish schools, provide aid to mission schools, or provide scholarships until the mid-1930s.\textsuperscript{892}

An instance of self-help that did not require administrative approval was the promotion of adult literacy in some Plateau province communities in the 1920s.\textsuperscript{893}

After the Aba women’s uprising spurred administrative reforms in the 1930s in the Igbo areas of the Eastern Provinces, local people themselves had initiated community

\textsuperscript{890} Ibid, Secretary, Northern Provinces to The Chief Secretary to Government, 7/12/1944, 71a and Ag Secretary, Western Provinces to The Chief Secretary to Government, 10/02/1945, 97.

\textsuperscript{891} E.R. Chadwick “Mass Education in Udi Division” \textit{African Affairs}, Vol.47, 1948, 34.

\textsuperscript{892} NAI BP 62/1922 H.N. Nevins, Ag. D. O. to Resident, Benin Province, 1.2.1922 , NAI BP 78/27 Scholarships by Native Authority- Lt. B. Bewley, Resident, Benin Province to D.O.s, 22/12/1931 and BP 762 Mission Schools, Grants to by Native Administration- Secretary, Southern Provinces to Resident, Benin Province, 9/12/1930.

\textsuperscript{893} NAI CSO 26/2 File 12601 Vol. II Plateau Province: Annual Report, 1928, 50
development schemes.\textsuperscript{894} District Officers endorsed and even supervised some of these schemes that did not require government funding. In the Western Provinces, voluntary community improvement work at Ilaro, Abeokuta Province, also predated the mass education scheme. Communities like Ile-Ife and Ilesa taxed their members and cocoa cooperative societies to raise money for the building of secondary schools, while Oke and Obadan communities in Benin Division used their cooperative societies to establish community schools in the 1930s. Private adult literacy classes known as “night schools” existed in Benin Province from the 1930s.\textsuperscript{895} It was onto these pre-existing community self-help schemes, with their own indigenous objectives, that colonial officials hoped to graft the proposed mass education and community development schemes of the colonial state.

Exacerbation of Juvenile Delinquency, Child Prostitution and the Establishment of the Department of Social Welfare

During the war, a Social Welfare Department was established in Nigeria. One key reason for its creation was the worsening problem of juvenile delinquency and the negative publicity it gave rise to in both Nigeria and Britain. During the war, the problems of the juvenile welfare and crime, especially in Lagos, increased with an upsurge in child prostitution, the trafficking of women, and an increase in the number of homeless children. As shown in chapter four, the problem of rehabilitating juvenile offenders and homeless street children in Lagos remained unresolved. However, when

\textsuperscript{895} For details see NAI BP 1191 Opening of new Schools, Procedure of
the problems of juveniles, particularly that of child prostitution, were internationally
publicized the colonial administration and Colonial Office could no longer ignore them.

In the 1930s, the Colonial Office had been forced to request information from the
Nigerian administration on child prostitution and the trafficking of women because of
League of Nations’ demands. Publicity about child prostitution and the trafficking in
women to the Gold Coast, as well as the problem of the waifs and “Boma” boys in Lagos
alleged to have been guiding sailors and soldiers to prostitutes, which reached the British
Parliament, renewed interest by the Colonial Office in these matters.896 Equally
concerning were the reports of a “high incidence of (venereal) infection among African
troops” and reports of prostitutes spreading venereal disease among European and
American troops. These developments compelled the Nigerian colonial administration to
begin to take action against juvenile delinquency and child prostitution. In response, the
Nigerian colonial administration quickly promulgated the Unlicensed Guides Prohibition
Ordinance of 1941, to check the pimping activities of waifs, and the Native Authority
(Amendment) Ordinance of 1942, which empowered Native Authorities to regulate and
safeguard child marriage betrothals897 that disguised child prostitution.

However, such legislation did not address the problem of poverty that was
producing homeless street children and child prostitutes. The situation was exacerbated
during the war when African soldiers who brought boys to Lagos as domestic servants
then left them to fend for themselves when they departed. Other boys came from the
provinces of their own volition to seek work with soldiers and opportunities for

896 NAI IjeProf 4, File J.687 Traffic in Women and Children, Obscene Publications etc, Report for League
of Nations 2.) Ordinance Venereal Diseases- G. Grantham, Officer Administering the Government of
Nigeria to the Rt. Hon., The Viscount Cranborne, Secretary of State for Colonies,9/07/1942, 8.
897 NAUK CO 859/75/12 Social Welfare Work in the Colonies: West Africa-Anti Prostitution Legislation.
education, but when unsuccessful, became street children. The use of “small boys” as domestics in Lagos and other urban centres had been practiced by African salary earners and European officials before the war. Similarly, girls, either of their own volition or on the directive of their parents or guardians, engaged in hawking food and other goods in the streets of the communities where they resided. This was viewed as a kind of training or apprenticeship. But under wartime conditions, such practices, including domestic service, became highly exploitative of child labour.

Social work scholars largely attribute the establishment of the Social Welfare Department in Nigeria to increased behavioural problems among children in urban centres, particularly Lagos, caused by the dislocation of families and the absence of fathers who went to the Second World War. They credit either the Triangle Club of Lagos or Mr. Donald Faulkner for intervention in these problems and the beginning of social welfare services in Nigeria. Such social work scholars only perfunctorily acknowledge the work of the Salvation Army Mission in the field before the war and are silent as to why and how Faulkner got involved in the investigation of juvenile delinquency in Lagos.

Okunola and Ibiezugbe claim that it was the delayed departure of the ship on which Faulkner, then Assistant Superintendent of Prisons and Head of the Enugu Industrial School, was to travel that led to his inquiry into the causes of delinquency in

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899 NAI CSO 26/1 File 03506 Vol. I Information relating to conditions of industrial life and labour 1926-1940 contains information submitted by various departments on the wages and benefits of small boys employed by various colonial officials.
Lagos. However, Faulkner was acting on a directive from the Director of Prisons and working in collaboration with an Education Officer, Mr. E.J. Savory. This work was a part of the Prison Department’s long time struggle to take over juvenile correction work from the voluntary organizations preferred by the administration. The Director of Prisons argued that,

The prevention of crime, from whatever sources it springs, is essential, but a function of Government which should be directed and controlled by Government. A voluntary organization to assist the Government is not only desirable but essential but the problem is far too difficult and serious to be left to the spasmodic efforts of voluntary workers who at the best can only devote their spare time to the work.

Furthermore, the Director criticized the £16,000 that had been granted to the Salvation Army over the previous sixteen years, which he argued the Prisons Department would have put to better use. Mr. Victor Mabb, the Director of Prisons, demonstrated his preference for official control by building the Enugu Industrial Boys School without seeking funding from government. Thus, when the opportunity presented itself, the Director of Prisons instructed Mr. Faulkner to use his delayed stay in Lagos to investigate the issue of juvenile delinquency. Faulkner and Savoy’s findings were compiled and submitted to the government as a means of securing the Prison Department’s control over juvenile rehabilitation.

Given the expectations of funding from the CDWA and pressure from the Colonial Office Penal Committee to reform prisons and implement juvenile offenders’ laws, the government accepted Faulkner and Savoy’s report. The report, which had been

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903 NAUK CO859/72/3 Penal Colonial Administration, Nigeria- Director of Prisons to The Chief Secretary to the Government, 21/07/1941,14B
904 Ibid
earlier circulated and approved by Police and Labour Department, recommended the appointment of a social worker to perform probation work, the establishment of schools and hostels using simple mud and shed buildings, employment of African staff to care for delinquent and homeless children, and the employment of reformed juveniles. The government thereafter requested the employment of a Social Welfare Officer for Lagos in November 1941. Faulkner was recommended by the Juvenile Delinquency Subcommittee of the Penal Committee of the Colonial Office. He was seconded to establish the Social Welfare Department in Lagos and further investigate juvenile delinquency in Lagos. This investigation was a precondition for the revision of Juvenile and Young Offenders Laws and the introduction of the British probation system in Nigeria as was directed by the Colonial Office Colonial Penal Administration Committee. Attempts to introduce this system to Nigeria in 1937 had been delayed following the plea of the Governor that Nigeria lacked the resources to implement the system. Following confirmation of completion of the investigation by Governor Bourdillon, the appointment of Mr. Faulkner was approved by the Penal Committee.

The Social Welfare Department was begun in 1942 by Mr. Faulkner as Chief Welfare Officer and assisted by Mr. Bankole-Wright, an African social worker trained in the United States, and one policeman. The Department immediately embarked on the development of an institutional infrastructure to tackle juvenile delinquency problems. To this end, it built a girls hostel, a remand home, and a training school at Isheri in rural Lagos. The Department also formed boys and girls clubs in Lagos to encourage

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905 NAUK CO859/72/3 Penal Colonial Administration, Nigeria-D.W.H. Ballantine, Commissioner of Police, Lagos to Mr Faulkner, 4/07/1941, 14 C.
906 Ibid- B.H. Bourdillon, Governor to Lord Moyne, Secretary of State for Colonies, 30/1/1942,17.
involvement in sporting and other recreational activities, while a youth camp was built in Kuramo in rural Lagos to organise holiday camping.

Volunteerism was encouraged, but force was also utilized by the administration to immediately address the problem of juvenile offenders and homeless children in Lagos. The support of the so-called “tribal” unions was solicited in a campaign to discourage migration from the rural areas, engagement in social vices - particularly prostitution - and assistance with accommodation and repatriation of victims. This was complemented by the activities of social philanthropic organizations. A voluntary organization of young men, known as the Green Triangle Club, raised £400 in May 1942 to rent a house that was used as a hostel for homeless children while their cases were being investigated and solutions sought for their problems. At the same time, a Women’s Welfare Council was established to undertake propaganda against the street trading or hawking of petty goods that exposed female children to sexual abuse. This was preparatory to prohibition of street hawking by girls.

The Department also employed the law to attain its ends. The Juvenile Offenders and Young People’s Ordinance was resurrected, amended, and enforced. Juvenile courts were established and Probation Officers were used to perform casework. Preventive measures were also taken against exploitation of juveniles by adults. To this end, port welfare services for sailors and navy personnel began to be given more attention. European women and voluntary agencies raised funds and established canteens and recreation facilities for European and American sailors and military personnel in an
attempt to check their mingling with African prostitutes and thus protect them against venereal diseases until a Port Welfare Officer could be appointed.  

Faulkner’s achievements within such a short period were highly commended in Lagos. His views on the causes of the problem largely informed his solutions. He attributed juvenile delinquency in Lagos to youth unemployment and broken marriages. He likened Lagos to “the sort of city Charles Dickens must have been familiar with” and claimed that the “Social conditions seem to belong to that age rather than 1942” noting that “Exploitation and lack of protection generally for children, laissez faire in business and so on” in conjunction with “the peculiar local customs” were responsible. He may have been right in likening the conditions in Lagos to Dickensian English cities, but his report failed to identify poverty as the cause of the social malaise. Faulkner’s report also wrongly claimed that, “In other parts of the country the children are well cared for.” Juvenile delinquency existed outside Lagos, but was more apparent in the city because of the housing shortage and over-crowding which rendered homelessness by children more visible. Also, the greater employment opportunities, which attracted more people to Lagos than other urban centres, created a population more heterogeneous and less amenable to traditional systems of social control.

As shown in chapter four, the Obas and Chiefs in the Western Provinces viewed the establishment of secondary schools to absorb young school leavers as the solution to the problem of juvenile delinquency and unemployment. They raised money to supplement Native Authority funds to establish and support secondary schools in their

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908 Ibid, D.H, Faulkner, Colonial Welfare Officer to Dr Miss Audrey Richards, 20/01/1943, 34.
909 Ibid.
areas. The problem of juvenile delinquency was also one of the issues of concern addressed at the conference of Emirs in 1941, and later by the Resident of Sokoto. In the Northern Provinces, reports abounded of juveniles migrating to the urban centres and residing in and around motor parks and railway stations and engaging in undesirable activities.

Since government mainly restricted its efforts to Lagos, the problem of juvenile delinquency was tackled in various ways in other provinces. In Calabar in 1943, individuals in the public service formed a Juvenile Welfare Committee. Its membership included government officials and members of nationalist organizations such as the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM). This committee requested funds and the appointment of Social Welfare Officers from the Chief Commissioner of Eastern Provinces and the Governor to combat the juvenile delinquency. In 1946 in Port Harcourt, W. Max George, who claimed to be a youth and social organizer, sought government assistance in fostering social welfare work through youth club activities. But in neither case, did the government provide funding or personnel until after the war.

In spite of the zeal of Faulkner and the Social Welfare Department, the problem of juvenile delinquency worsened in the colony of Lagos and the provinces. This was because juvenile delinquency in the cities and towns was rooted in worsening poverty in the rural areas. In addition to youths migrating of their own volition, poverty drove parents to accept child marriages for their daughters and domestic servitude of their

910 NAK KanProf 6268 Kano Provincial Development Committee, Juvenile Welfare Routine-Juvenile Welfare in the Colonies by Chief Commissioner, Northern Provinces, 4/08/1943, 3.
912 NAI ComCol 1 File 2872 Juvenile Delinquency in Calabar- Chief Secretary to Government to Commissioner of Lagos Colony, 25/08/1943, 1.
913 NAI CSO 26/3 File 46799 Social Welfare in Port Harcourt- W. Max Geroge, Port Harcourt to Principal Assistant Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Lagos, 30/04/1946, 1.
children in urban areas. Given the limited resources available to the Department and the failure of large-scale assistance from the voluntary/philanthropic organizations, little was achieved.

According to R.J. Cook, Commissioner of Lagos Colony, “a large proportion of the intelligentsia” was “quite indifferent to welfare activities. The attitude is frequently one of apathy but in some cases it is one of diffidence and lack of initiative, with a ‘leave it to the European’ outlook”. In so commenting, Cook failed to note that most Political (colonial administrative) Officers did not trust or want to work with the nationalists’ organizations and trade unions where the intelligentsia was most active. As a result, the Department relied primarily on the services and assistance of the so-called tribal “progressive”, “welfare” or “improvement” associations to assist in halting the migration of youths and women. Such ethnic associations’ assistance was limited to tracing the families of juvenile offenders or victims, providing them temporary accommodation before repatriation, and educating their home communities on the dangers of allowing their children to migrate to the cities.

The Native Authorities provided little assistance. This was in part because some Political Officers sought to avoid taking responsibility by refusing to admit the existence of the problem. But in areas where delinquents and victims originated and required repatriation, this responsibility could not be avoided. One Assistant District Officer in Kukuruku Division went to the extent of searching for and removing young women and

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914 NAI COMCOL 2600 Commissioner of Colony, Lagos to Chief Secretary to the Government, 12/08/1944, 190.
children from vehicles in motor transport parks on market days to prevent them from traveling to cities.  

Social welfare work and the treatment or prevention of juvenile delinquency in Lagos became the basis for practice elsewhere in Nigeria. Following reports of the achievements in Lagos to the Colonial Social Welfare Advisory Committee, Mr. Alexander Paterson, a prison specialist and member of the Committee, visited Nigeria in 1944 to assess social welfare work. Paterson’s report contradicted Faulkner’s earlier claim that youth in the provinces were well “cared for.” Paterson attributed juvenile delinquency problems in Lagos to poverty and overcrowding. He opined that direct communication between the Chief Social Welfare officer and the Administrator of Lagos Colony and the Chief Secretary to Government eased action and funding with regard to juvenile delinquency work. He argued that the expansion of social welfare to the provinces would require the establishment of a larger bureaucracy in Chief Secretary’s office. He further noted the serious problem of youth migration to Ibadan, Warri and Port Harcourt in the south, and to Kano, Zaria and Kaduna in the Northern Provinces. While he advocated the appointment of social welfare officers in Kano, Zaria and Kaduna in the Northern Provinces, he suggested that the appointment of social welfare officers in Abeokuta, Ijebu-Ode, Ibadan and Enugu be delayed until after more such officers were provided for Lagos. He blamed the problem of prostitution on the lack of employment for women in factories or domestic service, recommended the employment of women social welfare workers, and scholarships for the training of women to cater for women’s health needs. He concluded by suggesting that the Social Welfare Department should be

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915 NAI BP2163 Measures against Prostitutes and NAI KUKDIV 1/1 Vol. II KD 765 Prostitution 1945-1947
autonomous, directly under the central administration, and that the work of the
Department should be restricted to infant and maternal welfare, children’s education and
recreation, female and youth employment, and delinquency.\textsuperscript{916} He recommended the use
of voluntary social workers to support official efforts and advocated that social welfare
should be “recognized as part of the Government policy to raise the level of life.”\textsuperscript{917}

The Nigerian government disagreed with Paterson’s recommendation of an
autonomous Social Welfare Department, regarding social welfare as more of a labour
problem. Consequently, the Governor recommended to the Secretary of State for
Colonies that an Assistant Commissioner of Welfare be attached to the Department of
Labour to coordinate social welfare issues, and that social welfare officers, who would
only receive guidance on broad principles from the Assistant Commissioner, should be
appointed to the Provinces to work under the Residents and provincial Development and
Welfare Committees. The Governor’s recommendation for the placement of social
welfare under Labour Department was rejected by the Colonial Office and it was this
action that led to the establishment of a separate Department of Social Welfare.\textsuperscript{918}

Social welfare work among juveniles remained largely a Lagos affair throughout
the war, while the problems of juvenile delinquency continued to increase in the
provinces. Child prostitution remained a key problem. Investigations of child prostitution
in Lagos showed that the children came from particular groups, namely the Efik, Igbo,
Urhobo and Yoruba. While Yoruba children in Lagos were exposed to the “moral

\textsuperscript{916} NAI ComCol 2600 Social Welfare-General Questions, Establishment of- A Report to His Excellency
The Governor of Nigeria: Social Welfare in the Colony and Protectorate by Alexander Paterson, March
1944, 174-5.

\textsuperscript{917} Ibid, 171.

\textsuperscript{918} NAK MSWC 1214/S.2 Social Welfare in the Colony and Protectorate (Nigeria):Report on by Mr. A.
Paterson- Arthur Richards, Governor to Oliver Stanley, Secretary of State for Colonies, 14/10/1944 and
Oliver Stanley to Officer Administering the Government of Nigeria, 22/05/1945, 41.
danger” though hawking of goods in the city, Efik, Igbo, Urhobo, and Igbira children were imported from their provinces specifically for the purpose of prostitution. What was common to these latter groups, especially the Igbo, Igbira and Urhobo, was their high population density, land shortage, and consequent migrancy. These were exacerbated by the dependence of the peoples of these areas on the exploitation of wild oil palm, for which both productivity and produce prices were declining. In the Igbo areas of Owerri and Ogoja Provinces where most of the child prostitutes originated, Naanen’s study has shown that men’s average annual income was as low as £2./16s a year, compared with that of their southern neighbours at £12 a year. Women’s annual income was not more than a few shillings in the densely populated and poverty-stricken areas of Okigwe and Bende Divisions which exported young children to be exploited either as cheap labour or prostitutes.

The Urhobo had long been sustained by renting the rights to exploit wild oil palm outside their homeland. When oil palm produce prices slumped before the war, they had organized hold ups of palm produce sales in an effort to increase prices and maintain their income. With inadequate land for farming and with men controlling palm produce production, women were left with little or no income. In addition to poverty, educational opportunities for women and girls were grossly inadequate. As a study undertaken in the late 1930s demonstrated, only one in five girls attended school in Calabar (Efik) and Onitsha (Igbo) Provinces, while in Warri Province (Urhobo) only one in ten attended,

whereas in the Yoruba provinces the ratio stood at one in three.  

However, not all Yoruba provinces achieved this high level of girls’ education. Investigation revealed that the Yoruba children who engaged in hawking and alaru (porterage) came largely from Ilorin and Offa in Ilorin Province in Northern Nigeria, while others came from neighbouring Osogbo and Ede in Northern Oyo Province which were predominantly Muslim and in which female education was greatly deficient. Another source of children involved in prostitution were the Igbira of Kabba Province of Northern Nigeria adjacent to Ilorin. The Igbira were mainly food producers who lived in granite terrain with little farmland and who depended largely on tenant farming and migrant wage labour in the cocoa belt. These food crop producing areas were known for their poverty. Children from these areas were exported to Lagos and other urban centres to engage in hawking and porterage that exposed them to sexual abuse and other crimes and led them into prostitution.

With the “discovery” in Lagos in 1941/2 of a thriving market in child prostitutes, the Social Welfare Department and police raided brothels to rescue victims, and publicized the “moral danger”. The Department corresponded with the Native Administrations from which the victims originated, sought the assistance of ethnic associations to repatriate child prostitutes, and prosecuted the adult facilitators of child

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prostitution. The government also promulgated laws prohibiting the hawking of petty items by children, regulating native marriage, and penalizing venereal disease carriers who failed to submit themselves for treatment. In spite of these measures, a survey carried out in 1946 showed that “the amount of child prostitution in Lagos is now known to be an even greater evil than was originally thought to be the case.” As a result, an amendment to the criminal code redefined rape as having canal knowledge of any girl under age of thirteen even if one was married to her. Such laws were difficult, if not impossible, to enforce and, as a result, the problem persisted especially in Lagos.

In comparison with child prostitution, the prostitution of adult women, despite the associated problem of venereal disease, was only perfunctorily addressed. It was only in the Northern Provinces that the issue received some attention from the conference of chiefs. This might have been because the increased number of prostitutes made them difficult to control by the chiefs through traditional means. During the debate in the conference of chiefs of the Northern Provinces, the Emir of Zaria advised that prostitutes be sent to the mines as cooks. But as has been shown above, and as the District Officer of Gusau Division confirmed, prostitutes were already being sent to the mines to service war-time forced labour. To have accepted this proposal would have been to have given further tacit endorsement to this quasi-official, if clandestine, practice of prostitution. As a result, it was resolved to prosecute prostitutes in the Alkali (Muslim) Native Courts.

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925 NAI IjeProf.4 File J687 Traffic in Women and Children, Obscene Publications etc, Report for League of Nations 2.) Ordinance Venereal Disease- Ag. Chief Secretary to Government to The Secretary, Western Provinces, 5/6/1946, 16.
926 Ibid.
927 NAK KanProf 5050 Prostitutes-Taxation of – Notes on Taxation of Prostitutes with a view to reduce their numbers, 2.
The use of Native Courts for the prosecution of prostitutes was not sanctioned in the Southern Provinces.\textsuperscript{928} As a result, the problem of prostitution was left to individual local administrations to tackle as they deemed fit. As already noted, the Assistant District Officer of Kukuruku Division tried to use physical force to prevent young women from traveling to Lagos. In Benin Division, I.W.E. Dodds, the Acting Resident of Benin Province, threatened Chief Oshodi of Benin with removal from membership of the Oba’s Council if he continued to maintain a brothel.\textsuperscript{929} The police occasionally raided brothels and hotels to enforce the criminal code and the Township Ordinance that criminalized prostitution. As a result, some of the prostitutes were prosecuted and repatriated to their provinces. Ethnic unions were employed to sermonize to their people on the evils of prostitution and assist with tracing and repatriating members of their ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{930} Given the failure to address the socio-economic causes of poverty and unemployment of women, prostitution and trafficking in children and women continued to thrive.

**Treatment of Disability and Destitution in the Era of Social Welfare**

The various measures and schemes that were begun to address social welfare largely excluded the disabled and other related categories of destitute people. The fact that they did not constitute a social threat made them relatively easy to ignore. It was only after private humanitarian groups in Britain and international organizations stepped up pressure that the Colonial Office issued directives to address issues related to the

\textsuperscript{928} NAI BP 2163 Measures against Prostitutes.  
\textsuperscript{929} Ibid, I.W.E Dodds, Ag. Resident Benin Province to Chief Oshodi, 15/1/1943, 8.  
disabled. However, action on such issues was met with resistance and delay from the administration in Nigeria.

The continued incarceration without medical care of lunatics in prisons instead of in asylums is a case in point. Only two asylums, located in Lagos and Calabar, existed in Nigeria and none in the Northern Provinces. Lunatics were occasionally sent from the Northern Provinces to the Lagos Asylum.\textsuperscript{931} Reports of deaths of prisoners at the hands of incarcerated lunatics had prompted the Colonial Office Penal Advisory Committee in 1940/1 to direct the Nigerian administration to establish more asylums and segregate lunatics. However, instead of establishing more asylums, a block was set aside within Lokoja prison for segregation of lunatics in the Northern Provinces.

The state continued to have no policy towards the physically incapacitated - the crippled and lame, the blind, deaf and dumb or those disabled by age. The expectation seems to have been that, as in Britain, the development of local philanthropies would come to cater for their needs. The failure of these to develop was observed and complained about by the missionary Dr. Walter Miller.\textsuperscript{932} In their absence, the state continued to ignore the destitute disabled. In part, this was because they did not pose any danger to the health of European officials or the public, nor were they viewed as jeopardizing production activities as leprosy and violent lunacy did. Physically incapacitated and organ impaired individuals were left to the care of “native social organization.”

\textsuperscript{931} NAK SNP 10/8/108p/1920 Lunatic (Native of Zaria) at Jos: Removal to Yaba Asylum.

It was the Second World War that was to prompt the administration to look into the situation of some of the disabled and attempt to address some of their problems. The war had increased the number of disabled in the British population and changed both popular attitudes and that of the state towards taking responsibility for their wellbeing especially in the case of disabled veterans. As a result of the war, international and British voluntary organizations pressured the British government and the Colonial Office to extend welfare services to colonial peoples disabled by war, especially the blind, along the “modern lines” being used for disabled British soldiers. The SIM had introduced teaching the blind Hausa Braille in 1944 in its eye clinic that included a small training centre that also taught Christian religion to blind patients. Those who completed the training were employed as assistant preachers. However, little else had been done. The Colonial Office sent a directive to the Nigerian government to this effect that forced the administration to investigate the state of the blind in Nigeria. This investigation found that four in every one thousand were blind (88,000 blind people recorded). It also found that there were only two under-funded and overworked government operated eye clinics in Lagos, and another run by SIM in Kano, to serve over 40 million people. Blindness was found to be more prevalent in the north due to preventable causes such as malnutrition and venereal diseases. The investigators recommended that improved medical and health services could assist preventive work and suggested that since blind illiterate adults in the Muslim north could survive by begging, the government should

934 NAI CSO26/2 File 42588, Vol. I, Welfare of the Blind-Secretary, Northern Provinces to Chief Secretary to Government, 31/05/1945, 95.
concentrate on rehabilitation work among the youths, while mission institutions should be encouraged to assist the blind in the Southern Provinces.\textsuperscript{935} H.M.O. Lester, Director of Medical Department, in reviewing the report, argued that because of the enormous resources required, philanthropic bodies should cater for the welfare of the blind, while government should concentrate on prevention.\textsuperscript{936} The British government had undertaken to care for the welfare and rehabilitation of the service men blinded in the war.\textsuperscript{937} In Nigeria, however, there were only found to be four such. These were recommended for pensions, training in Braille, and crafts school training which was to be provided at Yaba, Lagos.\textsuperscript{938} The government of Nigeria eschewed responsibility for the welfare of the civilian blind as well as the education of the general population on how to deal with the problem of blindness. In the absence of philanthropic organizations in Nigeria catering for such problems, care of blind civilians was left to their families and the missions.

One major consequence of the War was that it compelled the government to build a rehabilitation centre in Igbobi, Lagos (now the National Orthopedic Hospital) for disabled demobilized soldiers in 1944. Permanently disabled former servicemen who, other than the blind, numbered seven hundred and seventy eight in Northern Nigeria, were given only a pension.\textsuperscript{939} Still, veterans were better off than those who suffered from disabilities that were incurred as a result of accidents in government service, the mines

\textsuperscript{935} Ibid, Director of Medical Services to Chief Secretary to the Government, 14/04/1945, 78-83.
\textsuperscript{936} Ibid H.M.O Lester to Director of Education, 16/03/1945, 84 and R.A. McDavidson, Director of Education to Director of Medical Services, 21/03/1945, 85.
\textsuperscript{937} Ibid, Officer Administering the Government of Nigeria to Resident Minister, Achimota, Gold Coast, 25/04/1945, 70.
and other production activities who received neither care nor disability pensions.

Industrial safety and compensation laws, where such existed, were rarely enforced. This was an issue that began to be addressed by the emergent labour unions when they were finally given official recognition in 1939.

**Rehabilitating the Unemployed: From School Leavers After-Care to the Juvenile Employment Exchange**

As shown in chapter four, the emerging problem of unemployment, although taken up by the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), was largely ignored by the government except in so far as it was connected to juvenile delinquency. Though the war created employment opportunities in the army, these did not benefit youths and women. Indeed, their unemployment increased in tandem with the continued impoverishment of the rural areas and expansion of education during the war. Many migrated to urban centres further exacerbating urban unemployment in Lagos in particular. Meanwhile, the Nigerian Youth Movement committee on unemployment had fizzled out and the activities of the Lagos After-Care Committee, which had been initiated by the Lagos branch of the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT), had fallen into a lull.

As a result of the increased unemployment and associated social problems, the NUT Lagos gradually revived and expanded membership of its After-Care Committee during the war. As shown in chapter four, the After-Care programme linked potential school leavers with both government and private organizations, and interviewed and assisted the former in securing apprenticeship training and/or employment to be taken up upon leaving school. That the programme received official cooperation was probably due
to the NUT’s missionary membership and non-confrontational stance. This cooperation with government departments grew to the point where the NUT committee became a quasi-official organ in its work of addressing the social problem of unemployment among young school leavers.

The NUT committee was reinvigorated by the establishment of the Social Welfare Department in 1942 as the Chief Social Welfare Officer pushed for more active involvement of the Education and Labour Departments.\textsuperscript{940} The Social Welfare Department found the committee and NUT to be useful vehicles for pursuing its objectives and, in particular, its aim of minimizing juvenile delinquency. The Social Welfare Officer held meetings with the headmasters of Lagos schools and the NUT to discuss how to check abuses of apprentices by masters that were claimed to be affecting the After-Care programme. The meeting also considered direct government involvement in the apprenticeship programme and a subcommittee was formed to prepare guidelines for headmasters to establish After-Care subcommittees in their schools.\textsuperscript{941} The Lagos NUT continued to work with the school headmasters to check truancy, make reports to the Social Welfare Officer and to counsel parents to encourage their wards to be apprenticed for artisan training.\textsuperscript{942}

The efforts of the NUT did not yield significant results either in stemming unemployment or orienting juveniles towards non-white-collar labour. This lack of results and the continuing problem of juvenile delinquency combined to elicit the interest of the Lagos Colony administration in the work of the After-Care Committee. In 1943,

\textsuperscript{940} NAI CSO 26/5 File 40132 Vol. II, Colony Welfare Officer to Commissioner of Lagos, November, 1942, 1
\textsuperscript{941} Ibid, After-Committee Lagos, by Fola Ejiwumi, Secretary, NUT, Lagos, 29/4/1942, 3.
\textsuperscript{942} Ibid, After-Care Committee to Headmasters of Elementary Schools, May 1942, 4.
the Lagos Colony administration sought the opinion of Mr. Faulkner, the Colony Social Welfare Officer, on the problems of the After-Care Committee and how to address them. Faulkner noted the busy schedules of the government officials who were appointed members, the non-completion of school by the boys, lack of jobs for fifteen-year olds, the absence of standards of apprenticeship, and called for a reconstitution of the Committee. His proposed new committee was to include a member each from the Colony’s Welfare Department and the administration, a Senior Education Officer, and representatives of the Labour Department and the NUT. Faulkner further recommended that the reconstituted committee should begin to compile data on the number of youths leaving school annually, survey local employment opportunities, and encourage local businesses to employ young school leavers. He advised that before leaving school pupils be placed in either work or apprenticeship schemes under the supervision and assistance of school sub-committees consisting of headmasters, scoutmasters, respectable parents and other influential individuals. He further recommended that the committee should work to identify and help delinquents and truants, experiment with after-care in the urban areas before extending operations to the rural areas, and should meet more frequently. Faulkner concluded his report by drawing attention to the existence of illiterate children and school dropouts as another group whose problems needed to be addressed.

Faulkner’s report probably persuaded the administration of Lagos Colony to reconstitute and rename the After-Care committee as the Lagos Advisory Committee for Juvenile Employment and After-Care in 1943. The Lagos Committee’s functions included collecting information on school leavers, interviewing and advising them on education and employment, furnishing information on industries in Lagos, and

943 Ibid, Colony Welfare Officer to Commissioner of Lagos, 16/12/1943, 16-18.
interviewing applicants on behalf of prospective employers. It was also tasked with the establishment of a Juvenile Employment Exchange, modeled on the British employment exchange that had been established in 1909, to provide employment and apprenticeship opportunities and monitor the progress of the both illiterate youths and school leavers.\footnote{John B. Seymour, \textit{The British Employment Exchange}, London, P.S.King and Son, Ltd, 1928, 130 and T.S.Chegwidden and G. Myrddin-Evans, \textit{The Employment Exchange Service of Great Britain: An Outline of the Administration of Placing and Unemployment Insurance}, New York, Industrial Relations Counselors Incorporated, 1934, 67-9.}

The Committee had twenty-one members\footnote{The composition was 2 representatives of Lagos Council, 4 of Employers, 4 of Working people(labouring classes) 2 of government Departments, 4 of Religious Missions, 2 of Education, 2 of Social Clubs.} including the Labour Officer as Secretary, a Chairman (chosen by Governor possibly from among the Bishops), the Commissioners of Lagos Colony, and Directors of the Departments of Labour and Education or their representatives attending in an advisory capacity.\footnote{NAI ComCol. 1 File 2784 Unsigned Minutes of Meeting of 20\textsuperscript{th} April, 1943, 28-9 and Commissioner of Labour to Colony Social Welfare Officer, 16/07/1943, 33-4.} The inaugural and second meetings of the enlarged Committee in 1943, chaired by Bishop Vinning, agreed to limit the Committee’s work to secondary school leavers, open the labour exchange only to school leavers, including girls, who had at least two years of education in Lagos, and postpone the inauguration of the apprenticeship program until after the establishment of a Labour Advisory Board to legislate on the matter.\footnote{Ibid., Minutes of the second meeting of the Lagos Advisory Committee for Juvenile Employment and After-Care held in the Council Chamber on the 25\textsuperscript{th} October 1943, 63-65.} In the same year, the Committee was able to get three schools to establish subcommittees. In 1944 it also finally established the Juvenile Labour Exchange with two clerks who interviewed and registered unemployed school leavers and found placements for a small number as detailed below:
REGISTERED UNEMPLOYED SCHOOL LEAVERS AND JOB PLACEMENT BY LAGOS JUVENILE EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE, APRIL AND MAY 1944 (TABLE 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. Registered M</th>
<th>No. Registered F</th>
<th>Job Place - ment by Exchange M</th>
<th>Job Place - ment by Exchange F</th>
<th>Found M</th>
<th>Found F</th>
<th>Renewed M</th>
<th>Renewed F</th>
<th>Failed to renew M</th>
<th>Failed to renew F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 1944</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May ‘’</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>414</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It was observed that, compared with the adult exchange and registration offices, few applications for registration were being received by the juvenile employment exchange. Moreover, only a few applicants were actually found employment. At the third meeting, Mr. E.B. Oshibo, a Nigerian, complained that the employment exchange was only filing away the school leavers’ information cards rather than making the necessary effort to find them employment. This was denied by the Labour Officer.948 While Mr. Oshibo quite possibly exaggerated, the reality was that only very few applicants were found employment. A later report and proposal submitted by one Labour Officer, Mrs. Cook, argued that,

… the scheme … has left entirely out of account the preparation of young people for employment. For example, the Juvenile Employment Confidential Report Card informs us the type of employment desired by the school leaver, also the type of employment recommended by the headmaster of the particular school, but no scheme exists at the moment to prepare these youths for the type of employment desired, or what is perhaps more important the type of employment available; neither does the scheme cater for those juveniles who have not had the opportunity of a school education and are in every way unskilled.949 (her emphasis)

948 Ibid, Minutes of the third meeting of the Lagos Advisory Committee for Juvenile Employment and Aftercare held in the Council Chamber on the 11th April 1944, 71-2.
She also stated and recommended that,

> Our aim then would be to develop Juvenile Registration into something more than the recording of a name in the hope of a job, and make it the basis upon which a scheme for the training of young people in ways not only to equip them for employment (or to aid in that objective), but to train them to be good citizens living healthy lives with their leisure times fully occupied with interest … if we are able to occupy the leisure time of young people, they will be more apt to hold on to jobs they may not altogether care for because life to them may then mean more than a working existence.\textsuperscript{950}

The Labour Department’s sought to manage the youth employment problem based on the model developed in depression-era England. This involved providing training “both desired by the youths and by us (the colonial administration) from the point of view of filling vacancies in trades in which there is a deficit of skilled labour”. In addition, it was interested in training girls for other vocations in order to “get them away from the idea of nursing and typing, etc. which are professions that are entirely over run.”\textsuperscript{951}

The claim of Mrs. Cook about nursing and typing being “over run” needs comment. There were very few Nigerian women in these professions which were either dominated by Europeans (nursing) or men (typing). In neither case, but especially nursing, was there a glut of those trained in proportion to need. It was only to be with the implementation of the later Nigerian Ten Year Development Plan that relatively large-scale training of women for nursing was commenced. Mrs. Cook’s claims might have been motivated by her interest in diverting women to training in other jobs that would be beneficial to the UK’s war effort and economy. This is attested to by the fact that when she applied for start-up funds from the CDWA for training, she argued that the funds

\textsuperscript{950} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{951} Ibid.
would be used to develop a self-financing contract scheme of agricultural production for export - a main objective of CDWA - to be undertaken by youths.

The Labour Officer’s proposals ran into problems with the Social Welfare Department which feared that the Labour Department was trying to take over the social clubs it had organized. The Social Welfare Department first suggested that the proposed project should be renamed the Juvenile Instruction Centre Scheme “to help the unemployed to fit themselves for employment.”952 The Labour Department saw the Juvenile Instruction Centre scheme as a duplication of effort and suggested that it should be a vocational education scheme handled by Education Department instead of the Labour Department.953 By November 1944, the conflict between the departments over functions reached the boiling point. The Commissioner of Labour reported the Social Welfare Officer, Mr. Faulkner, for interviewing prospective school leavers for employment without the knowledge of the Labour Department or the authorization of the Committee and viewed this as a usurpation of its functions. Faulkner defended his actions by claiming that he was acting on instructions and assisting the Army.954

While the inter-departmental struggle was still going on, the proposed pre-vocational training was approved by the government. The Lagos Advisory Committee, however, was divided over whether to include or exclude youths who had no schooling

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952 Ibid, Minute of fourth meeting of the Lagos Advisory Committee for Juvenile Employment and Aftercare held in the Council Chamber on the 27th June 1944, 97.
953 Ibid, Minutes of fifth meeting of the Lagos Advisory Committee for Juvenile Employment and Aftercare held in the Council Chamber on the 6th September, 1944, 109.
954 Ibid., Commissioner of Labour to The Commissioner of Colony, 9/11/1944, 121 and Faulkner to Commissioner of Colony, 13/11/1944, 122.
and whether to concentrate on secondary school leavers in the Lagos Colony area or extend their mandate to include other youths.\footnote{Ibid, Minutes of the Seventh meeting of the Lagos Advisory Committee for Juvenile Employment and Aftercare held in the Council Chamber on the 19th December 1944, 139.}

In spite of these conflicts, the Juvenile Registration Exchange continued to function, but its job placement performance remained poor through 1945. Registration totaled 2487 registered by September 1945 (compared with 1384 over 1937-1944), of which only 406 were placed in work.\footnote{NAI ComCol. 1 File 2784, Juvenile employment exchange-Returns, 143-4.}

The Committee became inactive and held no meetings between December 1944 and October 1945. The poor performance of the Committee notwithstanding, its activities were resented by a section of the colonial establishment that opposed extending its operations beyond Lagos. The attempts of the Labour Department and the Committee in 1944 to introduce the scheme into the Northern Provinces were opposed by the Chief Commissioner who wrote that, “The problems which the proposed Advisory Committee are designed for do not exist at present in Northern Nigeria, nor are they likely to exist in the near future. His Honour does not, therefore, consider that any good purpose would be served at present by setting up an organization of the kind proposed in Northern Nigeria.”\footnote{NAK, File MSWC 1346 Juvenile Employment and Aftercare: Advisory Committee for: Secretary, Northern Provinces to The Commissioner of Labour, Lagos, 9/11/1944, 7.} He pointed out that a meeting of chiefs had earlier resolved to employ surplus secondary school leavers from Northern Provinces. The Eastern Provinces, which had a chronic unemployment problem among young school leavers, also opposed any proposed extension. When funds were subsequently approved to establish juvenile employment exchanges in Onitsha and Calabar, the Chief Commissioner argued that the program would make the youths feel that the government owed them jobs, and this would
attract further migration to the cities. He was more concerned with the need to provide employment for ex-service men, to whom he felt government had an obligation.  

Consequently, it was resolved at a meeting presided over by the Governor on the 31st of October 1945 that no employment exchanges should be opened outside Lagos so as not to encourage migration to urban centres for employment that did not, and might never, exist. The meeting also resolved to examine the operations of the Lagos exchange with the objective of determining “whether or not it is to be discontinued”. Thus the attempt at finding a solution to the problem of youth unemployment suffered a serious setback.

**Labour, Nationalist Politicians and State Welfare Policies**

The official recognition of trade unions in 1939 had resulted in the creation of the Labour Department, the registration of existing unions, and emergence of many new ones. However, neither the Nigerian administration nor the Colonial Office Labour Advisor, Major Orde Browne, anticipated the development of independent and militant unions. Indeed, as events would demonstrate, they incorrectly believed that some, like Eastern Nigeria’s colliery workers were “mainly of the primitive and uneducated type, and the formation of any kind of trade union is for the time being beyond their powers.”

Indeed, the aim of official recognition of trade unions was to steer them into an idealized version of “traditional” British trade unionism in which union leaders followed

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958 Ibid, Secretary Eastern Provinces to the Chief Secretary to Government, 9/10/1945, 12 and 13.
959 NAK File MSWC 1338 Employment Exchanges: Establishment of Policy- The Secretary to Government, Lagos to Secretary, Northern Provinces, 3/11/1945, 1.
960 Quoted in Carolyn Brown ‘We were all Slaves’: African Miners, Culture and Resistance at the Enugu Government Colliery, 244.
official regulations on arbitration of disputes, had control over their workers, and were insulated from politics. To this end, efforts were made to cultivate “loyal” leadership in government establishments such as the government run Enugu colliery where, in addition, various experimental and token welfare schemes and projects were undertaken. Yet despite their characterization as “primitive” and “uneducated”, such intervention was rejected by many rank and file workers who formed their own independent unions.\footnote{Brown “We were all Slaves”: African Miners, Culture and Resistance at the Enugu Government Colliery, 244-5.}

However, the recognition and registration of unions did create fora for union members and leaders to collectively air their grievances about conditions of work and to demand improvement. The recognition of unions came at a most auspicious time for the development of militancy among workers in that the period of the war was one of state demand for increased productivity and enforced productivity drives that went hand in hand with widespread abuse, racial discrimination, and oppression.

It also coincided with the expansion of the popular nationalist press to the provinces. These newspapers employed sensationalism to draw attention to colonial infringements and abuses, criticized government policies, and advocated African participation and self-rule. This development caused some of these newspapers, particularly the \textit{West African Pilot} and other provincial papers of Zik Press published by the nationalist Nnamdi Azikiwe that sensitized workers to their rights in the workplace, to be viewed as champions of labour. In addition, leftist and socialist literature and ideas had begun to be more widely circulated in the country leading to the creation of Marxist study groups by some of those literate and educated workers who sympathized with the
Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR). These factors combined with the existing material conditions to instill and increase militancy amongst workers.

The conditions of wage earners worsened during the war years, especially in urban areas, because of inadequate housing and an increase in the cost of living. The only housing development undertaken by government during this period were the housing estates built in 1942 for mine workers at the Enugu Government Colliery. This project was the belated outcome of a recommendation made by Major Orde-Brown following the Northern Rhodesia copper miners’ strike of 1935, but not implemented in Nigeria because of financial constraints. The strategic importance of Nigerian coal to the war effort and the need to have miners live close by the mines to improve productivity compelled the government to finally build this housing estate. This along with additional pressure from Parliament and the Fabian Colonial Bureau forced the government to take a loan of £104,000 for the housing facility of 922 rooms in 1942. The few workers who got this housing were required to have their wives take lessons in nutrition and hygiene to help improve their health and productivity and transform their families into permanent wage earners along “European” lines that would make them more easily managed and controlled. However, most workers continued to have to depend on expensive privately provided housing of poor quality.

Another problem that worsened the social conditions of workers was the war induced shortage and inflated prices of imported goods on which workers had come to

963 NAUK, CO 857/77/13 Housing and Town Planning: Extract from Report of Conference of West Africa Labour Officers held at Achimota, November 23 and 25, 1942 and Brown, “We were all Slaves’: African Miners, Culture and Resistance at the Enugu Government Colliery, 252-7.
964 Brown “We were all Slaves’: African Miners, Culture and Resistance at the Enugu Government Colliery, 244-5.
depend. The increased prices of imports had a knock-on effect on that of local produce that also experienced dramatic increases. Foodstuffs were particularly affected due to the high demand for them by the military, for conscript labourers, and the increasing urban population. Previously existing shortages were exacerbated by the large-scale diversion of labour from the farms to the military, to mining, and to export crop production. As well, unfavourable weather conditions and epidemic outbreaks caused near famine in some areas. By 1941 inflation had risen to over 60% in some places and the scarcity of essential imported items like salt led to hoarding, black markets, riots and other disturbances.

The government responded by introducing various price control measures, the direct marketing of food stuffs, and the sale of grain reserves to bring down prices. In addition, the government employed a licensing system for import and export of certain items, the operation of which largely favoured the colonial firms at the expense of African middlemen traders. Increased hardship was experienced by many, but

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965 This shortage was caused by diversion of labour and resources to armament production and lack of shipping space during the war.
especially the lower classes who were reported to be most seriously affected. This worsening economic situation gave rise to increased labour militancy.

Before the war Governor Bourdillon had expressed his concern about the increasing difficulty of paying adequate wages and had expected that the CDWA would help relieve colonial governments of this and related problems. He had advised that the “inadequacy of local funds should not, in the future, ever be considered an adequate ground for paying government servants an insufficient wage, or failing to give them decent terms of service.” He had requested assistance to improve the salaries of wage earners, but was turned down because it was considered by the CDWA Advisory Committee that “The Act was … to be used for the benefit of the community as a whole and not directly to improve the standard of living of a selected class. Increases in the salaries of Government Servants … could only be justified if necessary to secure services of the quality desirable in the interests of Government.” Bourdillon was informed that only schemes that would improve welfare and services of the whole community would be eligible for consideration.

Probably as a means of reducing spending, the government decided to embark on an exercise to reorganize and standardize African staff salaries. The objective was to create an intermediate cadre of African officials to do routine work formerly done by Europeans officers, but without prospects for promotion to posts held by European officers. Its introduction would have further reinforced the racial disparities in

971 NAUK CO 859/81/16 Colonial Development and Welfare Act: Legitimacy of Grants for the purpose of improving Conditions of Service of Government Servants- Bernard Bourdillon, Governor to Lord Moyne, Secretary of State for Colonies (Secret and Personal) 24/10/1941, 22.
government employment and reduced the starting salary scale of Africans with higher qualifications at a time when the cost of living was dramatically rising.\textsuperscript{973} The Nigerian Civil Service Union (NCSU) deplored this move in a meeting with the Chief Secretary to the Government and drew the government’s attention to the high cost of living and their exclusion from the decision making process leading to this proposed action. The Union requested the suspension of this change until after the war and consideration of its formal input. Failing to change the government’s stance, it petitioned the Secretary of State for Colonies to demand the discontinuation of the standardization of African staff salaries, the raising of the initial salary of new entrants, use of the same salary grading system for both Africans and Europeans, an increment for Africans in supervisory positions, and the granting of pension rights to railway staff.\textsuperscript{974}

The Railway Workers Union responded to the proposed changes with the threat of a strike in defiance of the Defence Emergency Regulations that prohibited strikes. While the government moved quickly to appease the workers, their leader, Michael Imoudu, was deported to and imprisoned in his home province of Benin.\textsuperscript{975} To preempt further threats of strikes, the standardization of African staff salaries and reorganization of African staff were suspended, while the starting salary scale of Africans was raised from £36 to £48 and it was agreed that a committee be set up to review the cost of living.\textsuperscript{976} In response to the claim by the NCSU that the cost of living had risen by 72.7%, with food, 

\textsuperscript{973} NAI CSO 26/2 File 28715/S.18 Vol. II Conditions of Service of Local Staff- NCSU, Lagos to Chief Secretary to the Government, 08/02/1941, 176-179. 
\textsuperscript{974} NAI CSO 26/2 File 28715/S.18 Vol. II Conditions of Service of Local Staff- NCSU, Lagos to Chief Secretary to the Government, 19/09/1941, 260-280. 
\textsuperscript{976} NAI CSO 26/2 File 28715/S.18 Vol.II, Bernard Bourdillon, Governor to Secretary of State for Colonies, 13/2/1942, 331-4.
clothing and domestic expenses having risen by 150%, the government approved the payment of a Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) of between 25% and 50% of salaries. The provinces were graded on a scale from A, A1,2,3, B,C, to C1 in accordance with their cost of living for purposes of fixing the graduated amount to be paid (in addition to arrears from October 1941 to July 1942). Simultaneously, the Nigeria General Defence Regulation was passed again prohibiting strikes and lockouts. However, these were only stopgap measures that did not address spiraling price inflation and only affected government employees.

The new Governor, Sir Arthur Richards, who assumed office in December 1943 was ill-disposed towards the African wage earners, the trade unions, the Nigerian nationalist movement and its press. Richards’ policies and views were influenced by his racist disposition and his reputation for ruthlessness preceded him to Nigeria. He was to demonstrate these traits in his responses to the agitation of wage earners for the improvement of their conditions.

Developments in the West Indies since the riots and rebellions of the late 1930s had forced the Colonial Office and commercial firms to introduce certain social security schemes, particularly in Jamaica. Unemployment relief measures were introduced in some of the West Indian Colonies in 1940 and 1941. Richards was very critical of

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977 NAI CSO 26/3 File 39008 Food Control: Cost of Living- Cost of Living Statistics by S. Sonaike, Secretary, Cost of Living Committee, NCSU, 26-29.
978 NAI CSO 26/3 File 39008 Circular- Cost of Living Award in Lagos Township by Clive Watts, Acting Financial Secretary, 25/07/1942, 51-52.
980 NAUK CO 859/81/1 Colonial Development and Welfare Act: Papers submitted to Advisory Committee-CDWAC No.5 Note on Proposal for grants from the Colonial Development and Welfare Vote which involve relief measures, circulated for the information of the Committee.
these policies and their implementation by Frank Stockdale, the former Agricultural Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. In response to colonial reactions to the release of the Beveridge Report in the UK, and the CDWA, the Colonial Office decided to experiment with surveys and proposals aimed at the possibility of introducing similar social security measures to the colonies.\footnote{NAUK CO 859/78/1 Social Insurance: West Africa - Memorandum of 16/10, 1941.} For Nigeria, the idea was not new as the Nigeria Youth Movement and supporting newspapers had proposed the introduction of unemployment insurance in the 1930s in the light of the increasing unemployment and poverty in Nigeria.\footnote{Ayodeji Olukoju “The Travails of Migrant and Wage Labour in Lagos Metropolitan Area in the Inter-War Years” \textit{Labour History Review}, Vol.61, No.1, Spring 1996, 54.}

The new initiative of the Colonial Office was to take the form of experiments in Nigeria and Nyasaland for West Africa and East Africa respectively. These were to be assessed and the results used in preparation of proposals for the possible wider introduction of social security. From the beginning it was feared that social security would not be feasible in Nigeria and other colonial territories because of the small number of workers receiving wages and the poor revenue base of the colonies. The Northern Rhodesia administration, in light of its improved revenue during the war and anticipating the promises of the CDWA, already had embarked on an ambitious social services scheme and even contemplated the introduction of social security. But the Secretary of State for Colonies was quick to inform the colonial governments that:

\begin{quote}
Colonial Governments should not embark on social security schemes unless they are satisfied that they will be able to meet them from their own resources. I will have great difficulty, except in special circumstances, in approving any assistance from H.M. Government, either from the Colonial Development and Welfare Vote
\end{quote}
or from other sources, directed specifically towards the recurrent cost of social security schemes.\footnote{NAUK CO 859/78/17 Secretary of State for Colonies to Sir J. Waddington, Northern Rhodesia, 11/11,1943, 1.}

The assessment report and proposal for Nigeria was completed in late 1943 by Mr. Hampton, the Labour Officer, who proposed a compulsory unemployment insurance scheme to be funded by wage earners, employers, and the state. His report also proposed the registration of all workers, and the establishment of employment exchanges that would handle all vacancies, interviews, and appointments, as well as the payment of benefits. The report and proposal were to be presented at the West African Labour Officers Conference. This report caused serious apprehension on the part of Lord Swinton, the Resident War Minister in Gold Coast, who immediately contacted the Colonial Office in order to try to forestall discussion of the report and proposal. He feared that it would impose an unpopular obligation on the workers and advised that West African Colonies “should not go to the deep end in social and unemployment insurance.”\footnote{Ibid, Lord Swinton, Resident Minister, Achimota to Secretary of State for Colonies 22/11/1943, 2 and Secret and Personal letter from Lord Swinton to Col. Stanley, 20/11/1943, 3.}

He circulated his observations to the Governors and the Labour Adviser, Orde-Browne, who, he claimed, regarded his criticism of the proposal as mild. The Colonial Office staff feared that if the proposal was allowed to go forward it would occasion demands from other colonies for the introduction of similar schemes.\footnote{Ibid. 10.}

The Colonial Office prepared a prototype of its booklet, “Social Security in the Colonies”, and distributed it to the various colonial administrations for comment. Colonial administrations were advised that if social security was desired, it should be financed from their own resources and that they should “adapt and build upon” pre-
existing “communal machinery” and find ways to “make provision for individual advancement, particularly in the economic sphere.”

Faced with such unenthusiastic advice, it was easy for the Nigerian administration under Governor Richards to reject the proposal outright. Richards claimed that the proposed measures would benefit less than one percent of the population and further argued that, since Nigeria was a cash crop growing peasant society, what was “required is the provision of proper medical and water facilities to ensure that the average man’s body is in a sufficiently healthy state to enable him to work properly.” Other requirements for the improvement of Nigeria social welfare, he enumerated, were a properly stabilized market for exports to be provided by Britain, increased production for the market through improved agricultural methods, the employment of more agricultural staff, maintenance of customary child spacing mechanisms to check population growth in the overpopulated areas of the Eastern Provinces, improvement of assessment methods for graduated taxation which should be increased annually to redistribute wealth, and the use of the agricultural cooperative societies.

Apart from claiming that the introduction of unemployment insurance and social security was dangerous, Richards alarmed the Colonial Office by also claiming that it would “be followed by universal political unrest” which the Administration would “have the greatest difficulty in controlling.” Richards’ alarmist prediction of political unrest was either based on the fear of widespread agitation for payment of benefits by all and

986 NAUK CO 859/78/1, Oliver Stanley, Secretary of State for Colonies to The Officer Administering the Governments of Nigeria and Nyasaland, 30/09/1944, 2.
987 NAUK CO 859/246/1 Social Insurance; Nigeria, Sir Arthur Richards, Governor to Secretary of State for Colonies, 17/04/1945, 1.
988 Ibid.
989 Ibid.
sundry or a gimmick to discredit the implementation of the scheme in Nigeria. His arguments were accepted by the officials of the Colonial Office even if his alarmist views were given little credence. The idea of social security for Nigerians was now effectively dead. It would be revived in the mid-1950s, but remain unimplemented.  

Workers at this time were preoccupied with the review of their wages and cost of living allowance that had been agreed to earlier by the more sympathetic Governor Bourdillon. However, Richards’ administration ignored Bourdillon’s agreement to continuously review and increase the African workers’ pay in line with the cost of living throughout the war. To make matters worse, Europeans officers were granted annual increases of their allowances. In response, African workers petitioned the Colonial Office and the local administration. Their petition detailed the huge disparity in expenditure on the welfare between European and African employees with £1,077,390 having been expended on 1631 European officers’ welfare and only £998,040 on that of 14,866 African staff since Richards assumed the governorship in 1943. Government largely ignored this and other grievances, advising the petitioners to wait until after the war for a remedy.

Increased racial discrimination by the administration in conditions of employment was one of the key motivations for the trade unions to both federate and align themselves

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991 See his appeal in a personal and secret letter to the Secretary of State in which he admitted that “It is scarcely necessary for me to say that it has frequently so be held in the past, that I myself must plead guilty to having, on more than one occasion, refused demand that I knew to be perfectly reasonable, merely because there was not enough money in the till.” NAUK CO 859/81/16 Colonial Development and Welfare Act: Legitimacy of Grants for the purpose of improving Conditions of Service of Government Servants-Bernard Bourdillon, Governor to Lord Moyne, Secretary of State for Colonies (Secret and Personal) 24/10/1941
992 NAI CSO 26/1 File 06465 Vol. 1, Nigerian Civil Service Union African Staff- NCSU: Address of Welcome to His Excellency, Sir Arthur Frederick Richards, G.C.M.G. Governor and Commander in Chief of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria, 8/01/1944, 124-5.
with nationalist political organizations. The first attempt at federation produced the African Civil Servants and Technical Workers Union (ACSTWU). Further negotiations resulted in fifty-six unions federating themselves in a central body known as the Trades Union Congress of Nigeria (TUCN) that contemplated forming a Labour Party. The repressive attitude of the administration, oppressive legislation and the shared experience of discrimination combined with the low level of formal education of most union leaders to propel them toward affiliation with the more educated nationalists. This was beneficial to the nationalist organizations, which needed a mass following to negotiate concessions from the administration.

In this climate particular acts took on a larger importance. The protest of students at King College against their relocation following a government takeover of their hostel for military use in 1944 became the rallying point of the various anti-colonial forces that led to the formation of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC). This was a mass movement that affiliated ethnic associations, trade unions, professional, and artisan associations. The NCNC, armed with the nationwide reach of the newspapers of the Zik Press, soon went beyond criticism of government policies to begin agitation for self-government after the war.

It was against this background of an alliance of federated trade unions and nationalist organizations, worsening social conditions of the wage earners, and rumours of post-war retrenchments that the administration callously introduced the payment of local allowances to European officials and Senior African staff to cater for their family needs in Nigeria in addition to the existing separation allowance paid to European

993 James S. Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, 255.
officials to meet the needs of their families overseas. The separation allowances of European officials were not only increased, but in 1944 local allowances began to be paid to Europeans whose wives lived with them in Nigeria. This in tandem with continued failure to review the wages of African workers in the light of the increasing cost of living prompted the ACSTWU to petition for a review of wages in March 1945. This situation remained unaddressed until the after the war when the relaxation of the war measures prohibiting labour action set the stage for the general strike that will be discussed in the next chapter.

**CONCLUSION**

This chapter examined the Colonial Office’s responses to increasing restiveness and declining productivity that engulfed the empire from the period of the depression on. It has shown that the Colonial Development Fund of 1929, whose main object was solving the British unemployment problem, was only cautiously utilized by Nigeria and that its use increased Nigeria’s expenditure rather than seriously addressing Nigeria’s poverty and welfare problems. It also has shown that the failure of the CDA of 1929 led to the proposal of various schemes and the CDWA of 1940 at the outbreak of the war. These schemes and the CDWA were similarly geared towards solving British economic problems, countering German anti-colonial propaganda, and winning the support of the colonized subjects for the war.

However, the CDWA, and a number of the schemes that preceded it signaled a gradual change of policy from “development along native lines” to attempts at addressing

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African welfare problems, but these attempts largely failed. This was because of the opposition from the Treasury, changes in British political interests and personalities in the Colonial Office, and resistance from local officials in Nigeria - particularly from Governor Arthur Richards and Development Branch. The Colonial Office directive that colonies could only implement social security policies with their own revenue and the poor finances of Nigeria provided the excuse for the neglect of African welfare, which, it was argued, could only be improved through increased productivity. As a result, selective experiments with social welfare and security were only half heartedly implemented. The problem of juvenile welfare was a partial exception because it was linked to the threat of venereal disease to the health of European and American soldiers, the international image of British colonialism, and fears of worsening crime. Social welfare began to be narrowly defined to exclude the majority adult working population while emphasis was shifted away from social welfare to development planning to increase productivity. The neglect of African welfare during the war united the emergent urban working class and the nationalist intelligentsia in a movement for improved social conditions and self-rule in the immediate post-war period. It is the question of social welfare in the post-war era of development planning that forms the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER SEVEN

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND THE RETREAT FROM WELFARE IN THE ERA OF NATIONALISM 1945-1954

It should be recognized, however, that the Development Fund will not be a charitable institution.

Arthur Richards, Governor of Nigeria, 1945, in NAI CSO 26/5 File 40132 Vol. II Resettlement of Ex-Soldiers after the War- Chief Secretary to the Government to Secretary, Northern Provinces and others, 13/11/1945, 13.

I would like to say, however, that in international discussion-as often at home-colonial progress is too often discussed as if it were an affair controlled entirely by the administering power. The position of the colonial people is usually assumed to be that they want change; that they eagerly cooperate to achieve progress, that their ills arise from the shortcomings or evil policies of metropolitan power and the movement forward is largely a matter for the administration concerned- in terms of supply of capital, materials and technicians and a will to disinterested service. But we must recognize the conditions of the problem as it exists for our administrators and above all, the resistances and difficulties presented by the colonial peoples themselves. (My emphasis)


… the anxiety which the economy of the country causes as to the ability to carry the recurrent liabilities arising from a programme largely devoted to social services. Revision will result, therefore, not only in scaling down of the original plan, but in an overall change in the general picture of development which to many may lack the grace of the more classical features originally drawn.


Introduction

The end of the war brought about the renewed hope of the colonized Nigerian people. They looked forward to the end of wartime hardships and the implementation of the promises embodied in the Colonial Development and Welfare Act (CDWA). These
promises had been deferred to the post-war period because of the primacy of priorities and costs associated with the war.

Despite being among the war’s victors, Britain was burdened by a huge war debt and restive colonies agitating for independence. To address the former Britain turned to the resources of the colonies and embarked on what has been called the “second colonial occupation” of Africa in which state guided investment in the productive capacities of the colonies was to increase the output of dollar-earning or dollar-saving commodities that would assist Britain in paying its war debts. However, given the rise of anti-colonial nationalism in these same colonies, colonial welfare also had to be addressed. Thus from its outset, what became post-war colonial development policy had two conflicting ends: assisting Britain through the mobilization of colonial resources and generating resources to enhance colonial welfare and thus stave off the discontent that was fueling anti-colonial nationalist agitation. This conflict over the aims of post-war policy was further complicated by conflicting views as to whether increased productivity was an outcome of, or a precondition for, increases in social welfare spending. In the making of post-war CDWA policy and its implementation, these conflicting ends and views became repeatedly entangled. There was also a serious contradiction in the implementation of post-war policy between top down planning, adopted in part by a post-war Labour Government greatly impressed by the example of socialist USSR, and the notion of “community development” that was promoted as a means of re-vitalizing African “community” and achieving gains in social welfare cheaply through the mobilization of African self-help and participation in projects and schemes promoted and supervised by

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colonial officials that also had the stated objective of increasing productivity. Moreover, both planning and community development were to be implemented amidst a radical change in the structure of colonial administration in Nigeria in which the Native Authorities and Provinces of indirect rule were to be replaced by the creation of “local governments” and Regions both as a part of the strategy of post-war development policy and political reform. Indirect rule and the power of chiefs were to be replaced by a policy of revitalization of community spirit in Africans through community “betterment” schemes.\footnote{Joanna Lewis “Tropical East Ends’ and the Second World War: Some Contradictions in Colonial office Welfare Initiatives” Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, Vol.28, No.2, May 2000, 49.} To achieve these ends, the Labour Government, under the 1945 CDWA, opted for strategies that ultimately would place greater responsibility for solving Africans’ social welfare problems on the shoulders of nationalist politicians, while much of the resources for improving social welfare were to come from the communities themselves. Under the rubric of ‘local government’, both colonial officials and nationalist agitators were intended to be drawn into ‘planning’ and administering local social welfare. On both sides, so to speak, energies were expected to be diverted from nationalist agitation. This chapter examines these issues and their context.


The Second World War accelerated the ongoing processes of socio-economic change brought about by colonial rule. The colonial state took advantage of the war to consolidate the marketing boards and commodity buying licensing systems used to siphon off peasant surpluses and further strengthened the hold of colonial firms and their
middlemen over the peasants.\textsuperscript{998} Although the prices of exports crops increased, “large sums were withheld” from producers “by the Marketing Boards which controlled most of the peasant export trade”, and “held in the form of low-yielding United Kingdom and Commonwealth securities.”\textsuperscript{999} Much of the increase that producers actually realised nominally was eroded by inflationary increases in the price of inputs, particularly labour and food. The availability of necessary imports remained restricted as rationing and the war-time import licensing system was also maintained. In Benin Province it was reported in 1945 that “prices have remained high and imported goods hard if not impossible to get”, while in Oyo Province scarcity, high prices and controls continued throughout 1945 and similar high prices in Sokoto Province were reported in 1946.\textsuperscript{1000}

Among the worst affected by inflation were urban workers who experienced high prices of food, rent and services. Measures taken by the colonial government to cushion the effects of inflation were inadequate. Governor Richards refused to honour the agreement reached with his predecessor, Governor Boudillon, to review the cost of living allowance (COLA) and to meet with the representatives of the labour unions. The overt racism of approving and paying various allowances to European officers while neglecting the demands and grievances of African workers, as shown in chapter five, increased labour agitation. Against this background, rumours of government plans for a post war retrenchment exercise became widespread and made people desperate to restrain government action.

The relaxation of war-time emergency laws encouraged workers to remind the administration in March 1945 of their earlier petition demanding a review of wages and the COLA. The lack of response by the government caused the Nigerian Trade Union Congress (NTUC) to organize a rally in Lagos in May where it issued an ultimatum to the government to address its demands no later than 21st June or face a strike. These demands included higher wages, a minimum wage of 10/6d per day, payment of family allowances with effect from May 1945, and an upward review by fifty percent of the cost of living allowances,

The government rejected the unions’ demands on the grounds that wage increases would both increase inflation and reduce public expenditure. Acceding to the unions’ demands, the government further argued, would lead to further increases in taxes that would harm non-government employees. In addition, the government declared the proposed strike illegal and threatened legal action should the workers embark on it.

These arguments and threats did not dissuade the militants amongst the workers from mobilizing for a nationwide general strike. The workers were emboldened by the support of the *West African Pilot* newspaper owned by Nnamdi Azikiwe, a leading nationalist politician, and the government’s release of Michael Imoudu, a fearless and militant trade unionist of the Railway Workers Union from detention. The heroic

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1001 Though the biographer of Governor Richards exonerated him from the crisis because he was on leave (See Richard Peel, *Old Sinister: A Memoir of Sir Arthur Richards, GCMG First Baron Milverton of Lagos and Clifton in the City of Bristol 1885-1978*, Cambridge, F & P Piggott Ltd, 1986, 134) it is doubtful if he would have behaved differently from the Secretary to Government who was the Officer administering the Colony during the strike. This was because he believed in providing only improved amenities for workers and was opposed to wage increases. He had advised mining companies earlier against any wage increases which would “only be squandered by the thriftless African.” Bill Freund, *Capital and Labour in the Nigerian Tin Mines*, 135.

welcome of Imoudu to Lagos by the workers and the nationalist press encouraged him to mobilize his union\textsuperscript{1003} to defy the government and embark on a general strike. The strike was soon embraced by wage earners in many other government establishments and spread over Nigeria attracting the participation of 42,951 workers of which 41,165 were employed by the government.

In response, the government employed various repressive countermeasures including the forced closure of two of Azikiwe’s newspapers that supported the strike. Nonetheless, the strike received overwhelming support from market women and African middlemen traders, as well as landlords who offered various forms of assistance including monetary contributions to sustain the workers. In addition, the strikers received solidarity and support from the international labour movement. These helped sustain the strike, which lasted from 21\textsuperscript{st} June to 4\textsuperscript{th} August 1945 in Lagos and continued to the middle of August in some of the provinces. Towards the end of July, popular support for the strike began to decline and the unions decided to call it off without their demands being met. However, the government had also become weary of the strike and had stated its willingness to negotiate. The promise not to punish the strikers played a critical role in ending the strike. Attesting to the strike’s impact, Coleman stated that it “shocked both Europeans and Africans into realization that Nigerians, when organized, had great power, that they could defy the white bureaucracy, that they could virtually control strategic centers throughout the country, that through force or the threat of force they could compel the government to grant concessions.”\textsuperscript{1004} The strike was a major achievement for

\textsuperscript{1003} The Railway Workers Union was not only the largest union in the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria, they controlled the only railway service which was strategic and critical to the economy.
the working class movement and the nationalists. It forced the government to start negotiating with the workers and begin addressing the political grievances of the educated nationalist politicians. However, it also prompted the government to attempt to find ways of uncoupling the workers from the nationalist politicians and thus regain control over the colony.

The Failure of the Richards’ Constitution and the Drive Towards the Local Government System

A new constitution for Nigeria had been submitted before the general strike in March of 1945. It was, in part, a belated response to the empire-wide crisis of the late 1930s that had forced the Colonial Office and its advisers to seek new ways of maintaining their hold over the colonies. One key issue was how best to make the new forces of educated nationalists and labour acquiesce to continued colonial domination. While there was no unanimity of opinion in the Colonial Office towards the educated nationalists, officials and advisers were agreed in their opposition to the wholesale adoption of British parliamentary institutions demanded by the educated nationalists in the colonies. To avoid this end, they attempted to work out a new kind of administrative arrangement that would simultaneously maintain indigenous political institutions while accommodating some of the aspirations of the educated nationalists.

In the 1930s the influential Colonial Office advisor Margery Perham had envisioned the participation of educated nationalists in the Native Authorities as a

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solution to the political problems of the colonies. But her position was neither supported by Lord Hailey nor by influential officials of the Colonial Office, like Andrew Cohen, who favoured the introduction of a municipal system of government to accommodate the educated nationalists.\footnote{1006} In addition, Cohen reasoned that the rural masses should be incorporated into the administration where they would act as an effective check on the educated nationalists.\footnote{1007} In order to implement this new line of thinking on administration, the administrative system in the colonies needed to be changed. The situation of increasing militancy and the alliance of labour and the educated nationalist politicians armed with a radical press in Nigeria both before and during the war made reform urgent.

The political and administrative system in Nigeria had previously kept its population in three separate groups of provinces operating under different political systems of representation. The two groups of provinces in Southern Nigeria had limited and restrictive representation in the Legislative Council with a sprinkling of educated Africans in some of their Native Administrations. The Northern Provinces were represented by the Lieutenant Governor and later Chief Commissioner in the Legislative Council with the educated being excluded from participation in the Native Administration.

Governor Bourdillon, who had tried to initiate political reforms in the pre-war period, had supported both Perham’s recommendation for the inclusion of educated


nationalists and Hailey’s recommendation of regional councils. In addition, he had advised that a Royal Commission should visit the country to inquire into the best method of administering the country. He pressed for the inclusion of African officials in his Executive Council in accordance with the demands of educated Africans and contrary to the views of Colonial Office officials. However, his successor, Arthur Richards, acted in a racist manner that discounted African opinion, brooked no opposition and employed repression. He was an admirer of Sir Frederick Lugard whom he constantly consulted on the administration and future of Nigeria. Probably under Lugard’s influence and after only a short stay and tour of the country during which he consulted with only the Sultan of Sokoto, the foremost Muslim ruler in the Northern Provinces, he drafted in 1944 what has become known as the Richards Constitution. He hastily got Legislative Council approval for his draft and rushed it to the British Parliament in March 1945 where it had to await action from the new Labour Government.

Richards’ draft constitution did away with the limited democratic gains of the previous small number of unofficial members granted by Clifford Constitution of 1923. The Fabians, who strongly influenced the Labour Party, favoured a municipal system of administration in the form of Local Government, which they hoped would co-opt educated nationalists into acquiescence with the colonial system. Key Fabians in the Colonial Office, including Andrew Cohen and the Secretary of State for the Colonies,
Arthur Creech-Jones, were displeased with the exclusion of municipal system from the constitution and its non-extension to other major towns.\textsuperscript{1012} As a result, the new British Labour Party government altered Richards’ draft constitution to suit their own policies and not only reinstated elected unofficial members to the Legislative Council, but increased their number in the constitution’s final draft.\textsuperscript{1013}

The manner in which the constitution was drafted and introduced, without any consultation with or input from the educated nationalists, was one of its major weaknesses. The educated nationalist politicians had imbibed the spirit of the Atlantic Charter that guaranteed the right of all people to the government of their choice and independence after the war. As a result, they had looked forward to participation in the drawing up of their constitution (as had been promised by Governor Bourdillon) and to self-government after the war was won.

Various aspects of the constitution fell short of the expectations of educated Nigerians. Most notable among these were the division of the country into three regions, the Governor’s veto power, the Governor’s right of nomination of a large number of unofficial members to the Legislative Council, inclusion of traditional rulers in the Legislative Council, the denial of executive positions to Africans, the retention of a property and tax payment qualification clause for voting rights in Lagos and Calabar, continued restriction of voting rights to Lagos and Calabar, representation of vested European interests in the Legislative Council, official selection rather than election of provincial representatives, the arbitrary allocation of seats for regional representation, and

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\textsuperscript{1012} Ibid, 107-8.
\end{flushright}
limitations of the function of representatives to discussion rather than decision in the affairs of the country.\textsuperscript{1014}

The educated nationalists were further aggrieved by what they regarded as four obnoxious ordinances introduced alongside the constitution. These were the Mineral Land, Crown Lands (amendment), Public Lands Acquisition, and the Deposition and Appointment of Chiefs Ordinances.\textsuperscript{1015} These reinforced existing ordinances that vested rights over lands, resources and control of chiefs in the Governor. Protests against the constitution and these ordinances by educated nationalists were rebuffed by the British government, resulting in a spate of militant protests, strikes, inter-ethnic conflicts and assassination attempts on British officials.\textsuperscript{1016}

A new governor, John Macpherson, was appointed in 1948 and he immediately conceded to the drafting of a new constitution in consultation with Nigerians. The drafting of this new constitution was to be done alongside the transformation of the Native Authority system of administration into a system of “local government”. The local plan for the second installment of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act (1945-1950), which also had been drafted without consultation with Nigerians, was also to be revised in this context.

\textsuperscript{1014} Coleman, \textit{Nigeria: Background to Nationalism}, 275-282.
\textsuperscript{1015} For details see \textit{Ibid}, 282-4.
\textsuperscript{1016} The constitution and ordinances were seized upon by the nationalist media and the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun –NCNC to tour the country, raised money and send a delegation to Britain to submit their petition to the British Government. The British Labour government advised the delegation to “go home and cooperate” with the colonial administration. The nationwide campaign tour and British government rebuff further awakened political consciousness. Militancy was increased amongst the literate youth population who formed groups like the Zikist Movement and Northern Elements Progressive Association (NEPA) who rejected the accommodation with the colonial administration and the gradualist methods of the older nationalist politicians. There were the Hausa-Igbo conflict in Jos 1945/6, UAC workers strike and killings, Burutu 1946, Bristol Hotel protest in Lagos 1947, Nigerian Union of Teachers aborted strike 1947, UAC Zikist movement lectures 1948, Igbo-Yoruba conflict Lagos 1948, Colliery Workers strike and Iva Valley Massacre 1949 and so on. Iweribor, \textit{Radical Politics in Nigeria, 1945-1950: The significance of the Zikist Movement}, 104-112.
The Local Government Co-optation Strategy

Given the increasingly militant character of Nigerian labour and nationalism and the increasing espousal of socialist and anti-European sentiments, the problem that faced the administration in the immediate post-war period was how to detach the larger populace from the influence of the educated classes, and at the same time, to win the loyalty of educated classes themselves.\textsuperscript{1017} A possible solution was to find means of co-opting educated nationalists into a system that permitted the continuation of colonial exploitation and rule. The importance of the search for such a policy was confirmed by the Earl of Listowell, a Labour Party minister, who saw African nationalism as “… a deep seated emotion predominant in the educated classes and spreading rapidly among the masses which” he argued “must be blended with our own purposes.”\textsuperscript{1018}

The Labour government’s “purpose” was the continued colonization of Africa to exploit its resources for the rebuilding of the war ravaged British economy. To this end, the Colonial Office under the guidance of such Labour Party leaders as Creech Jones and Andrew Cohen worked to reorient African nationalist politics away from its own goals and to make it serve imperial ends. They hoped to achieve this through the institutions of local government, trade unionism and cooperatives. These three institutions were to be used to co-opt the educated nationalists, labour and the peasantry respectively in the quest to increase productivity through revitalization of the African “community”.

\textsuperscript{1017} Some of the protest activities included the physical attack on European business establishments, attempted assassination of the Secretary to Government and protest of racial segregation in the use of social amenities between 1946 and 1949.
Since the educated nationalists were viewed as the major problem, the institution of local government was deployed to address their major grievance of exclusion from participation in their community’s affairs. It was to also serve another important purpose. According to Paul Kelemen, the British Labour Party,

… saw in local government a way to bring the conservative rural masses into the political arena as a restraining influence on the mainly urban-based nationalist politicians. Cohen’s reasoning was that democratizing local government would ‘bring together literates and illiterates in balanced and studied proportions’ to check ‘the professional African politician’s selfish ambitions.’

This would enable the Labour Party to redirect the educated elements’ energies to squabbles and conflict with the rural populace in the politics of local government with British administrators acting as umpires and continuing with the task of exploitation of the colony’s resources.

In Nigeria, the Richards Constitution and the opposition it elicited delayed the introduction of the local government system. Governor Macpherson largely undid Richards’ legacy and implemented the Labour Government’s agenda. This resulted in a simultaneous review and drafting of a new (Macpherson) constitution between 1949 and 1951, a revision of the Nigerian Ten Year Development Plan that had been drafted in response to a Colonial Office directive for implementation of the CDWA (1945), experimentation with local government (1948-50), and introduction of elected local government (1951-2).

The Native Authorities, which were to be transformed into local governments, were largely fragmented along clan and ethnic lines. Many were financially insolvent and

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1021 The revision of the ten years development plan was to be jointly planned and implemented by the colonial government, regional governments and local governments.
incapable of employing or paying educated staff. However, despite this, a few literate retired government employees and traders overcame the autocracy of indirect rule and got nominated or appointed to some Native Authorities in the Southern Provinces. This gave some of the Native Authorities a sprinkling of literate and educated members, some of whom were nationalist politicians. As well, there had been experiments in some areas that had experienced persistent conflicts between the chiefs and the educated elites, such as Benin Division, in which members of the educated elite were either elected or appointed to the Native Administration councils.

The introduction of a fully-fledged local government system began in the Eastern Provinces with the passing of a local government law in 1950 and elections in 1951 for local government councils, while introduction in Western and Northern Regions had to await the promulgation of the 1953 Western Region Local Government Law and the Northern Region Local Government Law in 1954.

The Eastern Region adopted the British local government system almost wholesale. This did away with traditional authorities and instituted a three-tiered system of county, divisional and village group local councils. The Western Region modified the Eastern Region laws to suit its own conditions, retaining traditional rulers as presidents and lesser chiefs as council members. The Northern Region modified its Native Authority system into one of the three forms of organization: Chief and Council, Chief in Council and Ordinary Councils depending on the political circumstance of the polities involved.

The Ordinary Council was most common in non-Muslim areas where chieftaincy was least developed.

The local government elections provided the first opportunity for the educated to participate in the administration. They also formed the basis for choosing representatives to the regional and central legislatures. Educated nationalist politicians easily secured nomination, particularly for the regional and central legislatures, because of their education and influence in their communities and won election in both the Eastern and Western Regions without any prior experience of working in the local government councils.

The situation was different in the Northern Region where the most educated were usually Native Authority personnel and predominantly members of the ruling aristocracies. In most parts of Northern Region under Emirate rule, Colonial Officials and Emirs colluded to impose the appointment of these, instead of elections, as the main basis of representation in local, regional and central government. The administration instructed that representation in the councils should not be based on “a slavish adherence to the policy of elected majority”\(^{1023}\) while the elected members should not exceed two thirds of the members of any local government council. As A.D. Yahaya showed in the case of Zaria, the elected members never exceeded one third of the total representatives and it was only in 1957 that those selected by the Emir to contest elections became the first elected representatives in the local government.\(^{1024}\) As a result, members of the ruling

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aristocracies and loyal workers in the Native Authorities nominated by the Emirs predominated in the Regional and Federal assemblies.\textsuperscript{1025}

The election of the most educated nationalist politicians to the regional and central legislatures left the local government councils with members of low caliber. In Benin Division, the majority of the councilors had an incomplete elementary education, while in Izzi Council of Abakaliki Province only few of the councilors spoke English and majority were peasant farmers.\textsuperscript{1026} This made it easy for the councils to be manipulated and controlled by chiefs, the regional governments and colonial officials. Furthermore, the conflicting values and interests of members of the councils and external influences caused the councils to be conflict ridden. Conflicts ensued between largely illiterate chiefs and the relatively better educated elected members\textsuperscript{1027} as well as between the better-educated migrants and the indigenous population of the communities over participation in the affairs of the councils. The latter was most noticeable in the urban centres of the Southern Provinces such as Ibadan and in the Eastern Regional urban centres of Aba, Port Harcourt, Abakiliki, and the like.\textsuperscript{1028} In the North, conflict centred on how to exclude the educated elite from the Southern Provinces from participation in the

\textsuperscript{1025} S.O. Okafor “Ideal and Reality in British Administrative Policy in Eastern Nigeria” \textit{African Affairs}, Vol. 73, No. 293, October 1974, 465-6.


\textsuperscript{1027} In Western Region, the subordination of Chiefs to the elected majority and their struggle for control of resources and patronage were the paramount causes of conflicts in local government administration during this period. For examples of these conflicts see Uyilawa Usuanlele “State and Class: A history of Formation and Politics in Benin Division, 1897-1959” M.A. Thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1988, 365-385 and Olufemi Vaughan, \textit{Nigerian Chiefs: Traditional Power in Modern Politics, 1890s-1990}, Rochester, University of Rochester Press, 2000, Chapters 3 and 4.

local administration of the Northern Region. These conflicts distracted the elected councilors and chiefs from the problems of the welfare of their people and development of their communities while providing colonial officials with a much-needed platform for mediation and control of the local government councils.

One problem that the new local government councils faced was the subordination of their powers to the regional and central governments. Though at the initial stage, the powers and duties of local governments were, according to Hicks, “drawn wide and vague, presumably to give them ample opportunity to show initiative”, they were never autonomous of both the regional and central governments. In the Eastern Region they were controlled by the regional government until the introduction of a new local government law placed them under the control of a minister in 1955. The Western Regional government also had the powers of dissolution and approval of local government spending. This control by the regional and central governments has been argued by Okafor to have made participation in local government unattractive to the most educated who sought greater control. At the same time, however, aspiring politicians were interested in the control of councils because they could use council resources for funding political parties, maintaining their parties in power, and enriching and sustaining the status of party leaders. Local governments became a crucial building block for political parties. In the North, most local councils became, … deliberative bodies only, with no power to authorize expenditure. Even those which had power to spend money could not sustain the interest of members because they were made to be heavily dependent on the Native Authorities for their existence and for whatever resources were allocated to them. Only the

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1029 Hicks, Development from Below: Local Government and Finance in Developing Countries of the Commonwealth, 236.
district and town councils were given some measure of financial responsibility, but… they were hardly more than dummy organizations in the 1950s.  

In the Eastern Provinces many of the local government councils with powers to collect rates started to introduce various fees and increase taxes to enable them to perform their statutory function of providing services. Since a ceiling was placed on the amount they could raise, this limited council funds and service delivery. Some of the councils even cut funding to welfare programmes in order to meet expenditure on infrastructure and emoluments. For instance, the Benin Division’s Administrative Committee in 1949 declined continued funding of the pauper house formerly maintained by the native authority because of the priority given to infrastructure development and staff emolument.

The levying of rates and taxes for services was met with mixed reactions; in some cases police had to be employed to enforce collection. This resort to the levying of rates and an increase of taxes and fees were partly dictated by the CDWA of 1945 and the Nigerian Ten Year Development Plan (1946-1955) that stemmed from it, as the implementation of the CDWA and Plan were contingent on partial funding by the local councils and the remaining Native Authorities. This was a policy that was adopted with little consideration of local councils’ financial capabilities.

1033 The Pauper House maintained by the Native Authority was continuation of the pre-colonial welfare function of the Oba (King) of Benin who provided for the upkeep of disabled people, multiple births and in some cases banished witches and sorcerers (whose acclaimed powers were utilized by the Oba ) discussed in Chapter One. The inmates known as Ekonorhue were placed on a weekly allowance for their upkeep and lived in self-built huts in the outskirt of the City.

As shown in chapter five, Governor Richards had disbanded the committees established in 1942/3 to prepare proposals of schemes for funding from the CDWA and established an all European officials’ central committee for this task. This central committee, made up of the Chief Commissioners, members of the Development Branch and the heads of various departments, single handedly prepared and approved the Ten-Year Plan for Development and Welfare in Nigeria.

Planning had been adopted by the British government in place of the earlier approach of the submission of individual projects for consideration and approval. Partly inspired by the multi-year planning of the Soviet Union, the Nigerian plan suffered from structural disjointedness and lacked targets. Both the plan and its funding were subject to the whims and caprices of the Colonial Office and its expert advisers who could approve, change and add to the plans at their own discretion. What was to be developed was determined by the Colonial Office officials while the views of the local administration and the expressed needs of the colonized populace counted for little. Projects and schemes were not linked or integrated, lacked coordination in implementation, and their overall impact on development and welfare were neither stated nor known.\(^{1034}\)

Development projects under the plan were to be funded by internally generated revenue, grants from the British Government, and foreign loans. To this end the CDWA was revised in 1945 with funding increased to £120 million for the entire colonial empire. During the plan period, the colonies were allowed to draw up to an annual maximum of £17.5 million, increased to £25 million from 1950 on, of which up to £1 million could be

\(^{1034}\) Ibid, 65-8
spent for research on agriculture, education, health, industries and training annually during the plan’s ten years.

The colonies were directed to draw up ten-year development plans based on CDWA funds, local revenue, and external assistance, including that of private agencies. Colonies were encouraged to take loans to finance some of their schemes with the CDWA paying interest for an agreed period. Only schemes that were deemed suitable for assistance within the guidelines provided by the Colonial Office could be put forward.

The total cost of the Nigerian Ten Year Development Plan (1946-1956) was £55 million, of which £23 million was expected from the CDWA, £16.2 million from loans, and £15.8 million from Nigerian revenue that was to be spent on every thing except the military, police, and law and order. The bulk of the funds were concentrated on communication (£11.3 million) and on social services (education £7.7 million, health £10.4 million, and water supplies £8 million). With the introduction of development planning, the doctrine of colonial financial self-sufficiency ended. But this only introduced a new policy in which only communities that could match colonial grants with local revenue received development funds.

Approval of schemes dealing with social services was not easy and only obtained after a long drawn out process. Another serious problem was that the mode and likely problems of implementation of the plan were given little thought. This was particularly true for the sourcing of personnel and materials. The plan also had to wait for the approval and funding of individual projects and schemes which made coordination

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1035 Ibid, 57-8.
1036 Ibid, 60.
difficult and implementation uneven. Even during implementation the Colonial Office continued to tinker with the plan and change its level of funding commitment to it. For instance, in 1947, the Colonial Office announced the limitation of its commitment to funding agriculture, forestry, veterinary, medical and health services and education to only the first six years of the plan leaving the colonies to find funds for the subsequent years.\footnote{1038}

The Legislative Council also joined in cutting the funding of social services by directing that funds from the Loans’ Board be used for economic development rather than social services.\footnote{1039} Given the neglect that social services had suffered in the past and the vast area and population of the country, the impact of the CDWA and Ten Year Plan was limited as will be shown in the examination of education, medical and health services, and social welfare that follows. These will also show how tortuous the approval of funding under the CDWA and plan could be.

**Planning for Education**

Education in Nigeria, before the revision of the CDWA, was so severely under funded that even the Secretary of State for Colonies complained in 1941 that,

\[\text{... expenditure on Education for 1938/39 represents only 4.3% of the Government’s total recurrent expenditure and the approximate number of Government and assisted schools per thousand of the population is lower than in any other British territory but one in East or West Africa.}\footnote{1040}

Governor Bourdillon, who saw the CDWA as a panacea for the funding of social services quickly directed the Department of Education to prepare a proposal and application for

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{1038} Falola, *Development Planning and Decolonization in Nigeria*, 52.
  \item \footnote{1039} Ibid, 75.
  \item \footnote{1040} NAI, CSO 26/2 File 36644/S.14, Secretary of State for Colonies to Officer Administering the Government of Nigeria, 5/06/1941, 66.
\end{itemize}}
funding of the Department’s needs. The Director of Education and the Board of Education, meeting in 1940, viewed the problems of education as stemming largely from the inadequate funding of the grants-in-aid. Consequently, they requested £75,000.00 per annum for the next ten years to “enable the missions [to] carry on existing services efficiently.”¹⁰⁴¹ The meeting also resolved that the pre-existing policy of education “Through the Missions” should be continued and requested an increase in the salaries of teachers, especially Europeans, to bring these into line with rates in Kenya and Uganda. They also requested that a Teachers’ Provident Fund be established, that grants of 100% of teachers’ salaries should be given in return for government collection of 66.66 - 80% of school fees (based on assessment for different categories of schools), and that the staffing of the Education Department should be increased. Other resolutions of the meeting were that more teachers, particularly women, should be trained, existing secondary schools be brought up to efficient standards before the establishment of new schools, training schools for secondary school teachers should be established, and that rural agricultural education, handwork, domestic science and arts and craft centres should be built.¹⁰⁴²

The recommendations of this meeting formed the bases of a proposal that the Governor sent to the Colonial Office requesting £102,050 for grants-in-aid for 1940/41 and an additional £32,000 to pay European teachers. It also requested that an annual increment of teachers’ salaries should be paid from CDWA funds to solve the lingering teacher’s salary problem, particularly in the mission schools. The Nigerian government committed to contribute an annual £100,000 for grants-in-aid. The requested funds,

¹⁰⁴¹ Ibid, E.B. Morris, Director of Education to Chief Secretary to Government, 30/05/1940.
¹⁰⁴² Ibid, Mr. E.B. Morris, Director of Education to Chief Secretary to Government, 30/05/1940,12-19.
according to the Director of Education, in a view echoed by the Governor, were to be used “for repairing defects in the machinery which maintained existing services” instead of an “extension of social and developmental services.”

The Secretary of State for Colonies viewed matters differently. He attributed the poor funding of education, manifested in government’s inability to meet the increasing cost of grants-in-aid, to the failure of the Nigerian colonial government to exercise control over expansion of mission schools. He opined that “the relative poverty of Nigeria will necessitate substantial assistance from United Kingdom funds to enable any improvement to take place”, but warned the Nigerian government not to be too optimistic as he did not know how much would be available and that any funding provided would be for the “necessary minimum personnel.” Consequently, he approved the Teachers Provident Fund and directed that the grants-in-aid system be re-examined before the Nigerian government applied for CDWA funding. He further directed the Nigerian government to draw up “a systematic plan of development over a period of years by stages, each stage showing broadly the financial implications.” This directive formed the basis of further memoranda between 1942 and 1944/5 and would be used in formulating the Ten Year Development Plan on Education after the war.

Following this directive, the Nigerian government’s proposal was redrafted. Its aims were to raise government expenditure on education from a miserly 4.3% to 11-12% of total expenditure in order to increase the percentage of school-age children in school

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1043 Ibid, B. H. Bourdillon, Governor to Secretary of State for Colonies, 18/10/1940, 61.
1044 Ibid, Secretary of State for Colonies to Officer Administering the Government of Nigeria, 5/06/1941, 66.
1045 Ibid.
from 11% to 17%. Its other aims were to increase the efficiency of schools in the Southern Provinces and increase the training of teachers to facilitate the expansion of education in the Northern Provinces. The proposed plan concentrated on enhancing secondary school education with courses that would be more practical and “suited to rural environment” in the absence of large-scale employment prospects for secondary school leavers, improving the work conditions of teachers, and improving the quality of education through the building of a few new schools by the government and funding the expansion of mission schools. The total cost of the revised plan was £3,572,075, of which Nigeria’s contribution was expected to increase from £164,000 in the first year to £300,000 in the tenth year while that of the CDWA was to increase from £147,000 in year one to £500,000 in the tenth year.  

This proposed education plan was based on discussions between the Director of Education and the Boards of Education which were dominated by European missionaries and colonial officials and this probably accounts for the plan being skewed largely towards satisfying the missions. The unofficial African members of Legislative Council criticized the proposed plan because they viewed the expenditure on education as being too small and demanded that a greater portion of CDWA funds be expended on education. They called for the introduction of compulsory education, non-restriction of the number of schools to be built, equal treatment of the different categories of teachers (Europeans, Africans and the “uncertificated”), employment of more African education

officers, increased African representation in the Board of Education, and the use of the
Public Works Department’s apprenticeship training program for technical education.\textsuperscript{1048}

The Advisory Committee and the Colonial Office viewed the African members
demands as unrealistic because of the “poverty” of Nigeria. As the British government
was unwilling to fully fund the improvement and expansion of education in Nigeria, they
requested a more detailed education plan that could be sustained within the CDWA and
after the expiration of the Ten Year Development Plan in 1954.

Mr. Davidson, the Director of Education, redrafted the plan, asserting the critical
role of education in the development of the economy as the main goal of the CDWA:

Educational and general development are closely interlocked and bear directly on
one another at all points. Moreover, it appears that \textit{all} Departments will have two
urgent needs in common, first, many more Africans with a post secondary
education and, second a very considerable increase in European staff to give
technical training to these same Africans. Until these needs are met, no large
developments in any sphere will be possible.\textsuperscript{1049}

This linkage was most probably aimed at winning the sympathy and approval of the plan
for education from the Colonial Office and the Advisory Committee. The plan did not,
however, deviate from the emphasis of the earlier draft on the expansion of secondary
education:

… it involves a temporary neglect of primary education which, in itself, requires a
massive development. On the other hand it need not preclude the wide
dissemination of a rude elementary education among the masses. Indeed a spread
of rudimentary education, even if this extends to only a vernacular literacy,
appears to be necessary in order to secure a receptive public for projects of
development. When we speak of neglecting primary education we mean the
neglect of regularly constituted schools with properly trained staff. These must
await the teachers which it is the business of the secondary schools and the
Training Centres to produce. Their turn will come a little later.\textsuperscript{1050}

\textsuperscript{1048} Ibid, A.C. Burns to CSG, 25/3/1942, 97.
\textsuperscript{1049} NAUK CO 583/272/4 Planning and Reorganisation: Education, Sketch of a Ten Year Plan of
\textsuperscript{1050} Ibid, 4(59).
This neglect of primary education was to be for a period of ten years ending in 1955, while the “rudimentary” education was to be the “mass education” scheme, which, as shown in chapter five, was not widely embraced. The plan therefore remained anchored in solving the problem of the “shortage of suitably educated Africans and the dearth of teachers.” In order to address this shortage, “The immediate necessity” was “not so much to extend the quantity of secondary education as to improve the quality” of the candidates for post secondary education for employment by the departments.\textsuperscript{1051}

The plan proposed to employ fifty Europeans in 1946 who would produce fifty secondary school graduates annually from 1950 onwards for admission into teachers training centres and employment by government departments. On completion of training, graduates would be recruited and join (with an annual increase of fifty) European teachers in training others. Technical education would be introduced through Arts and Crafts Centres that would be established for training teachers in general education and technical subjects that would be affiliated to factories and workshops and coordinated by a proposed West African Institute or another government department. The Department of Education’s role in the technical education programme would be the supervision of extension work.\textsuperscript{1052} The plan proposed the establishment of only four new secondary schools, in addition to the existing forty-three in southern Nigeria and three in northern Nigeria, of which only six were owned by government in 1947,\textsuperscript{1053} to serve a population

\textsuperscript{1051} Ibid, Planning and Reorganisation: Education, Sketch of a Ten Year Plan of Educational Development, by Director of Education, Nigeria, Annexure 4, 4 (58).
\textsuperscript{1052} Ibid, 4 (61).
\textsuperscript{1053} Coleman, \textit{Nigeria: Background to Nationalism}, 134.
of almost 30 million. A small number of Africans would to be sent to UK for training\textsuperscript{1054} in addition to the few that had earlier been awarded scholarships for this purpose.\textsuperscript{1055}

The Colonial Office, in reviewing the redrafted plan in 1944, deemed the cost of buildings too high and therefore directed that either a substantial part of the programme of expansion or recurrent expenditure should be met from Nigerian funds and requested alteration of the estimates to reflect this point.\textsuperscript{1056} The Advisory Committee considered the plan to be too sketchy, criticized it for not stating how the funding was going to be sustained given Nigeria’s revenue situation, and requested a further redrafting in line with its criticisms. The required revisions were hurriedly done in four days by Mr. Baldwin, the new Acting Director of Education, as Mr. Davidson, the substantive Director was ill and Mr. F. E. V. Smith, Principal Assistant Secretary, Development Branch of Nigerian Secretariat, was rushing to London to try to secure approval of temporary funding for technical education before the submission of the Elliot Commission Report on Higher Education which will be discussed below.\textsuperscript{1057}

This again revised draft of the ten year education plan was still viewed as too sketchy by officials in the Colonial Office.\textsuperscript{1058} This was because, while the estimated cost of some of the programmes was removed from CDWA funding as requested, these deductions were added to the estimates for expenditure from Nigerian funds to make the

\textsuperscript{1054} NAUK CO 583/272/4 Planning and Reorganisation: Education, Aide Memoirs in respect of meetings with Mr. Davidson on January 17\textsuperscript{th}, 24\textsuperscript{th}, and 30\textsuperscript{th} 1945: Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies, African Reports subcommittee, Nigeria in M. P. Barker, Asst. Sec. (CO) to Mr. Cox, 3/2/1945, 20.
\textsuperscript{1055} This scholarship was awarded to only 69 persons between 1937 and 1945. L. J. Lewis, \textit{Society, School and Progress in Nigeria}, Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1965, 46.
\textsuperscript{1057} It was feared that the funding for technical education might not be approved after the release of Elliot Commission Report on Higher education, which might have some recommendations on technical education.
\textsuperscript{1058} NAUK CO 583/272/4 Planning and Reorganisation: Education, Memo to Mr. Pedler, 20/1/1945, 19.
plan acceptable to the Advisory Committee and Secretary of State for the Colonies. The reduction of costs was effected in part through the cancellation of scholarships for study abroad and their replacement with training of Africans at the Higher College, Yaba, the facilities of which were to be extended. Another major reduction involved reducing the number of new buildings by the modification of former military buildings to be financed from Nigerian funds. Consequently, the requested CDWA grant was earmarked for “part of the cost and the provision of the European staff (including passages and allowances but not contributions towards pensions) required in connection with the Government Secondary Schools and Teacher Training centres …”\textsuperscript{1059} Some existing government owned and voluntary agencies’ boys’ and girls’ secondary schools and teachers’ training centres were to be expanded. In addition, the now much revised plan retained a proposal for the establishment of four new government boys’ secondary colleges and two girls’ secondary colleges, fourteen male and six female elementary teachers training centres, one secondary teachers training centre and four rural education centres. These were expected to produce 1,530 standard school certificate holders, 100 intermediate degree certificates holders, 50 secondary school teachers of post intermediate degree standard, and 2350 primary teacher training certificate holders annually for the ten years of the plan.\textsuperscript{1060} The expansion of primary education was to commence with 410 schools at the end of the plan in 1955. The cost of primary education was to be met from Nigerian funds.

\textsuperscript{1059} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1060} Ibid, Development Plan for Education Services, Officer Administering the Government of Nigeria to Secretary of State for the Colonies 27/09/1945, 23
This reworked plan emphasized that, “Nigeria is considerably backward in the provision of educational services”¹⁰⁶¹ and therefore needed immediate development of secondary and teachers training education to provide teachers for expansion of primary education and manpower for the various government departments engaged in development work. The emphasis on Nigeria’s backwardness was probably intended to win sympathy for quick approval of the plan but as a result of the numerous requests for changes in the plan, it had not been approved when the war ended.

Although the Nigerian Ten Year Plan on Education had been rushed to the Colonial Office towards the end of the war to gain approval before the submission of the Elliot Commission Report on Higher Education in the Colonies, it was not approved until after the Elliot Commission submitted its report. This Commission, chaired by Sir Walter Elliot, which included some African members, was set up by the Colonial Office in 1943 to investigate the existing organization, facilities and needs of higher education in West Africa. It submitted its report in 1945 recommending the establishment of three universities and three technical colleges in the larger colonies resulting in the establishment of the University of Ibadan and the Yaba Technical College in Nigeria.¹⁰⁶²

The Elliot Commission’s further recommendation of the disbursement of £4 million for the establishment of territorial (or regional) colleges for advanced teacher training education rendered the £0.5 million that had been previously earmarked for higher education in the Nigerian plan grossly inadequate and thus prompted yet another revision of the plan. The approval of the plan was further delayed by the change of government in

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¹⁰⁶¹ Ibid, Nigeria: Development of Educational Services; Application for a free grant of £913,600 C.D.W.A. Scheme No. D, October 1945, 25.
Britain as the new Labour Party Government sought a plan that fitted into its own programme.

Following additional criticism by the Advisory Committee of the Colonial Office, the Nigerian government concluded in 1946 that the comprehensive plan it had submitted was “not capable of being implemented during a ten year period.”\textsuperscript{1063} As a consequence, the plan was revised downwards again to what could be implemented within the limits of available funds. One result was that the objective of improving primary education after expiration of the ten year plan was removed.\textsuperscript{1064} In February 1946, Governor Richards appealed to the Secretary of State for Colonies to press the Advisory Committee to expedite action on approving the plan, because education was the only aspect of Nigeria’s Ten Year Development Plan that had yet to be approved and its non-implementation was affecting overall development planning.\textsuperscript{1065}

In response, the Secretary of State for the Colonies sent approval for the proposed secondary schools and teacher training and approval of the division of responsibilities between the government and the voluntary agencies. He also conveyed the Advisory Committee’s view that teacher training should be concentrated in “few efficient centres”, secondary school teachers be trained under the higher education scheme, recruitment be limited for financial reasons to a small number of Europeans on a short term basis for secondary teacher education, payment of a percentage rather than the full salaries of both temporary European and permanent African teachers be made from CDWA funds, and that a reduction be made in “expenditure on secondary and teacher training in some measure in order to make available more funds for assistance toward primary education.

\textsuperscript{1063} Ibid, A. Richards, Governor to SS for the colonies, 31/01/1946, 41.
\textsuperscript{1064} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1065} Ibid, 19/02/1946, 42.
in later years of the plan.”\textsuperscript{1066} The Advisory Committee’s suggestions were rooted in fears that there would be wastage of teachers if funds became unavailable for payment of adequate salaries in the future. This fear was borne out of the Native Authorities’ inability to pay salaries without central government support.

The Secretary of State took the opportunity of his reply to state his disagreement with the payment of teachers’ salaries from the CDWA funds. He preferred “alternative assistance in form of a grant of interest on capital expenditure to be financed from loan” but also stated that he would not “insist on this alternative if you prefer to retain the arrangement embodied in the plan.”\textsuperscript{1067} A yet further memorandum by the Secretary of State directed that the proposed sixth form post-secondary certificate education be concentrated in a university or territorial colleges, while primary teacher training be conducted “in a relatively small number of large training centres.”\textsuperscript{1068} The reason for this call for still another revision of the plan was that of further reducing costs and the transfer of a larger share of the cost to Nigeria. Governor Richards pleaded that the plan should be approved as it was because:

The percentage of revenue devoted to education in the territory by the central government of Nigeria is amongst the lowest in the colonial empire. It is reasonable to assume that this percentage will gradually be raised to ten. Government indeed has been advised to proceed in this direction.\textsuperscript{1069}

He backed up his plea with the argument that,

… there are large funds which can be made available for educational expansion from the wealthier Native Authorities, should trained teachers be made available. These NA are in strained circumstances, or insufficiently developed, as in the

\textsuperscript{1066} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1067} Ibid, Secretary of State for Colonies to Sir A. Richards, Nigeria 6/3/1946, 43.
\textsuperscript{1068} Ibid, Secretary of State for Colonies to Sir Arthur Richards, Governor 14/03/1946, 45.
\textsuperscript{1069} Ibid, Richards to Secretary of State for Colonies, 3/04/1946, 48
greater part of Eastern Provinces, there is ample evidence that the local communities will find funds on their own initiative.”

He also promised that in addition to the expectation of Native Authorities devoting ten percent of their revenue to education, the central government would give generous assistance “where the local people are prepared to carry out their share of the necessary obligation” and that the central government would scale down its plans if revenue dipped. He concluded his plea with a suggestion to pay the temporary European staff from CDWA funds since their tenure would terminate with the expiration of CDWA funding.

Governor Richards’ pleas were rejected. The Secretary of State reiterated the Advisory Committee’s position that the salaries of both European and African teachers be financed from a percentage of CDWA’s contribution to recurrent expenditure for only six years, after which this would be discontinued. He concluded his reply by advising that if primary education was to be expanded, the introduction of fees should be considered as a source of funds for primary education. The Nigerian government complied and revised its plan accordingly in December 1946. It was approved in principle by the Secretary of State with the understanding that certain financial aspects were to be reworked and considered later.

The cost of implementation of the plan was £3,318,600. Only £913,600 of this amount was to come from the CDWA funds and was to be used for paying the salaries of European teachers, while £1,815,140 was expected from Nigerian funds and used to

1070 Ibid, Unsigned and undated-Notes on the financing of Primary Education, 52
1071 Ibid, Richards to Secretary of State for Colonies, 3/04/1946, 47
1072 Ibid, Secretary of State for Colonies to Richards, 22/10/46, 53.
1073 Ibid, Creech Jones to Richards, 19/12/1946, 56.
assist voluntary agencies and pay other charges. The balance was to be sourced from loans and used for construction of buildings. The process of approving the plan for education was tortuous because Britain was bent on shifting the cost to Nigerians. This was confirmed by the Deputy Director of Education in 1947 in response to demands for free universal education:

Nigeria cannot expect England to pay for her education. The money must be raised in Nigeria. I mentioned yesterday that all the money cannot come from Central Funds and you cannot use money paid by the Northern Provinces to educate the inhabitants of the Western Provinces so that it appears to me there be an increased necessity to find funds locally. We hope to give increased responsibility and we trust that we shall have the cooperation of teachers and leaders of thought to make it clear that if improved education is demanded the corollary is that taxes must be increased.”

Colonial officials were also concerned with the unemployment of school leavers which had become a serious social problem. The uncontrolled expansion of education was believed to be a cause of this problem.

Implementation of the plan started in 1947. In 1948, £500,000 was made available to Northern Nigeria to supplement the plan and meet the requirements for its implementation as the Northern Provinces were relatively backward educationally because of the restriction of Christian missionary participation, particularly in the Muslim Emirates. Implementation in Southern Nigeria was criticized as incapable of bringing about “development because they (the schemes) do not lead to more trained persons, but merely better trained persons.”

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Implementation was inadequately funded with problems arising of shortages of materials and teachers, especially for voluntary agencies schools.\textsuperscript{1077} The construction of the few approved schools was completed in Northern Nigeria by 1951. But construction was still ongoing in Eastern and Western Nigeria because of the larger number of voluntary agency schools involved. In 1948, the Yaba Higher College was moved to Ibadan and converted to a University College, while the buildings at Yaba were utilized for technical education. Each region was mandated to establish a higher college for manpower training.

The grants in aid to assist some schools increased the salaries of some teachers, but the arbitrary allocation of grants\textsuperscript{1078} did not assist the even development of education. In spite of the increase in grants-in-aid, the number of schools that received them was insignificant compared to the number of existing schools. For instance, in Oyo Province only 41 (6.2\%) primary schools with 15,000 (25\%) pupils received grants-in-aid of £66,000 out of 666 schools with 60,000 in 1948.\textsuperscript{1079} Many of the schools in Oyo Province in 1948 had no trained teachers because they were unavailable and the number of education officers was reduced from two to one. The situation further worsened in 1950 when the province had no education officer.\textsuperscript{1080} The situation was grimmer in Sokoto Province, which lacked teachers and, in spite of an upsurge in education in 1948, had only 2.8\% of the school age population in school in 1950.\textsuperscript{1081} The central problem of

\begin{thebibliography}{1077}
\item \textsuperscript{1079} NAI CSO26/ 2 File 12723 Vol. XVII, Oyo Province: Annual Report, 1948, 25.
\item \textsuperscript{1080} Ibid, Oyo Province: Annual Report, 1950, 29.
\item \textsuperscript{1081} NAI CSO 26/2 File 12518 Vol.XIII Sokoto Province: Annual Report , 1950, 12.
\end{thebibliography}
education was inadequate funding, which was made worse by the continued expansion of inadequately funded schools using untrained teachers by voluntary agencies.

The Nigerian government had commissioned Sir Sydney Phillips to look into the problem of funding education in 1948 and he had recommended that special attention should be given to the education problems of Northern Nigeria with the government and the local community sharing the cost. Local contributions were to be adjusted according to the requirements of the various zones of the country to enable grants to reach the most needy. Voluntary agencies, particularly in Southern Nigeria, should be made to define their commitment to improving the quality of education (rather than focus on religious conversion) and their needs for specified periods of time as a condition for allocating grants in aid to schools. The goal of Phillipson’s report was to commit Native Authorities and local communities to further increasing their contribution to the funding of education, in addition to taxation, thereby making mandatory the existing voluntary contributions of the local communities to funding education as a contribution to the Nigerian portion of expenditure under the ten year plan for education.

The recommendations of Phillipson’s report were implemented half-heartedly and had little effect on primary education. This was because of the long-term neglect of primary education in the past and the policy of not funding the expansion of primary education under the ten year plan. This policy was tenaciously upheld at a time when

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1083 Increment of grant in aid recommended by Phillipson remained insignificant. In Oyo province, it increased slightly from £66000 in 1948 to £86,658 in 1949, but was to be shared between voluntary agency and Native Authority schools, which had formerly been excluded; while the 19 new schools established in 1949 meanwhile, were denied grants. NAI CSO26/2 File 12723 Vol. XVII, Oyo Province: Annual Report, 1949, 31-2.
many people were just realizing the value of education and were yearning for establishment of more regular schools.

Many school age children remained out of school because of the lack of schools. For example, educationally advanced Benin Province had only 22,455 (less than 30%) out of 79,260 children of school age in school in 1952/3, a situation that the Resident blamed on insufficient revenue from the Native Administration to increase the number of schools.\textsuperscript{1084} The government exploited the popular yearning for schools by introducing and raising education rates. Believing that the rates would be used to establish and expand secondary education, payment of rates was enthusiastically embraced by local communities in Oyo Province.\textsuperscript{1085} Local rates for education were introduced in both Eastern and Western Regions in 1950/1. By 1954 the number of schools had risen dramatically as shown in the tables below:

\begin{center}
\textbf{School Attendance by Region in 1954 (TABLE 5)}
\end{center}

\begin{tabular}{lllll}
 & Eastern Reg & Northern Reg & Western Reg &  \\
Year & 1954 & 1954 & 1954 &  \\
Primary Schools &  \\
Govt Owned & 28 & 4168 & 745 & 40549 & 18 & -  \\
Grant Aided & 3511 & 461769 & 652 & 66154 & 3185 & -  \\
Unassisted & 2242 & 139833 & 373 & 25852 & 1170 & -  \\
Total & 5781 & 605770 & 1770 & 144051 & 4373 & 456600  \\
\end{tabular}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary Schools</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Govt Owned</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1837</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant –aided</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5952</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unassisted</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4271</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>10690</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2727</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>9694</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The findings of a Colonial Office study group indicated that, excluding the cost of grants-in-aid and other tiers of education in 1950/1, £3 per child or one third of Nigeria’s annual revenue would be required to put all primary school age pupils, who constituted a quarter of the population, into primary schools.\(^{1086}\) Given this enormous cost, the colonial government shifted the responsibility for education to the regions and the local government administrations that were now administered by educated nationalist politicians as the revised national development plan of 1951 and the new Macpherson constitution assigned responsibility for education to the regional governments.

The new African-led nationalist regional governments promised to make primary education universal and free. The government of Western Region started preparations in 1952 and launched its scheme in 1955. The Eastern Region soon followed suit. To finance these schemes, new education and medical rates were introduced in the Eastern and Western Regions. This increased the number of schools and doubled their enrolment:

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School Attendance by Region 1954-57 (TABLE 6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eastern and Western Regions combined</th>
<th>Northern Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. Pupils</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Schools</td>
<td>10,154</td>
<td>1,072,370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Schools</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>20,384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This increase in the rates, which was especially difficult for poorer and smaller communities to pay, led to resistance. For instance, women in Abakiliki in Eastern Province protested against the new education rates levied by the councils and they were discontinued.\(^{1087}\) In some cases, force had to be used in their collection. In the Western Region, police had to be deployed before increased taxes and rates could be collected. A body known as *Aiyepeju* - “The World Together” - arose to protest the new rates and taxes and rejected the social services being proposed.\(^{1088}\) In spite of such pockets of resistance, the regional governments continued the schemes. With regard to education, as with much else, the deficiencies of colonial government would have to be made good by Nigerian nationalist politicians.

Medical and Health Services under the Ten Year Plan

In spite of the critical role played by medical and health services in increasing production and enhancing economic development, these suffered extreme neglect before


and during the war. The Department of Medical and Health Services had to be prompted by Governor Bourdillon to prepare a proposal for improving health care delivery for the post-war period. This directive from the Governor urged the Department to concentrate its proposal on an “intensive campaign against the most widely spread diseases.”\textsuperscript{1089} The Department responded by preparing a memorandum which was used by the government to apply for CDWA funds for medical services in 1944 and also formed the basis for preparing a portion of the post-war ten year plan.

The initial memorandum, submitted by G.B. Walker, the Acting Director of Medical Services, focused on improving the doctor patient ratio, the number of hospital beds, health propaganda, improving rural health, and training local health personnel. The extensive nature of the memorandum was probably prompted by the request for proposals for the new plan based CDWA of 1945. It may also have been influenced by Governor Richards’ preference for the provision of social amenities over wage increments which he viewed as the antidote to social agitation and a stimulus for increasing production.

The Nigerian government submitted Walker’s memorandum along with an application for a preliminary grant of £40,000 to jumpstart the implementation of the plan. The funds requested were to “cover the cost of buildings which will be necessary for any programmes of developing the health services … recruit medical staff and to give firm orders for medical supplies during the next sixteen months, up to the end of the financial year 1945-46.”\textsuperscript{1090} The request was approved on the understanding that it would be included as a scheme in the ten year plan. The Treasury Department was consulted to

\textsuperscript{1089} NAI CSO26/ File 41426/s.24 Government Post-War Reconstruction Programme: Medical- Governor to CS, 21/1/1943, 2 and CS to Director of Medical Services, Lagos, 22/1/1943, 2.

\textsuperscript{1090} NAUK CO 583/272/2 Planning and Reorganization: Medical-Nigeria: Preliminary Assistance in connection with development of Health Services-Application for free grant of £40,000, 3.
determine the salary scale of the medical personnel if they were to be recruited from the
UK. The approval letter also directed that medical supplies should be “purchased in the
UK where possible i.e. principally to avoid the need for dollar exchange.”\footnote{Ibid, Colonial Development and Welfare Act, 1940: Extract from note of discussion with the Treasury on 30th November, 1944, enclosure Secretary of State for Colonies to Governor, 7/12/1944, 7.} £32,000 of
the approved sum for the 1945/6 financial year was to be used for the establishment of
training schools for dispensers, Native Authority sanitary inspectors, nurses and health
visitors, the creation of an epidemic unit, and provision of a launch for medical creek
services for areas only accessible by water. These services were targeted at the peasant
population whose improved health was viewed as necessary to increase export
production.

The plan for medical and health services aimed at increasing the number of
general hospitals in all provinces and beds from 4,284 to 7,600, establishing maternities
and special hospitals for mental health and tuberculosis, building rural health centres in
every division, controlling endemic and epidemic diseases, establishing medical and
pharmacy schools and training institutions for nurses, midwives, health visitors and
sanitary inspectors. The estimated cost of the plan was approximately £8.5m, of which
£3,654,000 was capital expenditure and £431,000 was annual recurrent expenditure
(excluding the annual cost of passages, pensions and increments, which were estimated at
about £500,000 annually).\footnote{Ibid, Medical Development in Nigeria” G.B. Walker to CSG , 5/09/1944, 5-10 and NAUK CO 583/272/2 Planning and Reorganization: Medical, Medical Map 3, 1.} The plan was to be entirely government controlled and
excluded voluntary agencies, missions and private practitioners. The plan was also
largely oriented towards curative medicine, with the preventive aspect minimized.
Dr. Harkness, the Director of Medical Services and Mr. J. Smith, the Development Officer discussed and negotiated the modalities for approval of the plan at meetings with Medical Advisers to the Colonial Office in London. They also consulted with the Governor to determine how much of the £23 million allocated to Nigeria from CDWA would be voted for medical and health services and other sources of funds. It was consequently resolved that not more than £3.5m from the CDWA should be allocated to medical and health services plan, while the balance of £5,053,000 should be sourced from external loans and Nigeria revenue. It was decided that some parts of the plan such as rural health centres, and epidemic and endemic disease units would have to be financed either wholly or in some measure by the Native Authorities or local governments. The Native Authorities involvement in funding some schemes, it was argued would free the Nigerian government to fund maternity, mental and tuberculosis hospitals. The scheme for establishing a training centre for African doctors in Africa was also tentatively approved, but the Colonial Office medical advisers directed that the proposal should be redrafted and submitted for final approval.\textsuperscript{1093} The approved plan also noted nutrition as a critical aspect of health that should be dealt with by a specialized unit, but did not vote any funds for it.

In spite of the extensive consultation and amendments, the plan was criticized by the Colonial Office because of the large number of doctors, hospitals and beds proposed. As a result, the plan was approved piecemeal. Explanations and pleas had to be made showing that Nigeria’s “hospital facilities are probably the poorest in the world, certainly in the British empire,” with a total of only165 medical officers of whom only 100 were

\textsuperscript{1093} Ibid, Notes of a meeting held at Palace Chambers on June 22\textsuperscript{nd} 1945 to discuss the Nigeria Health Development Plan, 19.
working at any one time, creating a ratio of 1 doctor to 220,000 people (when private practitioners were added it was 1 doctor to 150,000 people).  

The approved version of the plan excluded vital health issues such as leprosy control, anti-malaria work in Lagos and sleeping sickness eradication. This was because these were already either being implemented under other CDWA schemes or being funded by the Nigerian government. The sleeping sickness scheme was administered fully as a Nigerian project from 1947, while leprosy and anti-malaria work in Lagos were under schemes being shared between CDWA and the Nigerian government. Nutrition was eventually dropped altogether from the plan and the issue of sanitation was never seriously addressed.

The approval of the health plan was more easily achieved than that for education, but implementation was more difficult because of a shortage of technical personnel and materials, while the funding was disbursed to different bodies without coordination. The example of the Eastern Provinces illustrates this poor implementation. In 1949 in Eastern Provinces, the major scheme of the medical and health plan - building of hospitals - was two years behind schedule because of a lack of engineering and inspectorate staff. Also the “difficulty in obtaining materials and lack of technical staff” were reported to have “slowed down work or in some cases have prevented any start being made”. Many schemes in the plan were affected by inflation and allocated funds became grossly inadequate for their implementation. Similarly, the shortage of medical personnel in all areas was reported to have “affected training schemes and the development of Rural

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1095 Ibid.
Health Services and Medical Field Units for mass campaigns against the major epidemic
diseases” with the consequence that “the cost of the original programme is steadily
increasing…. To assess this increased cost at fifty percent would be a conservative
estimate.”

The schemes most affected by shortages of personnel, material and inflation were
those financed from Nigerian government funds. By 1948, the leprosy control
programme was reduced from six units (three each for Eastern and Western Provinces) to
four (three for Eastern Provinces and one for Western Provinces) because of problems of
finance, personnel and materials. By 1951, the medical field unit was merged with the
existing sleeping sickness services scheme, the tuberculosis unit was not yet functioning,
the nutrition unit (which was not being funded in the plan) was suspended because of the
resignation of the officer concerned; the construction of the mental health hospital was
yet to begin and the programme for training of personnel was far from being attained.

The worst affected were the rural schemes. With the plan to establish rural health
centres, the local administration began to discourage the opening of new dispensaries and
dressing rooms. In Bauchi Province, for instance, the building of a few rural health
centres, which served a miniscule population, led to the closure of existing dispensaries
and dressing rooms that served a wider area and population. The gross inadequacy of
grants and planning problems also affected the implementation of many rural health
schemes. In Ilaro, Abeokuta Province, after a rural health centre was built, the attached

1097 Ibid, 39.
1098 Ibid, 40.
1099 Ibid, 52-4.
medical field unit started a mass survey and epidemic containment programme without any medical officer to supervise this work.\textsuperscript{101}

The imposition of the funding of some of the rural schemes on Native Authorities further worsened the problem of implementation. Only a few Native Authorities were capable of funding the schemes and keeping them on schedule. The numerous small and poor rural Native Authorities were not capable of funding such schemes. Their financial situation worsened with the transition to the local government system. The introduction of the local government system necessitated the employment of professional staff such as treasurers, secretaries, midwives and the like and coincided with the placement of Native Authority staff on the same pay rates as government staff and the increment of wages that followed the general strike. These increases in recurrent expenditure, along with the payment of allowances to the various councilors, increased the cost of administration. According to Hicks, expenditure on administration was as much as 70-90\% of the revenue of small Native Authorities.\textsuperscript{102} This left barely enough for performing other functions including provision of services.

The resulting financial insolvency meant that most Native Authorities and many Local Governments could not meet some of their statutory and assigned obligations, particularly in social services and welfare. The training of personnel for rural health assigned to the Native Authorities in the medical and health services plan suffered most as some could not afford to send their personnel for training. In Warri Province, with no training centres, Urhobo Division could only train two Sanitary Inspectors between 1945 and 1949, while Aboh and Ijo Divisions could not train dispensers and midwives because

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid, 6.
\textsuperscript{102} Ursula K. Hicks, \textit{Development from Below: Local Government and Finance in Developing Countries of the Commonwealth},
the distance to the few training centres “increased the cost of training NA personnel [and] in addition to transportation, the NA had the responsibility for paying salaries and allowances of their employees in training as well as providing lodging, books, equipment and uniforms for them.”

Poor implementation resulted in the failure of the plan and attracted criticism from the populace. Sir Sydney Phillipson, who had earlier investigated the funding of education, was appointed to investigate health finance. Phillipson’s 1949 report on health criticized the exclusion of the missions and private practitioners in the plan and advised the extension of grants-in-aid to voluntary agencies for buildings, equipment and recurrent expenditure. He suggested that government should partner with the medical missionaries and private practitioners in the provision of medical and health services and the training of medical and health personnel especially in the rural areas.

Along with the implementation of some of Phillipson’s recommendations, the Nigerian government revised the ten year plan in 1951. This revision privileged economic development over social services, resulting in a further reduction in the funding of medical and health schemes which were yet to be implemented. Consequently, the buildings programmes were drastically cut to reduce cost, while the medical field unit was reduced from 18 units with 24 dressers to 12 units with 20 dressers. Apart from cancellation of some schemes, the “estimated expenditure (on health) of 2s/4d was

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1105 NAI CSO 26/2 File 53480 Vol.1, A revised plan of Development and Welfare for Nigeria, 1951-56, Note of a meeting to discuss the revised Nigeria Development Plan held in Mr. Corell Barnes’s room at 11.15am on the 17th October, 1950, 10.
reduced to 2s/-d per head of population in 1952.”\textsuperscript{1107} The revised plan’s implementation was further affected by regionalization, which made it difficult to implement the plan on schedule. In Northern Region, it was difficult to recruit qualified pupils for training because too few graduates were produced annually and the ease of their employment by the regional government made training programmes unattractive to them.\textsuperscript{1108}

After the approval of the revised plan, its implementation centered on the consolidation of the modest achievements of the first five year period, as whatever available funds, technical personnel and materials allowed. This focused largely on expansion of old hospitals and the establishment of two health centres in each region. By 1953, official reports recorded achievements in the medical and health field in terms of expenditure and provision of facilities over the pre-Second World War period. Government and NA dispensaries had increased from 337 in 1938 to 779, government/Native Administration and mission infant welfare and maternity homes rose from 77 to 494, while government hospital beds jumped from 1,930 in 1938 to 4,273 in 1946 and to 7,309 in 1953. These were only half the targets of the original plan. There was also increased spending on health from an estimated 1s.11d per person to an average of 15s.5d per person (14s.1d in Northern Region, 21s.2d in Eastern Region and 31s.1d in Western Region).\textsuperscript{1109} This increased expenditure, it must be noted, was mainly on capital projects (building construction, training of personnel and materials). While there were relative increases in hospitals beds, dispensaries, welfare clinics and patients attendance, the trained medical and health personnel were in 1952-3 reported to be

\textsuperscript{1108} Ibid, 45-7.
… much too few in proportion to beds. Doctors for purely clinical hospital duties totaled about 165 [same number as in 1945] but incidence of study and recuperative leave reduced the effective strength to about 120, each of whom, in addition to administrative, health, medico-legal, touring, schools and other inspection duties, had some sixty hospital beds to look after, saw thirty five new out-patients and admitted four in-patients each working day.

Similarly there were only about 70 nursing sisters available at any one time for over 7,000 beds and they had heavy teaching and clinic duties. The public now expects, and gets, a reasonably high quality of professional service at our general and special hospitals, but the staffing standards are low and any deterioration may seriously affect the quality of services rendered.  

Another report indicated that the situation was worse in the rural areas where

… concern is now being expressed by all regions at the deterioration evident in the Native Administration dispensaries, whose work must be re-orientated and for the constant supervision of which more rural medical officers than we at present have are required and must be provided... the various rural services now absorb the equivalent of about thirty doctors.

In addition to the gross inadequacies of facilities and personnel, the services became increasingly unaffordable to the over taxed and poor populace. Northern Nigeria, for instance, experienced a decrease of in- and out-patients “believed to be mainly due to the operation of the new Hospital Fees Regulations.”

Nutrition, which was removed from the plan, worsened. A report from Sokoto Province warned that,

Until the dietary (sic) of central Sokoto is completely revised, in terms of quality as well as of quantity, there can be no general improvement in standards of living. Still less will the province be able to increase its contribution to enhanced well being in more distant areas. The population is increasing, the soil except in the fadamas is steadily deteriorating. Unless bold measures are adopted starvation and not salvation may well be round the corner.

Similar nutrition problems existed in Southern Nigeria, particularly in the Western Region which “recorded the greatest number of patients, which may indicate that the

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1111 Ibid, 10.
deficiencies encountered are more severe than elsewhere and had seventy-seven in-patient deaths from nutrition deficiency diseases. An early medical assessment of the health of the people in Benin Province, Western Region in 1949 by Dr. Strudwick attested to the nutrition and poverty induced disease situation:

... the health of the local African is fair, but by no means good, Avitaminosis, (Ariboflavinosis) being extremely common and malignant malnutrition. Many marasmic children being seen but few cases of Cancrum Oris. A surprisingly low percentage of positives were found among children tested for Tuberculosis; the age group most affected by Tuberculosis appeared to be the 35-45 years old and Tuberculosis Peritonitis being frequently seen.

This situation persisted into the 1950s as attested by a report on Ishan division in 1953 where the common diseases included “malaria, the dysenteries, pneumonia, dracuntiasis, sarcoticsis, and avitaminosis”

One non-medical health services plan scheme that was critical to the health of the population was water supply which was divided into urban and rural. The urban water supply scheme involved providing piped and treated water to urban centres. The cost of staff, plant, instruments and vehicles plus 30% of other costs was to come from the CDWA while the balance 70% was to be financed by a loan which would be repaid by the urban centres’ administrations. The rural scheme was to provide clean water points for every 500 persons, improving existing water points and constructing new ones. The rural water supply scheme was to be partly financed from the CDWA.

The implementation of the water supply schemes started in 1944/5, but was also affected by the problems of staff and materials shortages. The urban schemes were too financially demanding for many Native Authorities, and only a few richer ones benefited.

For instance, in Warri Province, only Warri urban centre could finance a water works. Other urban centres continued to rely on wells and streams.\textsuperscript{1117} The rural scheme was concentrated on investigation and drilling in the groundnut producing areas of Northern Region\textsuperscript{1118} and neglected non-export crop producing areas.

By 1947 the rural scheme had run into financial problems and the approved plan was changed. Instead of the CDWA providing 30\% as approved in the plan, the funding of the scheme was transferred to the Nigerian government.\textsuperscript{1119} With this revision, the Native Authorities were required to provide 50\% of the cost of providing wells over 120ft in depth and the installation of tanks, pipes and pumping machines. Many Native Administrations could not afford this. For instance, by 1952, only eight of the 30 tube wells and ten of the 120 open wells proposed for Urhobo Division had been constructed. A further fifteen tube wells and thirty open wells were being built in 1953 when the scheme was discontinued.\textsuperscript{1120} Where such wells were provided, many were poorly executed. In Ondo Division, for instance, many of the completed rural wells had malfunctioned by 1950.\textsuperscript{1121} In Ishan Division, which had a deep water table, rural water supply was neglected and it was reported in 1953 that because of “The complete absence in some places of even spring water during the dry season, the peoples’ social and economic conditions, not to mention, ignorance and superstition and inadequacy of medical facilities have formed the fertile grounds in which preventable diseases have

\textsuperscript{1118} Nigeria, Annual Report on the general progress of development and welfare schemes, 1946-47 and 1947-48, 44.
\textsuperscript{1119} Nigeria, Annual Report on the general progress of development and welfare schemes, 1946-47 and 1947-48, 43.
\textsuperscript{1120} Agubosim “The Development of Modern Medical and Health services in the Warri/Delta Province, Nigeria, 1900-1960” Ph.D. Thesis, 210-211.
\textsuperscript{1121} Nigeria, Annual Report on the general progress of development and welfare schemes, 1949-50, 7.
grown and flourished.”

Though there continued to be small improvements in medical and healthcare service provision, the health situation of the population was worsening. This attracted World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) intervention especially in containing diseases of epidemic proportion such as yaws in Western Region and malaria and tuberculosis in Northern Region in 1954. The increasing incidence of tuberculosis and nutrition related disease suggests that poverty was increasing during the final decades of colonial rule.

**From Adult Mass Education to Community Development**

Community Development was a pet scheme of the Labour Party government, which was tied to the CDWA and Local Government reform, and aimed at achieving the Party’s political and welfare objectives in the colonies. Community development had grown out of the unfunded and poorly implemented “mass education” scheme of the late 1930s. The adult mass education scheme received little funding after its introduction and the Education Department showed little commitment to its implementation.

Since the adult and mass education scheme was not funded by the central administration and CDWA, the three groups of provinces had approached its implementation in various ways, depending on the disposition and revenue of the provincial administration. The implementation in the Eastern Provinces entailed both social and literacy education, the Northern Provinces placed emphasis on village

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reorganization/reconstruction or rural development based on the Anchau Scheme Model, while the Western Provinces attempted adult education in conjunction with other schemes decided on by the District Officer.

Shortly after the war, the Director of Education drafted a ten-year development plan for adult literacy. His stated reason for doing so was the need to have such a proposal to present to the Colonial Office or Parliament “when the inevitable request for information appears on the scene.” The scheme was to cost £14,000 in the first year with additional support from the NAs and fees in Southern Provinces to pay honoraria to volunteer teachers. Under the plan, 6000 classes were proposed to be established in 2000 centres and supported with grants for 4-5 years before becoming self-supporting. Only those schemes that emphasized agricultural training would receive further assistance from CDWA. The draft plan was not approved. However, £10,000 was approved for inclusion in the 1948 estimates for the scheme’s implementation in areas which showed enthusiasm and initiative in response to the propaganda of the Education Department.

The implementation of the adult and mass education scheme was adversely affected by the introduction of community development. A.B. Cohen of the Colonial Office had earlier visited Nigeria for an assessment of mass education in the colonies and found the implementation to be poor. For instance, the adult literacy scheme in Ijebu Province was reported to have dwindled with the loss of enthusiasm of the students and it was only in Ilaro and Ado Ekiti in the whole of the Western Provinces that schemes

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1124 Anchau scheme was localized scheme used to eradicate sleeping sickness in the Anchau village area of Zaria Province in the 1930s. It involved the clearing of the river banks and resettlement of the village inhabitants in planned new sites and their education in sanitation and agriculture.

1125 Ibid, Secretary, Western Provinces to The Chief Secretary to Government, 18/07/1947, 130-1 and Secretary, Northern Provinces to The Chief Secretary to Government, 28/07/1947, 133-5.

1126 NAK SNP 17 File 36861, Director of Education to The Chief Secretary, 09/09/1946, 92.

1127 Ibid, Chief Secretary to Government to Director of Education, 04/03/1947, 111.
similar to mass education were reported to be functioning. As a result, Creech-Jones, the Secretary of State for Colonies, directed that there should be no large financial provisions for adult literacy as an adjunct of education. The Governor concurred, but disagreed with the report of poor implementation in Nigeria, claiming that adult literacy work “has so far outstripped public relations and welfare departments which are both in the early stages of development”.

Following the regionalization of administration in 1948, adult education came under the jurisdiction of the central government and was coordinated by the Department of Education. The regional administrations adopted differing approaches to the scheme. In the first meeting of the Central Board of Education, the representative of Eastern Region was not supportive of adult literacy programmes, while the Western Region strongly favoured it, and the Northern Region held a middle ground. It was consequently resolved that the governments should assist only so far as funds and personnel allowed, use the spoken language of the people, assist with distribution of literature, and employ mature and experienced people as adult education officers. In the Western Region initial enthusiasm was not sustained because people became skeptical about the material rewards from participation. Potential teachers were also in high demand by regular schools. As well, work done on a voluntary basis or payment by token honoraria held little attraction for those concerned about meeting their subsistence needs.

By 1950 it was reported in Benin Province that engagement in rubber production had diverted people’s interest from the scheme, while in Oyo Province the lack of

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1128 Ibid, Secretary, Western Provinces to The Chief Secretary to Government, /01/1947, 105-6.
1130 Ibid, Arthur Richard, Governor to Secretary of State for Colonies, 20/08/1947, 136-140.
participation was blamed on increasing political activities.\textsuperscript{1132} In Northern Nigeria, where literacy had historically been in Arabic script, the administration stuck to roman script, which was a disincentive to potential participants. In Sokoto Province, though there was reported interest in the non-Muslim areas of Argungu, people neither patronized the reading rooms nor showed any interest in literary societies that were promoted.\textsuperscript{1133} They were mainly interested in provision of regular schools for their children that would lead to their employment.

Community Development was launched at the first Cambridge Summer School of 1948 that was held to prepare colonial administrative officers for the implementation of the British Labour Government’s policies in the colonies. Prior to its launching, Creech-Jones, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in a memorandum on “Social Development in West Africa”, had requested colonial governments to assess the means and ways of “raising rapidly the standards of living of African populations.”\textsuperscript{1134} The memorandum emphasized the need to increase agricultural output through new farming techniques and methods, reform of land tenure alongside “industrialization,” and political reforms.

The various tiers of government in Nigeria were still reviewing the memorandum when A.B. Cohen of the Colonial Office visited Nigeria for an assessment of the mass education scheme. Following Cohen’s report of its poor implementation and discussions at the 1948 summer school, Creech Jones abandoned the earlier adult education and mass literacy scheme with its top down approach in which the government was supposed to be

\textsuperscript{1134} NAI BP 2467 Social Development in West Africa- Arthur Creech-Jones, Secretary of State for Colonies to Governor of Nigeria, 22/02/1947, 3.
“having something to teach” the people about their own development. Creech-Jones excused British government culpability for the situation of the colonies and blamed the “resistance” of the colonized people for their bad situation.\(^ {1135}\) He further blamed the failure of mass education on misunderstanding and criticism by Africans and the inadequacies of the local administrative machinery.\(^ {1136}\)

Subsequently, in the place of mass literacy, the Colonial Office, under the guidance of Creech-Jones, developed a scheme known as community development to support the implementation of projects supposedly arising from the peoples’ initiative and involving their participation. The scheme was supported with a budget and implemented by special committees and officers. Community development, according to Creech-Jones was,

\[\ldots\text{a movement to secure the active cooperation of the people of each community in programmes designed to raise standards of living and to promote development in all its forms. It is no new movement but the intensification of past plans for development by means of new techniques; its main novel feature lies in the great emphasis which it places on the stimulation of popular initiative.}\] \(^ {1137}\)

He went on to quote from the report of the Cambridge Summer School that it,

\[\ldots\text{embraces all form of betterment. It includes the whole range of development activities in the districts, whether these are undertaken by Government or unofficial bodies; in the field of agriculture by securing the adoption of better methods of soil conservation, better methods of farming and better care of livestock; in the field of health by promoting better sanitation and water supplies, proper measures of hygiene and infant and maternity welfare; and in the field of education by spreading literacy and adult education as well as by the extension and improvement of schools for children … must make use of the}\]

cooperative movement and must be put into effect in the closest association with local government bodies.\textsuperscript{1138}

Its organizational base was the local government. It required that all the departments cooperate on the implementation of all schemes. Implementation also called for the creation and involvement of committees at all levels of administration. These were to be assisted by a Community Development Officer who was “in the closest consultation with local opinion.” The Provincial Resident was to control the budget which could be expended without reference to the central government. There were also to be training programmes for community development personnel and establishment of places for rural entertainment and amusement to help stem rural-urban migration.\textsuperscript{1139} The implementation of community development was tied up with the introduction of the Local Government system. This relationship was emphasized by Griffiths, a Labour Government Minister, who asserted that the success of local governments rested on community development, which was “the best method of winning the enthusiasm of the people for new and better local government bodies.”\textsuperscript{1140}

Community development, like its predecessor mass education, had an underlying political objective, which seems to have been emphasized at the Cambridge summer school, but was not included in the published report. Commander T.S.L. Pyke-Nott, Chief Commissioner Eastern Provinces, who participated in the seminar, prepared a memorandum for circulation to political officers that highlighted this hidden political objective:

\textsuperscript{1138} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1139} Ibid.
As I see it we are approaching the goal of self-government very rapidly and the pressure of events, both in this country and from outside, is such that we are in danger of reaching the stage of self-government for Nigeria before the masses of the people are in any position to take their due share and make themselves felt in the conduct of their own affairs. I do not attempt to set any time limit, but it might be fair to say that self-government is an event of the foreseeable future, and it is our greatest responsibility to ensure that it does not mean merely the exploitation of the masses by the few professional politicians. We must, therefore, as quickly as we can, develop an enlightened public opinion and encourage the people at the lowest levels to take the initiative and a lively interest in their own affairs. It is this at which community development aims...¹¹⁴¹ (my emphasis)

This excerpt illustrates the Labour Party strategy of attempting to use the illiterate peasants to neutralize the influence and ambitions of African nationalist politicians as outlined above by the Earl of Listowell and Andrew Cohen. It also makes it clear that the attachment of the community development scheme to the transition to local government was strategically aimed at alienating the unlettered rural populace from the urban based, educated nationalist politicians. This would simultaneously deny the educated nationalist politicians any grounds for further criticizing the colonial administration’s performance in the area of provision of social services. Consequently, the educated nationalists would become isolated and deprived of a mass political base to challenge the administration and colonial rule.

As Creech-Jones rightly pointed out, neither community development nor its emphasis on the “stimulation of popular initiative” were new. Indeed, much popular initiative in the field of social welfare had been discouraged by colonial officers. In part, community development was actually an attempt to solve the long-recognized problem of lack of coordination in the provision of skeletal social services through the cooperation of the various departments. Community development was an attempt to force departments to

¹¹⁴¹ NAK SNP 17 File 36861, Personal letter from Chief Commissioner to Residents, Eastern Provinces (No Date) 186-7.
cooperate under the coordination of the Provincial Resident who would be provided with some funds and free labour (lacking since 1930) for implementation of local schemes. Compared with its predecessor, this new approach was relatively less expensive. The earlier mass adult education scheme ran into funding problems and a lack of volunteers to perform free services. With the introduction of community development, adult literacy was de-emphasized. Creech-Jones circulated a memorandum, advising that adult literacy should be organized only in selected areas where it was likely to prove a success. Community development came to emphasize projects that would engage and maintain the population in their rural communities, increase productivity and engage the rural population in projects that insulated them from the influence of nationalist/agitationist anti-colonial politicians.

Creech-Jones had argued that community development “should improve an economy, since it is the most likely means of securing financial and other assistance from the people themselves” and that “…it must be regarded as part of the development programme and can contribute materially to their execution in the field.”\textsuperscript{1142} Since neither the latter memorandum nor the previous ones specified any particular projects for community development, the different regions continued with their different approaches and emphasis in formulating community development programmes.

The implementation of community development entailed either displacement or absorption of existing schemes. One scheme that was absorbed and became a main focus was the former Town Planning scheme of CDWA. Before the introduction of community development, the rural dimension of the town planning scheme was separated and

\textsuperscript{1142} NAK SNP 17 File 36861, Arthur Creech-Jones, Secretary of State for Colonies to Sir Arthur Richards, Governor of Nigeria, 25/07/1947, 114.
renamed the Village Reconstruction and Improvement Scheme to be separately funded by CDWA. The CDWA had proposed to provide 33½% funding of urban and township rehousing and reimbursement of 10% of the expenditure of rural communities that redesigned their houses and villages to enhance hygiene and initiate improvements of their communal buildings/facilities.1143 This was an incentive to community leaders to embark on improving the social infrastructure of their communities. To this end, the Nigerian government requested ten years’ funding in the sum of £352,000, but the government was advised to reduce the scheme’s funding period to five years and the amount to £156,000 in 1946. In addition, the British Treasury requested that the government provide the per capita cost of specific schemes before they were approved and funds released. However, this demand of the British Treasury could not be met, because the number of communities that would be involved could not be known until they applied.

With the introduction of community development and its absorption of the Urban and Town Planning and Village Reconstruction and Improvement Schemes, the earlier CDWA vote of £156,000 (out of which only £100,000 was approved) for village reconstruction and improvement was increased to £250,000 per year. The Regional Production Development Boards1144, with access to export crops marketing boards’ surpluses, were granted statutory powers to finance schemes for the development of produce industries and assist community development.1145

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1143 NAUK CO 583/274/1 Planning and Reorganisation: Village Reconstruction and Improvement-J. Smith, Development Secretary, Nigerian Secretariat to S. Caine, Colonial Office, 1/05/1945 and Extract from Minutes of Meeting of Central Development Boards.
1144 Regional Production Development Boards were established in 1948 and got first allocation of £4.3m from the Produce Marketing Boards.
1145 NAK SNP 17 File 36861, Sir John Macpherson, Governor of Nigeria to A. Creech-Jones, Secretary of State for Colonies, 08/06/1949, 228.
With greater available funds, the issue that the administrators of community development had to face was deciding which improvement scheme or facility was eligible for funding under the community development scheme. The improvements or amenities prioritized by communities varied. A case in point was in the Eastern Provinces/Region where some communities built leper segregation villages for their members and requested 10% reimbursement from community development funds or, in the alternative, that the cost be charged to leprosy and medical schemes. The Colonial Office returned the application to the colonial administration which decided not to fund the segregation villages.  

As a result of this development, the Chief Secretary to Government listed the village improvements that did not qualify for funding. These included “post offices, schools, maternity homes and leper villages, or the building of palm presses and similar commercial activities” as “none of these subjects can be considered as true village reconstruction and in some instances are the normal responsibilities either of government or Native Administration”, while those that qualified were “some form of amenity such as market place, playing field, village hall and other suitable facility or improvement.”

Since community development was aimed at keeping the populace in their rural communities, it also tried to promote rural handicrafts production. Rural handicrafts had been touted as a post-war development scheme to solve the envisaged unemployment problem of demobilized soldiers. It was feared that these demobilized soldiers would not

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1147 NAI BP 2305B Community Development: General- Circular on Village Reconstruction and Grants under Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme D. 547 by Chief Secretary to the Government, 15/01/1946, 45-7.
return to farming and needed alternative sources of livelihood in their villages. In the course of planning post-war development and rehabilitation of demobilized soldiers, some Political Officers had suggested the establishment of modern industries. They were quickly reminded that “…it was important not to confuse rural industries with industrialization” and that the only industries that should be considered were “local industries that have been set up during and as a result of the war.” As a result, local and rural crafts that had been revived and used to augment war shortages were to be used as a basis for establishing rural craft centres. The indigenous craft industries were textile weaving (whose looms were redesigned to utilize imported thread for producing clothing items for the local market) and the production of some raffia fibre products which were exported to the UK during the war. Rural textile weaving industries were encouraged because they did not compete with imports and boosted the market for imported British thread. The export market for Ikot Ekpene raffia products collapsed after the war following imposition of high taxes on imports to protect British products. The local textiles crafts scheme was also not remunerative. The decreased demand and poor remuneration from the rural crafts resulted in poor enrolment in the training schemes by both the ex-soldiers and youths who drifted to urban centres to seek alternative employment.

Under the community development scheme, model villages/communities and Farm Settlement Schemes that tried to replicate Anchau Scheme of the 1930s were also

1148 NAK SNP 17/ 31415 Extract from Minutes of the Northern Provinces Area Development Committee, 30/5/1945, 4.
promoted. The model villages/farm settlement schemes were popular in the Northern Region. A Christian missionary designed model village which revolved around the mission church was put forward in the Western Region. This church mission model was criticized for its religious bias and Oba Akenzua II, King of Benin, argued that it had the potential for conflict with local communities. These model villages and settlement schemes had planned layouts, rudimentary social amenities like central markets, feeder roads, reading rooms or community halls/centres and were presented to village leaders to copy for remodeling their communities. But most villages could not afford such comprehensive schemes. They only proposed single schemes such as the building or refurbishing of markets, or feeder roads, or reading rooms or community halls/centres which they could afford. After approval of the proposed village scheme, the administration provided the villages with work implements and sometimes materials in lieu of reimbursement of ten percent of the cost. In Benin Province, for instance, the administration provided spades, shovels, axes, hoes and pick axes. These were said to be “easily the most popular form of assistance and villagers walk in from many miles to collect their implements”. In addition cement, whitewash or coal tar and corrugated iron roofing sheets were provided. The markets were in most cases relocated and either extended or partially reconstructed with more permanent materials like cement and corrugated sheet metal roofing.

Similarly, the village halls or centres, which also served as reading rooms, were built mostly in small towns and were expected to serve for meetings and recreation. Such

1152 NAI BP 2305B Community Development: General- Oba Akenzua II of Benin to Resident, Benin Province, 21/11/1944, 6.
1153 NAI BP 2305/1 Community Development: Benin Division- J.B. Hamilton, District Officer Benin Division to Resident, Benin Province, 2/12/1949, 15.
town halls/centres and reading rooms were favoured by the Colonial Office, which
directed the administration to encourage the provision of entertainment in the villages as
an alternative to the attractions of the urban areas aimed at stemming urban drift and
d diverting interest from urban agitators. The administrators in some cases reported that
entertainment activities were thriving in rural communities,\textsuperscript{1154} but most of the kinds of
entertainment reported were indigenous leisure or religious activities that had long been
practiced. The reading rooms, as already shown, were also not much of a success.\textsuperscript{1155}
Only the markets, roads and wells could have made some impact on the welfare of the
rural populace as these promoted some level of hygiene, trade, and increased
productivity.

Community development also focused on promoting increased agricultural
production. The Native Authorities collaborated with the Agricultural Department and
invested funds in various schemes aimed at increasing agricultural productivity proposed
and promoted by the Department. This took the form of farm settlement schemes,
mechanized farming, animal husbandry, composting, inorganic fertilizer usage, mills,
irrigation, anti-erosion measures and campaigns, and promotion of new farming methods.
A few farming schools and settlement centres were also established. But these various
agricultural schemes affected only a small portion of the population in a few areas. This
was because the administration lacked the machinery and funds for wider coverage. Also,
the majority of the people lacked both the money and labour required for these schemes.

People would have had good reason to doubt the profitability of these schemes as
some proved ineffective in increasing agricultural yields. An instance was Benin

\textsuperscript{1155} NAI CSO 26/2 File 12518 Vol. XVI Sokoto Province: Annual Report, 1949, 4-5 and NAI CSO 26/2,
Division, where the Agricultural Officer informed the Resident in 1947 that after thirty years of agricultural experiments “no one experiment has succeeded in producing two good crops of yams (the basic food crop) from the same plot and that there is no new method which he can recommend to farmers” and recommended that the farmers should stick to their traditional agricultural practices.\textsuperscript{1156} In 1946, it was reported that the demonstration farms where the agricultural schemes were promoted in Oyo Province had not been visited by the farmers in the previous seven years,\textsuperscript{1157} thus making the continued maintenance a waste of the Native Administration’s funds and time.

But such advice by Agricultural Officers was not heeded by superior officers who were only interested in demonstrating their commitment to implementation of Colonial Office directives and programmes like community development and who were unwilling to admit failure. The failure to heed advice at times led to frustration of field officers. For instance Mr. Hainsworth, the Agricultural Officer of Benin and Delta Provinces vented his frustration: “I am not at all certain that the Native Authorities should continue expending large sums of money on Agriculture, as this is not and never will be an agricultural area.”\textsuperscript{1158} Though such failure and frustration cannot be generalized for Nigeria, it was a widespread problem that brought neither prosperity nor salvation to the mass of the population. Export crop production continued to expand, but the failure of food production to meet demand led to persistent shortages, high prices and increasing nutrition related health problems.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1156} NAI BP 2467 Social Development in West Africa- Resident, Benin Province to The Secretary, Western Provinces, 11/08/1947, 16.
\item \textsuperscript{1157} NAI CSO 26/2 File 12723 Vol. XVII Oyo Province: Annual Report 1946, 29.
\item \textsuperscript{1158} NAI ID 727 Vol. XI Annual Report, Ishan Division 1953, 13.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Overall, community development had little impact on the social welfare of the people. This was due to the many problems associated with both its objectives and their implementation. A major problem was the uniform method of funding all community projects. All the communities were treated alike, irrespective of the differences in their ecology, population and revenue potential. This non-consideration of differences made it difficult for some communities to benefit from the few approved projects. For instance, it was cheaper to provide wells in places where the water table was close to the surface and such communities were easily provided with water at less cost. In places with deeper water tables, needed boreholes and pumping machines cost 20-40 times the cost of providing a well. Such communities, like the waterless Ishan Plateau of Benin Province, were left out of the rural water schemes.

Poverty and the low revenue base of small sized native authorities also made it difficult to procure vital materials for provision of social amenities. Small population size prevented some communities from accessing some of the community development schemes as they lacked sufficient labour to undertake projects. The strategy of implementing community development based on voluntary labour and minimal funding was counterproductive. The Chief Commissioner of Eastern Provinces noted that “considerably larger allocations than we presently have for village development” were required because “there is much that costs actual cash and it can hardly be said that it is in human nature anywhere to do everything, or the greater part of anything, by voluntary effort.” He recommended the raising of various rates to offset the cost of the various schemes. But such advice and recommendations were not heeded. The problems of

\[1159\] NAK SNP 17 File 36861, Personal letter from Chief Commissioner to Residents, Eastern Provinces (No Date) 186-7.
implementation of community development were further worsened by the colonial administration’s concentration on local government reform work, decentralization of revenue allocation following the creation of regions, and staff shortages. Consequently, community development, like many other schemes of CDWA, did little to improve the social welfare of the populace.

Worse was the fact that peasant agriculture, which contributed 60% of the GDP, received only 6.5% of the projected expenditure in the first ten-year development plan. Despite large marketing board surpluses, most of these community development induced rural welfare projects were stillborn for lack of funds. As a result, community development increasingly began to emphasize propaganda work using radio talk shows, mobile cinema shows, and lectures on sanitation, domestic science, modern agricultural production systems, and the like.134 The objective was to increase the productivity of the “raw and ignorant” peasants,135 who were meant to bear the full cost of improving their own welfare through contributions of free labour and cash in the name of community development.


As already shown in chapter four, the welfare of Africans, which began to get the attention in the late 1930s that culminated in the addition of the word “welfare” to the CDWA of 1940, suffered a setback during the war. The war not only delayed

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implementation of the CDWA, but also provided an opportunity to clarify what the “welfare” component of the Act entailed. It was made clear that welfare in the colonies would not replicate the Beveridge Report, but rather was to be linked to activities that enhanced productivity and determined by an individual colony’s revenue. As a result, much that can be understood as social welfare was largely excluded from the CDWA funding and remained the sole responsibility of the Nigeria government. This section looks at the treatment of these various classes and categories of welfare excluded from CDWA funding.

**Resettlement and Welfare of Demobilized Soldiers**

A pressing issue that faced the colonial government was the resettlement of the over two hundred thousand Nigerian soldiers to be demobilized after the war. Ex-soldiers, who had been exposed to both the new experiences and traumas of military service, would have to be re-integrated, and in some cases resettled, into civilian life. The Colonial Office sent a directive on the issue to the Nigerian government as early as 1941 putting this issue on the government’s agenda. In response, the Economic and Social Welfare Committees and the Conference of Residents in Nigeria considered the issue of resettlement of demobilized soldiers and resolved that to prevent the ex-soldiers from becoming unemployed agitators in Lagos and other major urban centres, they should be demobilized in their provinces of origin to enable them to reintegrate quickly into community life. In addition, the demolition of military camps was proposed as a scheme that might provide initial employment and it was proposed that a questionnaire be sent

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1160 NAK KanProf 3657 Post War Problems- Summary of Proceedings of Residents Conference 1941, 4.
1161 NAK KanProf 3657 Post War Problems- Summary of Proceedings of Residents Conference 1941, 13.
to Nigerian soldiers with an “implied promise that loans might be issued to selected farmers and that ex-servicemen would be encouraged to take advantage of any such facilities.”\textsuperscript{1162} No other concrete plans were made for their resettlement as it was assumed that most would voluntarily return to their farms.

When the war ended, the returning soldiers were welcomed with music and parades with the occasional government officer in attendance and sent back to their provinces for demobilization.\textsuperscript{1163} Eighty resettlement centres were established in semi-urban communities in the provinces to discourage the soldiers from settling in the large urban centres. The ex-soldiers were registered and thereafter left to their own devices, the resettlement centres only receiving and attending to their complaints. An ordinance was passed which specified that a quota of ex-soldiers should be employed by commercial firms and government departments, but there were few vacancies and these had to be shared with civilian job seekers.

Policies regarding the employment of ex-soldiers varied by province. Labour exchanges, which had been established for young school leavers and other juveniles in places like Oyo Province, were instructed to give preference to the placement of ex-soldiers.\textsuperscript{1164} Sokoto Province encouraged them to return to their farms and reported that only the “undesirable” drifted to the large urban centres.\textsuperscript{1165} In Benue Province, a few were absorbed by the Native Authorities while others returned to the land with a few

\textsuperscript{1162} NAI CSO 26/5 File 40132 Vol. II Resettlement of Ex-Soldiers after the War- Record of Discussion held at Labour Headquarters on 11\textsuperscript{th} June 1946, 17.
placed on a five shillings monthly incentive as apprentice farmers. In Oyo Province the number of ex-soldiers reported to have secured employment showed annual improvement, while a few took training in the Farm School. In Owerri Province, the Resident, after securing employment for seventy-seven of its ex-soldiers, opined that “if work is found for five percent, good.”

The different policies adopted in the provinces resulted from the varying numbers of ex-soldiers involved and their educational qualifications. Sokoto, for instance, had only a few ex-servicemen and these were largely without much western education. But in the Southern Provinces, the problem of resettlement was compounded by the education of many of the ex-soldiers. In Benin Province, some of the ex-soldiers were professionals in their trades. The situation was worse in Owerri Province, which had over 20,000 volunteers, approximately twenty five percent were tradesmen and non-combatants. They were described as “a most difficult population to absorb into a predominantly rural community”, and by 1946, only 1,521 of the 10,528 ex-soldiers that had registered in the province had found employment. Most were reported to have shown “little disposition … to accept labourers work on daily wage rates.”

Some departments like the Forestry Department and Agricultural Departments proposed and designed CDWA funded settlement schemes to employ the ex-soldiers. The proposals were however rejected by Governor Richards who opined “that these men should be reabsorbed into civil life in their own home areas as quickly and as

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unobtrusively as possible” as he did “not consider it desirable that special settlement schemes should be devised for ex-servicemen alone.”  

Importantly, he argued “such settlement schemes are too expensive” and reasoned that “their gratuities and accumulated savings were more than sufficient to meet [the]… capital expenditure” of starting their own farms.  

Where the demobilized soldiers were interested in the farming and crafts, the existing training centres were too small to absorb many. For instance, the Oyo farm school admitted 24 ex-soldiers in 1946, dropping to 22 in 1948, and the former servicemen were reported to be a bad influence, which precluded any further admissions.  

By 1948 the administration directed the closure of the settlement centres, starting with nineteen in Northern Region, and the conversion of the centres in Eastern Region to employment exchanges. Other assistance for securing employment for demobilized soldiers was discontinued. According to Olomola,  

Of the 116,550 demobilized by December 1948, only 36,287 were absorbed into some employment and 4,401 re-enlisted into the army. Of the 34,188 tradesmen who returned, only 15,537 found employment while 1,285 re-enlisted. This shows that about 48-49 percent of tradesmen were rehabilitated … Of the 82,369 non-tradesmen who were demobilized, only 49,930 registered for employment; 20,750 were employed and 3,116 re-enlisted. These together constituted only about 29 percent of the non-literate the vast majority of whom - in fact 71percent-obtained nothing.  

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1170 NAI CSO 26/5 File 40132 Vol. II Resettlement of Ex-Soldiers after the War- Chief Secretary to the Government to Secretary, Northern Provinces and others, 13/11/1945, 13.  
1171 Ibid, Record of Discussion held at Labour Headquarters on 11th June 1946, 17.  
1173 NAI CSO 26/5 File 40132 Vol. II Resettlement of Ex-Soldiers after the War- Ag Secretary, Northern Provinces to The Commissioner of Labour, Lagos, 13/08/1948,45-6 and Secretary, Eastern Provinces to The Chief Secretary to the Government, 23 August, 1949, 54-5.  
Many of the ex-soldiers remained unemployed and frustrated. The situation was most serious in the Eastern Provinces that had no agricultural settlement schemes. Many had joined the army specifically to solve their problems of land shortage and unemployment. The former servicemen soon formed associations to liaise with the administration over their common problems. In response to the annual increment of tax, which they were expected to pay, they engaged in anti-tax agitations that resulted in violent riots in 1949 and 1950 and met with state repression.\footnote{NAI CSO 26/2 File 11930 Vol. XV Owerri Province: Annual Report, 1949, 4-5 and NAI CSO 26/2 File 11930 Vol. XV Owerri Province: Annual Report, 1950, 16.} Even in Northern Nigeria, which had only a few educated men or tradesmen among the demobilized soldiers, unemployment of ex-servicemen was a problem. As late as 1953, the Social Welfare Officer in Zaria reported frequent visits of ex-servicemen seeking employment assistance.\footnote{NAI CSO 26/5 File 40132 Vol. II, E. Hillier, Report on Social Welfare Services in Nigeria, Northern Region, 1953, 4.} The demobilized soldiers either sought re-enlistment or joined the growing army of unemployed.

Rehabilitating the Unemployed: From School Leavers After-Care to a Juvenile and Adult Employment Exchange Policy

As shown in chapter five, the government decided to restrict the employment exchange and registration of the unemployed for job placement to Lagos and was considering closing the exchange at the end of the war in 1945. This was at a time when the problem of unemployment had been exacerbated by the end of the war.\footnote{The termination of war reduced the job opportunities created by the war and the demobilization of soldiers increased the population of the unemployed. The Lagos press, particularly the \textit{Daily Times}, expressed concern about the decision to restrict establishment of labour exchanges to Lagos and demanded removal of this restriction and}
the extension of labour exchange services to the provinces to tackle the employment problem.\textsuperscript{1178} The \textit{West African Pilot} (WAP) blamed the unemployment problem on investment of surplus revenue abroad instead of in the local economy and called for extending credit to the unemployed.\textsuperscript{1179}

The Labour Department defended the restriction of the employment exchange and registration to Lagos and countered the claims of the press that the employment exchange was responsible for migration of the unemployed to Lagos. The Department further argued that the exchange and registration were means of controlling labour, as once it was known that only skilled and resident labour were registered and employed, rural folks and their relatives would be discouraged from migrating to Lagos and other industrial centres for employment.\textsuperscript{1180} They supported their argument with figures that showed that before the restriction 400 school leavers drifted to Lagos in 1943 and that because of the restriction of employment to Lagos School leavers and the creation of a separate register of provincial school leavers, 319 of 418 secondary school leavers, or 90 percent, remained in the province in 1944.\textsuperscript{1181} The Department further claimed that registration helped provide employment for the bulk of secondary school leavers in 1943 and that the employment exchanges’ linkage of employers with suitably qualified employees helped eliminate the bribery that characterized job seeking. In addition, the employment exchange was providing apprenticeship, training and providing information on the prospective job seeker. The Juvenile Employment Exchange also had the

\textsuperscript{1180} Ibid, Commissioner of Labour to CSG, 20/12/1945, 5-8.
\textsuperscript{1181} NAI ComCol. 1 File 2784, Juvenile employment exchange- Commissioner of Colony to Chief Secretary to Government, 7/12/1945, 158 and CSG to Commissioner of Colony, 19/12/1945, 159.
advantage of “decentralization” because it “assists in the movement towards regionalization and in addition discourages the tendency towards detribalization.” The Department concluded its defense by blaming the alleged poor performance of the employment exchange on the now corrected problems arising from inexperienced staff and on the stoppage of registration since the closing months of 1944 in order to clear existing backlogs. The arguments of the Labour Department, though self-serving, clarified the objectives of setting up the juvenile employment exchanges. These objectives were both social and political, mainly restricting rural-urban drift and checking “detribalization.”

Though the influence of the Lagos press on the government on this issue is not clear, it may have combined with the arguments of the Labour Department to sway the Governor and the Chief Commissioners to rescind their earlier decision to close the Lagos employment exchange and not to establish employment exchanges in the provinces. The demobilization of soldiers and the need to find employment for some of them might have also contributed to the retention of the labour exchanges to address this problem. Thus, the Juvenile Employment Exchange was saved and separate registers were opened for school leavers who moved on their own from the provinces to Lagos as well as for those who applied from the provinces.

1183 Ibid, 7.
1186 NAK, File MSWC 1346 Juvenile Employment and After care: Advisory Committee for, CSG to Secretary, Northern Provinces, 19/12/1945, 2.
By 1946, the unemployment of school leavers and juveniles had worsened, but the Labour Department was more concerned with the reservation of available jobs for demobilized soldiers.\footnote{NAI ComCol. 1 File 2784, Juvenile employment exchange- Minutes of the Seventh meeting of the Lagos Advisory Committee for Juvenile Employment and Aftercare held in the Council Chamber on the 26\textsuperscript{th} January, 1946, 163.} The After Care Committee was making little progress in tackling unemployment and the Chief Social Welfare Officer complained that “after a few years” the Committee “has had no effect upon juvenile employment.”\footnote{Ibid, CWO to Commissioner of Colony, 23/4/1946, 166.} The Committee’s records for early 1946 showed that only 195 school leavers got job placements out of 1403 registered between January and March. It was worse in March when only 37 juveniles (including women) out of 531 got job placements.\footnote{Ibid, Juvenile Employment Exchange Statistics, 168-9.}

The poor performance of the Committee was partly due to the nature of the Nigerian economy which was largely agrarian and generated only a few service jobs in the absence of manufacturing industries. There was also the problem of the lackadaisical attitude of the Committee members, including the chairman, towards their task. Though placements improved slightly afterwards, there were complaints that employers, especially those who employed domestic servants, were wary of using the exchange because some of those placed by the exchange were reported to be “very smart.”\footnote{Ibid, Minutes of the Eleventh or last meeting of the Lagos Advisory Committee for Juvenile Employment and Aftercare held in the Council Chamber on the 4\textsuperscript{th} July 1946, 181-2.} In addition to complaints, the Committee paid little attention to the wages and working conditions of positions being offered to job seekers. The Committee saw these as the responsibility of the Labour Department and only concerned itself with interviewing and sending applicants to available jobs. As a result of this ineffectiveness, the Committee was dissolved in July 1946, but reconstituted and enlarged in 1947.
Apart from the problem of juvenile unemployment, new problems of child labour abuse and exploitation, particularly in the plantations and timber industry of Benin Province, soon attracted international attention. Here children were being used to undercut the position of unionized labour. The government responded by demanding compulsory registration of all employed and unemployed young persons aged between 12 and 18 years in all industries by the Labour Exchange from 1st April 1946 to ensure that young persons could only be employed in certain jobs specified on their labour cards. This compulsory registration ended in June 1946. Applicants were thereafter required to prove residency in Lagos before 1st April to be registered by the Lagos exchange.

In spite of the labour abuse problem, attempts by the Labour Department to establish labour exchanges outside Lagos continued to be resisted by the local provincial administrations. The Chief Commissioner, Western Provinces, set out as conditions for the establishment of labour exchanges in Ibadan, Benin and Sapele that the Labour Department must provide competent staff and funding, that the Provincial Administrations would not be involved in conducting interviews of prospective school leavers, that school leavers’ participation should be voluntary, and that the labour exchange would support registration of labour in timber and rubber industries. The reason behind the setting out of these conditions was the attempt by the Provincial Administrations to avoid the expense of setting up and running labour exchanges. By September 1946, a labour exchange had been established in Benin and a juvenile labour

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1192 NAI ComCol. 1 File 2784, Juvenile employment exchange- Minutes of the Eleventh or last meeting of the Lagos Advisory Committee for Juvenile Employment and Aftercare held in the Council Chamber on the 4th July 1946, 181-2.
1193 Ibid, Ag. Secretary, Western Provinces to CSG, 9/02/1946, 23.
exchange in Ibadan, but not in Benin. While the abuse of child labour had not been reported in Ibadan, the town did have a problem of juvenile delinquency, and perhaps it is this that explains the establishment of a juvenile labour exchange there. Even if a juvenile labor exchange had been established in Benin City, it probably would have been ineffective in solving the child labour problem, as recruiters of children for the rubber and timber industries by-passed the city by recruiting child labour to be trafficked to these rural industries from rural areas of the Eastern Provinces.

The Chief Commissioner of Eastern Provinces continued to oppose the exchanges in spite of support for their establishment by the majority of his Residents. The Residents of the Northern Provinces also opposed the exchanges, except for the Resident of Plateau Province, who had a huge mining labour problem to deal with. The Chief Commissioner eventually approved establishment of adult labour exchanges for Kano and Plateau Provinces, but argued that other provinces were not ripe for labour exchanges.

Opposition by the local Provincial Officers was prompted by a lack of funds to set up and run the exchanges, by avoidance of additional responsibilities, and the desire to restrict youths to agricultural occupations. The opposition was short-lived, as additional exchanges were opened in Kaduna along with eight army resettlement centres in 1947. The Public Works Department and Native Administrations used the exchanges to get ready information on the number of workers that were engaged seasonally and or permanently laid-off for purposes of re-engagement.

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1195 Missing reference
1196 NAK File MSWC 1338 Resident, Plateau Province to Secretary, NP 13/02/1946, 19 and Secretary, Northern Provinces to Chief Secretary to Government, 25/02/1946, 22.
1197 NAK File MSWC 1338, Senior Labour Officer to Residents, August, 1950, 35.
Given the initial opposition to and absence of labour exchanges in most towns, labour continued to drift to Lagos and other urban centres. Since the denial of registration to non-residents of Lagos failed to arrest migration, new methods were adopted to attempt dealing with rural-urban migration. By April 1947, Barbara Akinyemi, a newly arrived European nurse and health visitor seeking domestic servants was informed that Africans could only be employed through the Labour Exchange, but that the Exchange was not issuing labour cards in order to discourage migrations to Lagos.¹¹⁹⁸

Little documentation exists of the activities of the new After-Care Advisory Committee that was reconstituted and enlarged in 1947. Though it claimed to have held quarterly meetings, it submitted its first and only report in 1951. Of all the members appointed in 1947, only one remained in 1951 and he called for a reassessment of the value of the Committee which succeeded in placing 10⅔ % of primary school leavers and 46% of secondary school leavers in employment.¹¹⁹⁹

**RECORD OF REGISTRATION AND PLACEMENT OF SCHOOL LEAVERS BY LAGOS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON JUVENILE EMPLOYMENT AND AFTER CARE, 1946-1950 (TABLE 7)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pry. Sch. Leavers - reg.</th>
<th>-placed</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Sec. Sch. Leavers - Reg</th>
<th>-placed</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>1948</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pry. Sch. Leavers - reg.</td>
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<td>1461</td>
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</tr>
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<td>-placed</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sec. Sch. Leavers - Reg</td>
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<td>608</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>918</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-placed</td>
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<td>333</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>565</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>41%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NAI ComCol. 1 File 2784, Advisory Committee on Juvenile employment and After-care, pp.200-201.

¹¹⁹⁹ NAI ComCol. 1 File 2784, Advisory Committee on Juvenile employment and After-care Report in M.H.V Fleming, Ag. Colony Education Officer to The Commissioner of Colony, 6/2/1951, 197.
The bulk of the primary school leavers that were registered and placed in employment came from Lagos and Western Provinces, while the Eastern Provinces produced very few and the Northern Provinces had only one employed. The Advisory Committee claimed that a large number of primary school leavers could not be employed because of the economic conditions of the colony, and that the preference of secondary school leavers for “white collar” jobs made it difficult to get them to accept available job placements. The Advisory Committee’s report also highlighted the large number of primary school-age children who were not in school, but were reported to be “gainfully occupied” as domestic servants, hawkers, bartenders, truck (cart) pushers, and so on. This group of “out of school” children, including girls between the ages of five and eight years, was reported (in census figures) to be “gainfully occupied” in circumstances which the Committee report regarded as illegal. The report ended with a recommendation for the appointment of a full-time professional to perform the functions of the Committee and the establishment of separate offices for both the Adult and Juvenile Labour Exchanges.\(^{1200}\) Subsequent reports of the Committee’s work showed poorer results in job placement. By 1953, the Committee was again dissolved and a management committee appointed in its place.\(^{1201}\)

The After Care Committee and juvenile labour exchanges were not meant to, nor did they, seriously address the unemployment problem. They were not only starved of funds, but also never adequately staffed. The training centres, which were proposed and approved for technical and craft training of school leavers, were never established, while

\(^{1200}\) NAI ComCol. 1 File 2784, Advisory Committee on Juvenile employment and After-care Report in M.H.V Fleming, Ag. Colony Education Officer to The Commissioner of Colony, 6/2/1951, 195-201.

\(^{1201}\) Ibid, Ag Town Clerk to CSG, 17/3/1953, 310.
the technical education schemes contained in the ten year development plan had very limited facilities for the training of the large non-school and school leaver youth population. The restricted opportunities and facilities for training denied the majority of the young population employment and meaningful citizenship. While this large population of untrained unemployed youth contributed to cheapening the cost of labour, government was left to deal with the attendant problem of juvenile delinquency.

**Juvenile Delinquency and Social Welfare in the Post-War Era**

Juvenile delinquency made it necessary to establish control over youth in order to minimize crime. Since the establishment and maintenance of youth recreation and social clubs was less expensive than controlling crime itself, the Social Welfare Department continued with this line of work among the youth. But this work remained confined to Lagos and gradually became less of a priority after the war. One indication of the diminishing importance of social welfare more generally was that the First Annual Progress Report on CDWA contained no report on the subject. The exclusion of Social Welfare Department’s work from CDWA was blamed on the Lagos colony administration’s late submission of proposals and schemes for the CDWA. Though subsequent reports on CDWA included social welfare, this was done as a formality and perhaps to serve propaganda purposes. The Development Secretary, Mr. Chapman stated that,

… in my view Social Welfare had found its way into the 10 year plan rather by accident and that therefore it continued in the revised plan, whereas its rightful place might be in the normal estimates or in the estimates of Local Government….  

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Social Welfare in post-war Nigeria was not considered critical to increasing production or the revenue base of the colony. As a result, it was not considered important enough to attract CDWA funding. Consequently, the funding of social welfare was passed on to the Nigerian government,\textsuperscript{1204} even though the achievements and performance of the Department were reported in CDWA reports for cosmetic purposes.

Developments in the Social Welfare Department immediately after the war were not influenced by the CDWA, but rather by the Report on Social Welfare in Nigeria prepared by Mr. Paterson, a member of the Colonial Social Welfare Advisory Committee, who visited and assessed social welfare work in Nigeria in 1944 (as discussed in chapter five). Paterson’s report was largely welcomed by the Nigeria Government, and based on it, the government made some recommendations and requests that were endorsed by the Colonial Office.\textsuperscript{1205} Following this endorsement, a female social welfare officer was employed in Lagos and a Miss Belcher was appointed to start social welfare work in Calabar in 1945.\textsuperscript{1206} Major Shepheard was subsequently appointed to survey and draw up principles for the operation of social welfare in Nigeria. The report and criticisms of Major Shepheard’s survey were harmonized into one document, approved, and circulated as guidelines for social welfare work in Nigeria. The


\textsuperscript{1205} The Governor recommended to the Secretary of State for Colonies, the appointment of an Assistant Commissioner of Welfare attached to Department of Labour to coordinate Social welfare issues. He also requested for Social Welfare officers to be appointed for the Provinces to work under the Resident and Development and Welfare Committees while the Assistant Commissioner of Welfare was to provide them with guidance as broad principles. The recommendations of the Governor were all endorsed except the subordination of social welfare to Labour department. NAK MSWC 1214/S.2 Social Welfare in the Colony and Protectorate (Nigeria): Report on by Mr A. Paterson- Arthur Richards, Governor to Oliver Stanley, Secretary of State for Colonies, 14/10/1944 and Oliver Stanley to Officer Administering the Government of Nigeria, 22/05/1945, 41.

\textsuperscript{1206} Private voluntary social welfare work had been initiated in Calabar since 1943 before government stepped in and took over.
approved guidelines had the objectives of promoting improved conditions of living and brightening rural life through promotion and encouragement of the formation of boys and young farmers clubs. In the urban areas, the objectives were rehabilitating young offenders and juveniles and providing them with probation services, hostel accommodation, employment services, community and play centres, libraries, and reading rooms. The government was to provide funds for the implementation of the guidelines.\(^\text{1207}\) In addition, a school for training of African social workers was to be established to provide the personnel to implement these programmes.

With these developments, social welfare was largely reduced to prevention and remedying juvenile delinquency problems through the engagement of youths and children in various desirable activities as a means of social control. It continued to primarily confront the symptoms rather than the causes of delinquency. The promotion of this kind of social welfare continued to expand in Lagos but was not extended to other areas as had been recommended by Paterson in 1944. The reason given for the continued restriction of social welfare work to Lagos was that the Social Welfare Department needed to be developed to provide,

\[\ldots\] a comprehensive service of the highest standard, in order that the efficacy of modern methods could be demonstrated, and as corollary, it was necessary to follow a policy of concentration as opposed to dispersal of resources… Worthwhile expenditure… on staff; the key-note [has]…been the use of African staff.\(^\text{1208}\)

In Lagos, social welfare work still concentrated on trying to stop children’s engagement in street trading (as a contravention of the Children and Young Persons Ordinance of

\(^\text{1207}\) NAI Ughelli Dist.1 File 826 Advisory Committee on Economic Development and Social Welfare-The Chief Secretary to Government to The Secretary, Northern Provinces et.al, Report on Social and Juvenile Welfare in Nigeria, 23/09/1946, 206-208.

1948) and the establishment of a Borstal institution for “a number of young persons of confirmed criminal habits for whom the juvenile court could not prescribe adequate treatment.” This was in addition to the remand home. Work on organizing the boys’ and girls’ clubs and running the hostel and probation work were continued. The Department also attempted to adopt a community development program as a means of interesting and orienting youths towards agriculture and crafts especially in rural communities of Lagos Colony.

The establishment of a Social Welfare Department in Calabar in 1946 soon attracted requests for extension to other urban centres by their inhabitants who faced a similar problem of juvenile delinquency. For instance, W. Max George, who claimed to be a youth and social organizer in Port Harcourt, requested government assistance for promoting social welfare work through youth club activities there in 1946. The worsening poverty that was manifested in overcrowding and slum development in Port Harcourt soon necessitated an official request by the Chief Commissioner of Eastern Provinces for the funding of social welfare there in 1948. Before its approval, the Chief Commissioner was notified by the Development Branch that,

> The underlying principle of the social welfare scheme however is that the people of Nigeria must be made to realize the need for such services and the best way to make them realize is to make them pay for such services…. The need for such services is largely the result of the local peoples’ own shortcomings, and therefore their financial responsibility for social welfare work should be greater.  

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1210 NAI CSO 26/3 File 46799 Social Welfare in Port Harcourt- W. Max George, Port Harcourt to Principal Assistant Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Lagos, 30/04/1946,1.
This view of social problems as being caused by the people themselves rather than by the changing processes of social and economic production brought about by the colonial system was a clear case of blaming the victims. The result was that even the restricted social welfare services provided were to be made the financial responsibility of the victims and not the colonial administration.

The local provincial administrations were themselves unwilling to fund social welfare because of inadequate revenue. For instance, the Chief Commissioner of Eastern Provinces requested a large sum for establishing social welfare work in Port Harcourt in 1948 because the Region had no provision for it in the provincial budget and wanted it funded entirely from central funds. When funding was not forthcoming, the local administrations resorted to denying the existence of social problems among Africans.

The problem of social welfare administration was worsened by regionalization that introduced the sharing of revenue among the regions. It became ever more difficult to determine which level or unit of government was to fund social welfare. The central government eventually decided to establish social welfare departments in the three regions. Consequently, in the Northern Region, which formerly had no Social Welfare Department, one was established in Zaria in 1949. It was decided to establish Social Welfare Department offices in Jos and Kano in Northern Region in 1950, but this was made contingent on the availability of staff, and could not be implemented because of the lack of educated personnel in Northern Provinces.

Another survey of the social welfare situation was made in 1950 by Mr. Chinn, the Adviser on Social Welfare to the Secretary of State for Colonies. This survey showed

1212 Ibid.
that in spite of Nigeria’s pioneering the appointment of the first Social Welfare Officer in the colonial empire, the level of social welfare work was still very poor. He commended the concentration on preventive services, which was considered an area of strength, as well as the treatment of “girls in moral danger”, and rural welfare though voluntary community works in Lagos Colony. However, he found that the probation system, restricted to Lagos and Calabar, was not being well administered, and that there was no advisory coordinating machinery to help the government in defining and interpreting policy. There was also no defined welfare policy for Calabar and social welfare work in Zaria was done out of official interest instead of need. He also noted that there was a neglect of social welfare where it was most needed, in the Western Region, especially Ibadan, inadequate local training and a lack of consideration of regional differences. He concluded that,

Social Welfare has had a bad start in Nigeria. The demonstration of its successful application in certain fields in Lagos has not inspired enthusiasm in official circles for its development elsewhere, although there is evidence that in this respect that official interest has not kept pace with public demand….

The functions of a social welfare service need to be defined both from the technical and administrative point of view and financial provision should be estimated on an approved plan. The financial provision for social services in Nigeria as a whole is at present £100,000 voted arbitrarily, had two thirds of which is already committed to the Colony.\textsuperscript{1214}

In spite of the sorry state described by Mr. Chinn’s report, social welfare was still excluded from CDWA funding in the revised plan of 1951. When Mr. Chinn queried its absence in the revised CDWA plan, C.J. Pleas of the Nigerian Secretariat claimed that the earlier inclusion of social welfare in the CDWA report had been an accident and that the revision of the ten year plan in 1950 was neither a response to his report nor to the

\textsuperscript{1214} NAK MSWC 1226 Social Development in the Colonies: Report by Mr W.H. Chinn-Report by Mr Chinn, Social Welfare Adviser to the Secretary of State, February 1950, 7-26.
Secretary of State for Colonies’ dispatch. He further claimed that the “regions were unable to find more for social welfare in conflict with claims for other services within the financial ceiling.” However, the plan was revised to make provision for the establishment of social welfare services in Abeokuta, Ibadan and Warri in the Western Region, continuation of services in Calabar and Port Harcourt in Eastern Region for the next two years before welfare services would be absorbed into municipal and local government services, and maintenance of skeleton advisory staff in Northern Region.

With regionalization of the provinces, the different administrations tailored social welfare to suit their perceived social problems and needs. In 1951/2 the Northern Region defined the task of the Social Welfare Officer as “to assist and guide the Native Authorities in social welfare work, which has by tradition always been a function of natural rulers.” But the Native Authorities and regional government lacked the personnel to perform social welfare work. This was because they lacked the requisite number of qualified personnel. Mr. Hillier, a Social Welfare Officer, complained that the few potential staff were too young and inexperienced to undertake the work and “even though the posts are junior … with an educational standard not below middle IV. In this region it seems impossible to find them.” Consequently, social welfare was concentrated in and around Mr. Hillier’s office in Zaria and centered on probation work, organizing social youth clubs, attending to matrimonial reconciliation cases, and trying to establish borstals, hostels, recreation and community centres. The Social Welfare Office

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1216 Ibid, 73.
also continued to deal with the problems of demobilized soldiers. In addition to the old reformatory in Kano, the Native Authorities established two reformatories in Maiduguri and Sokoto in 1953.\textsuperscript{1219} These were the same provinces where officials had denied the existence of social problems till the late 1940s.

In spite of the existence of some social welfare institutions, namely the Enugu Industrial School, Calabar Remand Home and Boys Section of Port Harcourt Prison established by the central government, the Eastern Regional government relegated social welfare work to the new local governments. Pre-existing social work in the port towns of Calabar (which had the only juvenile court) and Port Harcourt were continued, most probably because these ports facilitated the trafficking of children to Spanish Fernando Po. But, probably due to funding problems, there was no further extension of social welfare work to other areas. In addition, the Chief Commissioner had earlier expressed his unwillingness to introduce the foreign or American models of rural social welfare proposed by Faulkner and preferred that social work be undertaken by missions who would be supported with grants.\textsuperscript{1220} However, the missions were neither mandated to undertake the work nor provided with any grants and, by mid-1950s, the regional administration was blaming the shortage of trained staff for neglect of rural welfare work. The absence of female welfare officers was claimed to have contributed to the trafficking and migration of children of the rural Eastern Region to urban centres and plantations in the Western Provinces and Fernando Po.\textsuperscript{1221}

\textsuperscript{1219} Ibid
\textsuperscript{1220} NAI CSO 26/3 File 52016 Development of Social Welfare in Eastern Provinces-Secretary, Eastern Provinces to The Chief Secretary to Government, 31/01/1948, 44-5
\textsuperscript{1221} M.L. Belcher, Annual Report 1956-57Social Welfare Department, 1
The Western Region government continued along the lines established by the
Lagos Colony Social Welfare Department. An assessment conducted in 1952
recommended the extension of social welfare services to other urban areas and
consequently social welfare offices were established in Ibadan and Abeokuta in 1953 and
Warri and Sapele in 1954. In all these years, save the hostel in Lagos which was for
temporary accommodation, no training institutions were established for rehabilitation of
girls in spite of the outcry over child prostitution and inadequate employment
opportunities for girls.

Though social welfare work addressing juvenile exploitation, crime and
destitution began in the 1920s, culminating in the establishment of a Social Welfare
Department in the 1940s, the aims and objectives of social welfare were never defined.
The Department started with the problems of juvenile delinquency, and later added
mediation of matrimonial disputes, issues of child custody, and conflicts between masters
and juvenile domestic servants in Lagos. The provinces largely left social problems
arising out of increasing poverty to the extended families and charitable institutions. But
given the inadequacies of the extended family and church charities within the changing
socio-economic system, it was only with regionalization in 1952 that social welfare as
distinct from social security was defined “as excluding social services such as education
but including something more than measures undertaken for classes of the community
requiring special care.” By this time, the central government had relinquished
responsibility for social welfare to the regions, which, in turn, increasingly relegated it to
the cash strapped local governments. The worsening social welfare situation began to

1222 Western Region of Nigeria, Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare Services Western
Region, (including Lagos) for the Year 1953-54, Ibadan, Government Printer Western Region, 1956, 1-2.
attract increasing involvement of international social philanthropic organizations such as
the British Red Cross that became active especially in the Eastern Region.\(^{1224}\) The worst
affected in the new dispensation were “classes of the community needing special care”
particularly people with disabilities.

**Post-War Treatment of Disability**

Though the Second World War aroused the state to establish a Social Welfare
Department, the disabled, in spite of the recognition of their needs during the war, never
featured in the agenda of the Social Welfare Department. Since the disabled posed no
threat and had little potential for political action capable of destabilizing the colonial
project, they were largely ignored. Except for the pressure from British and international
organizations which resulted in the few war disabled being paid a pension and given
some training, and the establishment of rehabilitation centre in 1944, the disabled
continued to be neglected.

The 1952 Colonial Office report which helped define social welfare could only be
understood to have included the disabled in so far as they might have been understood to
have been included in the vague reference to “classes requiring general care”. But it was
stated clearly that “Generally speaking the care of the destitute, aged and sick is the
acknowledged responsibility of the family”\(^{1225}\) and this can be interpreted to have
excluded the disabled from the definition of social welfare. This was a reaffirmation of
existing policy of leaving the social welfare of those other than delinquents to “native
lines”. Only leprosy and mental health received some attention under the CDWA, and


this would have benefited only the few disabled lepers and psychiatric patients who could afford the fees. The larger population of disabled persons remained dependent on their families and charity. Many moved into the urban centres where they begged or were left to their own devices until death.

With regionalization, the government of Northern Region, which had the bulk of disabled, was more proactive because of the criticisms by its population about the shame begging was bringing to the region. The Region’s blind population was reported to have numbered over 200,000 by 1959. The regional government established a society for the blind in 1952 and seven rehabilitation centres in different towns with 23 employed blind workers and 208 trainees by 1956. In addition, the Sudan United Mission established a training school for blind children in Gindiri, but its application for a government subvention was turned down because the government claimed to be planning a similar school. This rejection might also have been due to the religious inclinations of the SUM, which was unwelcomed by an administration largely under the influence of Muslim leaders.

The Eastern and Western Regional Governments had yet to show interest in disability by 1954. The care of the disabled was being undertaken by private charities and philanthropic groups. The situation began to attract the attention of international agencies. In 1952 the British Empire Society for the Blind revived interest in the colonies and funded investigation of River Blindness. A farm and craft school for the blind was later started in Lagos in 1954. The British Red Cross Society commenced fund raising

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1227 Ibid, 184.
1228 Ibid, 77.
to assist the welfare of the disabled persons, particularly in Eastern Region. In addition, voluntary and philanthropic organizations - especially missions, and ethnic and township associations - were assisting to care for the disabled. But the main responsibility, as already indicated, was assigned to the family. However, the “late colonial” economy made it increasingly difficult for the working people to fulfill this obligation.

Managing Family Welfare on a Bachelor’s Wage: State and Labour Welfare

The wage and salary earning class, though small in relation to the total population, were critical to the economy and society. Many members of their nuclear and extended families and their communities depended on the earnings of the wage and salary earning class, thereby imposing many demands on their wages and salaries. As the economist Gerald Helleiner remarked in 1966:

The family system found intact in most Nigerian cities, which requires the prosperous – the employed – to shelter the less fortunate, permits the urban wage rate in many small-scale urban activities and services to fall well below subsistence.\(^{1230}\)

Both wages and salaries were also critical to the expansion of import trade and custom revenues on which the state largely depended. Wages and salaries remained low and premised on the belief that wage-earners’ families were self-sufficient through other means. This made it difficult for wage-earners to meet their various obligations. Discontent with this state of affairs was a major cause of the general strike of 1945.\(^{1231}\)

\(^{1229}\) Ibid, 86.
\(^{1231}\) It prompted the formation of more unions and spate of strikes that was to plague Nigeria until the 1949 massacre of striking miners at Iva Valley in Enugu and consequent widespread urban riots in Eastern
However, a resulting major demand of the strike, the payment of “family” wages and allowances to Africans to enhance their family welfare, was not achieved. The demand for family wages had been partially conceded by the Tudor Davies Commission, which had arbitrated the general strike. But the Nigerian administration deliberately stalled the implementation of the Tudor Davies Commission recommendations by insisting on waiting for the outcome of the later Harragin Commission on the West Africa Colonies. The Harragin Commission was established in 1945 to deal with the terms and conditions of the civil service in British West Africa. The Harragin Commission report argued that European families and culture differed from Africans and so metropolitan allowances were not applicable to African workers’ families.\textsuperscript{1232} It viewed African families as including every relative, and marriage and divorce as easy and simple. Harragin concluded that “a children’s allowance is not a practicable position if applied to the whole service, and invidious if only applied to a section,”\textsuperscript{1233} and since European children had to be raised in temperate climates, European officials should be entitled to an expatriation allowance.\textsuperscript{1234}

Harragin’s recommendations were welcomed by the Nigerian administration which had also argued that implementation of family allowances from Nigerian funds would jeopardize the Ten Year Development Plan. This was in spite of the critical need for increased productivity of Nigeria, which was then viewed to be contingent on stabilization of workers, to help the British economy recovery. But the British preferred

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1232] Lisa A. Lindsay, \textit{Working with Gender: Wage Labor and Social Change in Southwestern Nigeria}, Portsmouth, NH, Heinemann, 2003, 92-4.
\end{footnotes}
to sacrifice stabilization and increased productivity in Nigeria because it was feared that payment of family allowance to workers in Nigeria might cause empire wide agitation. Consequently, the Secretary of State for Colonies stopped the granting of any concession on the implementation of family wages, upheld Harragin’s recommendation of separate wage scales for Africans and Europeans and directed that individual colonies should negotiate and fix their wages.¹²³⁵

Possibly to forestall further agitation for a family wage, the government descended heavily on militant trade unionists who were members of the Zikist Movement, proscribed the organization, charged the leadership with sedition, and jailed them. Other union leaders were bribed with overseas scholarships to further weaken the unions and their agitation for family wages and allowances. Simultaneously, the government started to promote regional political and ethnic organizations which helped to break the ranks of the nationalist forces. With disunity in ranks of both the nationalists and trade unionists, it was easy to continue the payment of “bachelor’s wage” to workers until after 1954. Even when the government conceded payment of “family” wages for its employees, these were to be too low “to actually cover family needs.”¹²³⁶

**Conclusion**

The chapter has examined post war social welfare policies and practices in the period leading up to the eve of the devolution of power to nationalist politicians in Nigeria. It was during this period that the pro-welfare dispositions of the late 1930s came to be abandoned in the post war period. This was the result of a combination of factors, but

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¹²³⁵ *Ibid*, 94
¹²³⁶ Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa*, 327
chiefly the need to increase productivity to repay Britain’s war debts and to address nationalist agitation. This necessitated the formulation of new strategies and policies that would simultaneously increase productivity and delink the populace from the nationalist agitators as well as weaken their criticisms of colonialism. The outcome of these was the introduction of development planning and the local government system.

Development planning emphasized infrastructural development for increased economic productivity with partial funding from CDWA, while the local government system was created to co-opt the educated nationalist politicians into participation in the administration in preparation for decolonization. Implementation of both development planning and local government reforms were largely influenced by the Colonial Office and the Nigerian administration officials, particularly the Governors and the officers of Development Branch. The Colonial Office continuously criticized and instructed the local administration on the various revisions of the plan proposals necessary to make them congruent with British interests. These resulted in reductions to British contributions through CDWA funding of the plan and compelled the local administration to increasingly resort to foreign loans. In addition, it increased the Nigerian administration’s contribution to funding the plan and this left less money for provision of social services and welfare. The implementation of the plan suffered from dearth of materials, personnel and inflation which not only disrupted the schedule but further increased the cost. Consequently, the implementation of the plan became haphazard with certain aspects that would have assisted welfare provision being either reduced or abandoned.
The failings of development planning and resultant criticisms of the pace of economic and social development and concomitant agitation and protests forced the administration into fast tracking political reforms. The introduction of the Macpherson constitution and regionalization sucked the educated nationalist politicians into the process of administrative reform. This left the local government system largely populated by illiterate and semi-literate politicians who were vulnerable to manipulation by both the Colonial Officials and the educated nationalist politicians. Lacking adequate resources to undertake its responsibility of providing social services, local governments were encouraged to increase taxes and impose rates and levies on the populace for such services as well as to embark on self-help community development. The result was that only populous urban local governments and a few resource rich councils could fulfill their welfare obligations. This left most local governments without adequate social services.
CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

Barely four years after independence in 1960, Nigeria experienced its second general strike, which was led by the veterans of its 1945 predecessor. A key issue in the 1963-64 general strike was the gross inadequacy of family wages that finally had been granted in 1959 but were described as too low “to actually cover family needs.” Four years later, in 1968, amidst the Nigerian Civil War, Agbekoya peasants in Western Nigeria took up arms against the state in protest against high taxation and poor prices of cocoa in 1968.

If the second general strike was stark evidence of the rapid post-independence collapse of the alliance of nationalist politicians and labour, the Agbekoya peasant uprising provided a bleak commentary on the legacy of colonial development ideology and its minimal commitment to welfare that the post-colonial Nigerian state had inherited. Development, in this incarnation, had never been about addressing poverty and welfare, but rather a means to increase productivity for the benefit of capital, the colonial, and post-colonial states. Post-colonial development continued to be about conserving and “revitalizing” the peasant producer and insulating him and her from urban ideas, while providing the minimal welfare necessary to stabilize the urban work force. In this sense post-colonial development was largely a refurbishment of the pre-WW II colonial development policy of “developing along native lines” in which “voluntary” labour for “community development” was substituted for the forced or “political” labour of

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1237 Larry J. Diamond, *Class, Ethnicity and Democracy in Nigeria: The Failure of Nigeria’s First Republic*, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 17
1238 Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa*, 327
colonialism, and nationalist politicians and local government functionaries for the chiefs and Native Authorities of indirect rule.

In chapter two I surveyed the changes in aspects of the organization of production activities and political administration in the polities and communities that were to form Nigeria. Although many were potentially vulnerable to poverty in the changing circumstances of the late nineteenth century, poverty was not a mass phenomenon. The near absence of landlessness and the access of most people to other means of production enabled most members of the societies concerned to achieve self-sufficiency in their basic needs. Although exploitation and exactions by political heads existed, such taxes and levies were in most cases insufficient to cause impoverishment. Attempts at ruthless exploitation were generally checked by resistance, migration, and the loss of power and authority by political leaders. Although there was a relative absence of specialized welfare institutions, the family, lineage, provincial rural community organizations all played important roles in welfare provision. In addition, religious and social obligations enjoined the wealthy to be charitable. Thos who breached the values and norms of their communities as well as those suffering from dreaded diseases could lose family assistance, community support, become socially excluded and consequently impoverished. A key marker of such poverty was the loss of the ability to participate in the affairs of the community.

In chapter three I surveyed the various mechanisms and processes that transformed the societies of colonial Nigeria as these were brought under British rule. Especially important were the imposition of policies designed to prevent social disintegration that produced the unintended outcomes of impoverishment and
destabilization. Indirect rule changed relations between local rulers and ruled, enhancing the ability of rulers to exact taxes and tribute while simultaneously limiting both their willingness and ability to mitigate poverty. The demand for and monetization of taxes and the increasing monetization of the necessities of social reproduction increased the cash needs of peasant producers making them vulnerable to exploitation by European and Lebanese firms, their African agents, corrupt chiefs and usurious moneylenders. The ensuing entanglement in a vicious circle of indebtedness, coupled with droughts, locust invasion, crop blights, deaths and loss of labour time from forced labour ruptured the peasant reproduction cycle, and led to increasing impoverishment. Pre-colonial social institutions were unsuited to address this new kind of poverty that left many with little alternative to an expansion of export crop agriculture or migration in search of employment opportunities in cities, mines and other centres of wage labour.

Chapter four examined the development of social services in colonial Nigeria before the Second World War. These, mainly in the areas of health and education, were developed to meet the needs of British administration and European firms rather than those of colonial Nigerians. However, the conflicting desires of that colonial regime and missionary agencies resulted in the wider provision of these services than was required by the state and the firms. The fear of the destabilization of African communities, the need to increase agricultural productivity, and the fear of creating expensive commitments to African welfare caused the colonial state to limit African access to social services. This resulted in the increasing inadequacy of the colonial state to deal with the social problems thrown up by the colonial political economy including unemployment and juvenile delinquency.
In chapter five I showed how policies and legislation prohibiting practices deemed repugnant to the British sense of justice and the segregation of people with certain ailments combined with other political and economic policies to create new social problems. These were initially addressed through asylums, homes, and prisons, but such actions were limited by imperial policies of colonial financial self-sufficiency. In the face of this parsimony greater reliance was placed on private philanthropic organizations where available. State intervention in social problems was undertaken only in so far as these threatened the colonial objective of increasing productivity or were directed by the Colonial Office. In the later case, they were more often not implemented on grounds of lack of funds and in order to discourage dependence on state assistance. Empire wide restiveness following the inter-war depression, increased British unemployment and scrutiny of international organizations on the welfare of colonial subjects caused a temporary change in policy and short-lived experiments with limited and piece meal welfare solutions.

Chapter six examined the short-lived moves toward greater welfare provision on the eve of the Second World War that culminated in the CDWA of 1940. However, much of its welfare component was scuttled by the combination of opposition from the Treasury, changing interests and personalities in the Colonial Office, resistance from Governor Arthur Richards and other Nigerian officials, and the impact of the war itself. Consequently, revenue generation from increased productivity became the requirement for any increase in social welfare provision. “Development” became the antidote to poverty, while social welfare became focused on juvenile delinquency and so narrowly defined as to exclude the majority adult working population. This neglect of African
welfare was important in uniting the emergent urban working class and the nationalist intelligentsia in post-war agitation for improved social conditions and self-rule.

In chapter seven, I showed that the abandonment of pro-welfare rhetoric of the immediate pre-war and early war period was a key issue leading to the 1945 general strike. Post-war political reforms and development planning helped shift the burden of welfare to Nigerians by co-opting nationalist politicians. Social welfare provision was largely removed from CDWA funding in the negotiations leading to the creation of the first Nigerian Ten Year Plan for development. The implementation of the plan became the basis of restriction of the use of Nigerian funds for ‘development.’ Social welfare largely became the responsibility of the new local and regional governments who increasingly shifted the burden of welfare onto the poor themselves through “community development.” Community development was, in reality, little more than a post-colonial version of “development along native lines.”
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Appendix 1 - Tables

**TABLE 1**
Impact of the World Depression Upon Principal Nigerian Exports
(Percentage Reductions from Peak to Trough)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Export Value</th>
<th>Unit Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cocoa</td>
<td>54% (1929 &amp; 1931)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm Kernels</td>
<td>64% (1927 &amp; 1934)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm Oil</td>
<td>77% (1929 &amp; 1934)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groundnuts</td>
<td>39% (1929 &amp; 1931)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tin</td>
<td>71% (1929 &amp; 1933)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton (lint)</td>
<td>90% (1929 &amp; 1932)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubber</td>
<td>88% (1927 &amp; 1932)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 2**
Nigerian Terms of Trade, Selected Periods 1911-1945

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Net barter terms of trade (1953 = 100)</th>
<th>Income terms of trade (1953 = 100)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911-1914</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920-1925</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926-1929</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930-1934</td>
<td>58</td>
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<td>1935-1939</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940-1945</td>
<td>42</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
