



Colonial Destruction of Extractive and Manufacturing Industries, and the Spirit of Trade and Commerce in Southern Kaduna-Nigeria, 1900-1960.

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1. Introduction

Southern Kaduna refers to all the non-Hausa-Fulani autochthonous language groups in Kaduna State of Nigeria. They do not form a geo-political entity, but a social and geo-cultural one. In spatial terms, the region covers the geo-linguistic and cultural entity of that was commonly referred to as Southern Zaria or Southern Division or “Pagan Division” of Zaria Province, with parts of former Bauchi, Niger, Nasarawa and Plateau Provinces. Southern Kaduna is not a geo-political expression; but the culture-complex sub-region, which together with Jos Plateau and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, form the heartland of Nigeria. Southern Kaduna is situated within the central high plains of Central Nigeria and is located between Hausa land and the Niger/Benue Valley. It is located between Longitude 7° 45' 20"N to 8° 30' 15"N and Latitude 9° 01' 34"E to 10° 57' 30"E.

The former Southern Division of Zaria Province, Jama'a Division, and the Independent Chiefdoms of Ham, Agoworok, and Asholio of Nasarawa and Plateau Provinces; make up the present land mass of Southern Kaduna. Its present geographical spread was administered as Magaji Jisambo, Woinya, Sarkin Zana, Lere, Chawai, Dallatu, Ma'aji, Zangon Kataf, and etc., Districts of Zaria Province and Aogworok, Mada, Bajju, Ham, Gong, Yug, Ninzo, Yeskwa Districts plus Jama'a Division of Nasarawa and Plateau Provinces. Several parts of this region were so often moved from one province to another, that it is simply correct to conclude that British administrative boundaries of the region were never stable. “Southern Kaduna” is not a political unit, but a socio-cultural unit.

The British understood from day one that the Hausa-Fulani of Zazzau Emirate were different from the Gbagyi of Kaduna town, and other Southern Kaduna indigenous language groups of present day Igabi Local Government, Kaduna North, Kaduna South,

Lere, Kauru and other Southern Kaduna local government areas of Kaduna state. It is this Gbagyi and the other Non-Hausa-Fulani language groups in present day Kaduna state that are referred to in this work as Southern Kaduna. With the exception of few Fulani Colonies or Settlements, the whole area is covered by Pre-colonial autochthonous language groups that share every socio-cultural trait. In fact, evidences from archaeology, linguistics, culture, anthropology, ethnography, etc; has proved that all these languages had the same origin in distant past

In this paper however, an effort will be made to discuss how British Colonialism destroyed the post-colonial extractive and manufacturing industries in Southern Kaduna. This area had a very thriving and blossoming textile industry before the British arrived in 1900. The Gbagyi cloth industries were exported to other parts of Northern Nigeria and beyond. In fact, they were sold in Badagry, Benin Republic, Morocco and Tripoli in Libya. Colonial records also have it that the honey produced here was one of the very best in the world. Unfortunately, the British did nothing to encourage these industries. This was because they wanted to maintain the region as a Colonial food and labour reserve. In fact, in the process, the British discouraged both internal and external trade and commerce that blossomed in the area in pre-colonial times.

1.1 Destruction of Indigenous Extractive and Manufacturing Industries in Southern Kaduna: 1900-1960.

1.1.1 Textile Industry.

“The Ninzam men were tall athletic and wore loin cloth.” These were the words of Blackeney in his 1907 assessments of the ethnic groups in Southern Kaduna. But the major textile industry in Southern Kaduna was controlled by Gbagyi. Gbagyi dyed clothes were one of the most popular clothing used in pre-colonial northern Nigeria and beyond. But the

Gbagyi local industrialists were technically knocked-out by the British at the turn of the 20th century. This was when the market became saturated with imported textile materials. Porch in his assessment of Woinya District (metropolitan Kaduna) in 1912, observed that “Gbagyi cloth is woven at this town and there are some twenty disused pits.” There was a great cloth making industry in Southern Kaduna (particularly in metropolitan Kaduna), that served the aristocratic and other rich classes in pre-colonial Northern Nigeria. But with the introduction of European made textile goods, the Gbagyi dyed cloths took a downward movement.

As early as 1911, in one of Gbagyi settlements (precisely Kudensa area, around Maraba Rido in current metropolitan Kaduna), over 20 disused dye pits were noticed by Porch. This number in a small settlement like Kudensa is a clear proof that the Gbagyi dyed cloths had a massive pre-colonial industry. If it was provided with modern facilities and developed, it could have developed, perhaps into great international industrial and commercial scales. If encouraged, this cloth industry by extension, could have fed the immediate growing markets that were emerging in Kaduna town, other parts of Southern Kaduna, northern Nigeria and beyond. Unfortunately, this industry by means of neglect was destroyed by the British colonialists.

By the end of 1916, imported European cloths were already ousting the local producers completely out of place. This led to a massive reduction in the local manufacture, especially when lack of currency in circulation inflamed the problems they were facing from international competition. Moreover, this was because barter was no longer profitable to the local producers. Currency was now generally more acceptable for all forms of transactions as the economy was becoming more and more monetized. Therefore, many local dyers, tailors, traders and others in the textile industry were thrown out of business.

Thus, they had no alternative than to revert purely to agriculture. “Fortunately”, this was more advantageous to the British who needed basically food and labour from the Peoples of Southern Kaduna. But this development affected the amount of colonial taxes collected from local industrialists. It eventually led to a decrease of colonial revenue from the industrial class. But most dangerously, the Gbagyi and other Peoples of Southern Kaduna that benefitted from the textile industries were the worst hit. Thus, the colonial destruction of the textile

industry had multiple negative impacts on the economies of the region.

1.1.2 Honey Industry.

Honey is a sweet, thick, supersaturated sugar solution produced by bees to feed their larvae and for subsistence in winter. The nectar of flowers is ingested by worker bees and converted to honey in special sacs in their oesophagi. Honey is an important constituent of the diet of many animals, such as bears and badgers, and is put to many uses by humans. Bees were commonly reared for honey in Southern Kaduna before the coming of the British. Honey was the basic sweetening agent before the introduction of sugar into the area. Bees were universally kept in the region. Honey was therefore plentiful from the region.

As a result of the Ninzam Patrols of 1909, Captain Tremearne, the Assistant Resident Jama’a reported the likelihood of a profitable trade in bee waxes being developed by the Niger Company in the region. And owing to the absence or scarcity of Sugar in most of the markets in Nigeria, there was a brisk demand for honey. Therefore, Captain Tremearne was convinced that the Niger Company would make stupendous profits from trading in both honey and bee-wax with the region. However, both government and the Niger Company did not do anything meaningful about these potentialities of the honey industry in the region.

This attitude lingered until Major Larymore arrived in 1911. He described the richness of honey among the peoples using the following words:

Every effort is being made to introduce a bees-wax industry. More bees are kept by our Pagans than by any other tribes in the Protectorate. Vast quantities of honey are consumed, and till now the wax discarded. It is hoped that practically all our Pagan Tribute may before long be paid through this medium. I do not expect to command the £145 per ton which is held to the price of bees-wax, because the kind obtainable is dirty, and possibly inferior, but even if half this can be obtained the advantage to our Pagan communities will be tremendous. It is intended to purchase proper bee-hive apparatus from England which will greatly increase the quantity of wax to be obtained.

It is unique that Major Larymore concluded that gains from the sale of bee-wax alone (not including money from the honey product itself), was enough to pay the whole taxes British imposed on the region. This meant that the honey industry alone was enough to deliver the whole region from poverty. Thus, the

development of such an industry to become a major export item could have been very profitable, but these 1911 plans advocated by Larymore were never executed.

Throughout the period of this research, one could not find a useful explanation for non-execution of such plans. This is because Larymore was still Resident of Nasarawa till he went on leave of absence late 1912 to England and then returned late 1913. This means that Larymore spent most of 1913 in England, and one wonder why he was not able to influence government or international honey dealers to purchase proper bee-hive apparatuses from England for the region. Why did he not contact major industries that produced furniture, sweets, candles, crayons, etc., in Europe that needed the processed beeswax for their products? The unanswered questions and propositions can be endless. The only fitting explanation for the colonial failure to develop or modernise the honey industry, was the fact that they never lost sight of their focus of maintaining the region as a food and labour reserve.

Sciortino was the then Acting Resident Nasarawa Province; in June 1913, he also noticed the richness of the honey industry in the region., but still he ended up making only proposals like his Boss Larymore. In his own words:

Beeswax is being brought in, in increasing quantities but it is very badly prepared. A few instructors to go about among pagan beekeepers would do much in improving quality and increasing the output. At present large quantities of wax are annually thrown away.

He complained about the large quantities of beeswax that were being thrown way. But this time around, the proposal was for few experts to be sent to develop the industries, and not the Larymore's proposal of importing modern bee-hive apparatus, but the experts Sciortino spoke about were never sent to the region. This day that his report is being analysed (2 August, 2013), is exactly one hundred years after same proposal was made! Therefore, it is not today that government officials started making unfulfilled promises to the Peoples of Southern Kaduna.

Moreover, Sciortino's counterpart, Resident of Zaria Province, J.M. Fremantle, that same month was attracted by the rich honey he saw among the peoples, but the best Fremantle could do at that point was to report about the Hausa traders from the north that were coming to conscript the product at take-away prices. According to Fremantle:

Kachia is a market-centre like Zango, of less importance. The commodity most sought after by the traders from the north is honey, bee-keeping being a flourishing industry in the neighbourhood. A new market has been built similar to that at Zango, on a new site.

Therefore, even the little interest shown for the development of this industry by the Residents of Nasarawa, was completely lacking in hearts and attitudes of their counterparts from Zaria. When Fremantle made the above observation when he was personally in Southern Kaduna on tour with Emir Aliyu of Zaria. But expectantly, as Emir Aliyu did in the case of ginger, he felt it was more profitable to order some indigenous Peoples of Southern Kaduna, who were expert beekeepers, to go to Zaria and teach the people in Zazzau Emirate how to trap and keep bees. Some Atyap men became the unfortunate victims of such exploitation.

Laing, the Resident of Zaria was ready to use the taxes of the peoples of the region to sponsor such project in Zaria Emirate. Thus, Laing said accordingly:

I very strongly recommended the employment of a couple of selected men from Zangon Kataf who are experts in the preparation of the beeswax to be sent round the Northern Districts to instruct the people in the preparation of that commodity. They could be paid out Beit-el-Mal funds.

As regards the outcome or success of this project, we were not able to lay our hands on any information, but by 1920 at Jama'a, honey fetched high prices in the market (6d per cash bowl or 4/- per large jar or 'Tukunya'). However, the wax was not still prepared for export and nothing was done to encourage the industry generally.

1.1.3 Mining, Smelting and Blacksmithing.

Mining is discussed in several parts of this work, but here, it is intended to briefly discuss smelting and blacksmithing. The chief pursuers of the smelting iron in Southern Kaduna were the Koro. Iron smelting was always accompanied by blacksmithing. Kuba and Ikwa were some of the remaining strongholds of Koro in Jere District by 1923. This was after some Koro left the district for Niger State, due to extreme colonial exploitation, but almost the entire population of the remaining villages were engaged in iron smelting. Most of the iron won went to Abuja, though some was sold to local blacksmiths. It was marketed in a rough, undressed lump; a little larger than a brick known as "itoro". It was sold for

about 1/- to 1/6, and the average production was three per individual in a monthly basis. Others, who were also given to smelting and blacksmithing in Southern Kaduna, were Ham, Bakulu, Gong, etc.

2. Colonial Destruction of the Spirit of Trade and Commerce in Southern Kaduna: 1900-1960.

Since British policy in Southern Kaduna Region (a food and labour reserve), did not encourage cash crops production and industry generally, the markets in the region targeted food crops alone. For instance, statements like, "A corn market is shortly to be established here."

"The Gbagyi who were the original inhabitants kept themselves away so it was a question of going on pilgrimage by crossing the river Kaduna on their market days to get what was wanted..."

These kinds of reports were common among colonial circles. Everything the British did was to exploit the food and labour economy of the area as already discussed. How such exploitation affected trade, commerce, businesses and development of capital for further investments, is the concern here. It will also emphasise that because food and labour were not heavily cash oriented, the colonial economy in the region was basically disastrous. This is because there is no way to develop any strong market economy without cash in circulation. The only cash acquired by the sale of foodstuffs and labour in the region was to be conscripted by the British as taxes. Thus, all British policies and practices among the Peoples of Southern Kaduna were not healthy for the transition from barter to a cash economy.

A little into the colonial period (1913), while some parts of the region were still offering stiff oppositions against the British wars of conquest, the British understood that the peoples had great keenness for trade. Britons noticed how the peoples heartily welcomed all traders. Sciortino said accordingly that: *The Divisional Officer assures me that among Pagan tribes Europeans and traders are generally received in the most-friendly manner since all have begun now to overcome their early fears.*

But by mid-1913, the overemphasis on food production was already affecting trade and commerce very badly. Sciortino reported this situation thus: *Trade has fallen off during the quarter, this being due to the whole population being busily employed farming.*

This is only temporarily, and it can be asserted that trade is in a flourishing and progressive condition. The Divisional Officer Abuja reports that Gwari Pagans from the Northernmost point of the Province are beginning to take palm kernel to Yewuni on the Gurara on the condition that cash is paid them; apparently the demand for palm kernels is greater than the supply as trading firms have agreed to pay cash for palm kernels but refuse to do so for other products. Native Agents in charge of "Canteens" have instructions from their superiors not to pay cash but force goods on vendors whenever possible. Where no competition exists (at stations where there is only one firm established) cash payment is refused. At stations where there are two or canteens cash is paid when goods are absolutely refused by natives.

The Gbagyi at the most northernmost points of Nasarawa Province at this time were in Janjalla and Kagarko Districts. However, commerce was discouraged by non-cash payment on most of their goods. This of course, limited the circulation of money and accumulation of capital. Goods (finished products) were forced on the peoples. Moreover, even colonial government here was too slow in encouraging the circulation of the new silver coins that was already in use in different parts of Northern Nigeria. By mid-June, the report was still a proposal that Divisional Officers should be allowed to put it in circulation. In Sciortino's suggestions:

There is a fair amount of silver in circulation. Nickel is scarce and is badly wanted. The new Silver Coinage has not yet put in an appearance in this Province. It should be put in circulation simultaneously in all Divisions on a fixed date to ensure its confident reception.

While these bottle neck bureaucracies and lack of swift implementations of new monetary inventions lasted, trade and industry were greatly being discouraged among the peoples. The attitude of the trade companies was badly reported thus:

Divisional Officers reported "With the exception of palm Kernels the Trading Companies pay only pieces of goods for the commodities bought. If the Trading Companies could be forced to pay cash the improvement in trade would be immediate.

Purchase without cash had a multiple impact on the market forces among the peoples. It discouraged the producers and killed the spirit of enterprise. It also stopped the free flow of money in the economy, but socio-economically, barter also encouraged gross exploitation of the producers. They could in no way participate in determining the prices of their products. The pieces of goods given them as payment were

simply tagged whatever prices the traders wanted. Moreover, those who wanted to save capital for future investments were simply deterred. Unfortunately, though Sciortino (Acting Resident Nasarawa) knew that if trading companies were forced to pay in cash, the improvement in trade would be immediate, but he did nothing about the attitude of the trading companies.

Another thorny disadvantage associated with buying in kind was that most trading companies used tobacco as their unit of exchange. Akin to the way opium was forced on the Chinese by the British, tobacco was forced on the peoples by agents of the European Trading Companies. This continued precipitously until some indigenes began to accept the tobacco. This was compulsory because it was tobacco that most trading agents carried about as their units of exchange. At the close of 1913, the peoples began to insist on cash alone. Larymore described the peoples' insistence in these words: "Pagans round the mining areas are awaking to the advantages of trade in food-stuffs, and prefer cash to the tobacco...."

By December 1915, the effect of the First World War resulting in the close of so many mining companies, scarcity of head carriers, etc., had compounded the scarcity of cash. This was drastically slowing down the development of the market economy in the region. Moreover, the trading companies were absorbing rather than disseminating cash and as the situation compounded, it was hitting the markets hard. Sciortino cried out thus:

Greater difficulties than usual have been encountered in some parts owing mainly to the scarcity of silver. This is due mostly to shutting down of a number of Mines and the reduction in the salaries and staff of the few remaining ones ... and the total disappearance of the carrier class etc. These constituted by far the more important means of putting cash in circulation, for though there are five European trading stations in the Province, barter trade prevails and these stations absorb rather than circulate cash.

This barter trade at the end of 1915 was stunting the progress of the market cash economy. It was making it difficult for the Peoples of Southern Kaduna to get cash for taxation. Some had to travel from distant areas, crossing lands and seas to sell farm products, just to acquire cash for taxation. Unfortunately, Britain was fighting the imperialist war. This affected every other sector of the economy that could have relieved the market scarcity of cash. Most of the mining companies were closed on security grounds and head carriers that easily disseminated cash were

scarcer. These factors put together were gradually bringing the market economy in the region to a total collapse. Sciortino had to cry out to the Lieut. Governor thus:

I visited and spent some time in these Pagan Independent Districts during this quarter and found the collection of taxes on the new assessment going on smoothly. The scarcity of cash has caused some delay but to 31st December over 50% of the increased assessment has been realised and at the time of writing Kagoro has actually realised and paid in more than the full assessment, while Moro'a and Jaba were nearing completion. To obtain the necessary cash large numbers of these pagans have gone as far as Naraguta market to sell farm produce, and Jabas and Kajes have actually travelled to Gwari Districts in Zaria and Niger Provinces with hoes, goats and dogs for sale – the last being apparently an article of diet in high demand among Gwari.

By mid-1916, colonial government was already shifting blame on its lack of commitment to the development of cash crops on the attitude of the trading companies. Colonialists claimed that smooth circulation of cash could have hastened the development of the sylvan and cash crops. Traill said: *There is no doubt that there is a very considerable scarcity of cash throughout the Province. From all parts comes the same complaint that cash is hard to obtain. The Mining Companies are doing very little work and the trading firms pay no cash but keep to their barter trade. I have heard the opinion freely expressed that if only they would pay cash for all produce brought in, they would find their turn over largely increased. At present much of the sylvan produce of the Province is neglected, but were cash obtainable, I am convinced that considerable larger quantities would be offered for sale. It is useless to tell the pagan that when he takes produce to a European Trading Station he should insist on cash. Even if he did so he would be told to take himself and his produce elsewhere.*

These were of course, tough challenges for the needed development of the general spirit of trade and commerce among the peoples. Unfortunately, the situations only worsen by the close of the year. The refusal to buy sylvan and other produce with cash, drove trade to its lowest ebb by the close of 1916. The people had no alternative than to pay part of their taxes that year in nickel, and also began to propose and insist on paying taxes in kind.

Surprisingly, the European trading firms carried out barter only with the indigenous peoples, but not with

fellow Europeans. The situation got Sciortino frustrated by the end of 1916. He knew that permanent solution was in the hands of the trading firms, who continued to dampen the spirit of trade and industry among the peoples. He said accordingly: *The dearth of silver currency reported in the 1915 Annual Report is steadily increasing. Practically 30% of the 1916 taxes were paid in nickel and this has caused inconvenience especially in Native Treasuries where only one cash tank is provided for each Treasury. The nickel is being put in circulation again by paying out all salaries with it. If this scarcity continues it is feared that this year part of the taxes will have to be accepted in perishable goods which may cause serious loss in Revenue and will necessitate the reopening of clumsy suspense accounts. European trading firms, represented in this Province by the Niger Company Limited and John Halts Limited totalling five trading "factories," continue to carry on barter with natives only but accept cash for goods sold to Europeans; these firms export cash from the Province. The Government Treasury also export cash from the Province. During 1915 £6, 673.5.8 in silver was transferred from Nasarawa Treasury to Zungeru Treasury (through the Banks) and at the time of writing a further £5,000 was on its way to Kaduna, totalling £11, 673.5.8 within twelve months. Trade is at present at its lowest ebb ... Some relief may be experienced when Railway construction is commenced ... This would of course be only a temporary alleviation; in my opinion the real solution of a very serious difficulty is to cause Trading Firms to abolish barter and introduce cash trade only.*

Trade was really poor throughout the year and showed no sign of improvement up to the close of the year. This difficulty affected all alike, from the large European trading "factories" to the petty trader in the market place. The peoples were discouraged by this, and brought less and less produce to the markets. This also forced the trading companies to reduce the quantities of imported goods.

When this dearth of silver currency coincided with a reduction of local and imported goods that were brought to the market, it resulted in general stagnation of the market economy. This situation ultimately impacted negatively on the general spirit of trade and industry that was being developed in the region. Again, the annual increment of taxation was more and more taking cash out of the region. Government insisted to collect taxation in cash and by government remittances to treasuries outside the region; cash was put into a constant 'exodus' from the region. Therefore, by end of that year, the peoples

began to get discontented with the increasing difficulty of acquiring cash, and argued that they rather hand over a couple of goats valued at about 5/- than travel long distances to sell them for perhaps 6/- and have to hand over 5/- as taxes.

After the capitalist global war in 1919, this aggravated scarcity of silver and nickel was relived a little by the introduction of currency notes. These were, at that point, beginning to be known and accepted in larger towns at or near provincial and divisional headquarters. Peoples in the villages refused the currency note because, though Native Administration accepted it in payment of taxes, and trading canteens also accepted it; only traders in large markets accepted it also. Retailers and other petty traders rejected it. The peoples refused the currency note because it was easily torn and difficult to save. It soon became very mere pulp, or tattered and soiled to the extent that made it unacceptable anywhere. All these challenges affected the development of the free flow of cash, the operations of the principles of free market economy and the general growth of the economy.

3. Conclusion

This work is a deliberate attempt to show that poverty and economic deprivation, as it is found today in Southern Kaduna is principally a British creation. The British were very deliberate in both their policies and practices in the region. They deliberately exploited the region principally as a 'food and labour reserve.' Pre-colonial Southern Kaduna was so rich in extractive industry; that Major H. D. Larymore in 1911 observed:

Every effort is being made to introduce a bees-wax industry. More bees are kept by our Pagans than by any other tribes in the Protectorate. Vast quantities of honey are consumed, and till now the wax discarded. It is hoped that practically all our Pagan Tribute may before long be paid through this medium. I do not expect to command the £145 per ton which is held to the price of bees-wax, because the kind obtainable is dirty, and possibly inferior, but even if half this can be obtained the advantage to our Pagan communities will be tremendous. It is intended to purchase proper bee-hive apparatus from England which will greatly increase the quantity of wax to be obtained.

If money from bee-wax alone could have paid the entire taxes imposed on the region, then one could deduce that a development of the honey industry in its totality could have perhaps delivered the whole region from poverty permanently! But of course,

nothing was ever done to promote and develop this industry. In fact, it is worth noting, that honey was just one among a myriad of several other precious industries that were common in Southern Kaduna. But governmental policies and practices have therefore kept the region in economic destitution. This principle of systematic neglect was to enable the colonialists preach, indoctrinate and force an untoward and ever increasing large scale food production and labour supply from the region to feed capitalist interest elsewhere. For this area to develop, current governments must be radically different in their economic policies.

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