



British Destruction of Sylvan and Cash Crop Industries in Southern Kaduna-Nigeria, 1900-1960

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1. Introduction

From the onset, British colonialists divided the Northern Nigeria protectorate into a number of economic spheres. These include the export crops producing areas, such as Kano, Sokoto, Katsina, and northern parts of Zaria province. Mineral producing areas were Plateau, Bauchi, etc. Livestock producing areas for hides and skins were such provinces like Borno, Sokoto and Kano. While food and labour reserves stretched to encompass areas such as Benue, Plateau, Southern Kaduna and Niger. These were to serve the colonial infrastructure in building roads, bridges, railway, and towns (like Kaduna). They were also food supplying areas for urban centres, minefields, colonial armies, etc. As the British emphasised food production and labour supply, they did same to the detriment of both sylvan crops and booming indigenous industries in Southern Kaduna. In this development, the worst hit sectors of the economy were the sylvan and cash crops industries.

The area referred to as Southern Kaduna is a socio-cultural and geo-cultural unit. In spatial terms, it presently covers the geo-linguistic and cultural entity which was formerly referred to by the British as Southern Zaria Division of Zaria Province, and also parts of former Nasarawa and Plateau Provinces. Southern Kaduna is not a geo-political entity; but the culture-complex sub-region, which together with Jos Plateau and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, form the central 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.

Forests and the potential forest areas were of great importance to the inhabitants of Southern Kaduna. For the people living close to forest or forest prone areas, derivation of name for their dwelling places

was often considered easier. But unique about the Southern Kaduna forests were rich agricultural products; mostly manifested in the ample sylvan crops. Some of them include palm produce, ginger, cotton and rubber. With meaningful agricultural investment, each aforementioned product in its commercial value could have opened up the area to profitable domestic and foreign investments, trade and commerce. However, this was not envisioned by the British colonialists, who were only concerned in maintaining the area as a food and labour reserve. Before the coming of the British in 1900, and its eventual conquest of this region, crop production and industrial sectors of the economy were supplementary to one another; and created surpluses both for reinvestment and other purposes. But by the end of colonialism most of the sylvan crops had already become outright endangered species! While most of the indigenous industries were now facing the threat of direct extinction. Therefore, the argument in this paper is hinged on the fact that the British had no interest in developing the economies of Southern Kaduna. Colonialists made no investments in developing any sector of the economy. Thus; British colonialism hijacked and destroyed the pre-colonial progress recorded in every sector of the economy. The sectors of particular interest here are the sylvan and cash crop industries. These sectors held unusual economic potentialities before the coming of the British.

The major sylvan and cash crops, were rubber, shea-butter, ginger, cocoa, acacia, cotton, palm produce, groundnut, etc. It is worthy to note that none of these was introduced to the area by the British! More so, none ever got any support by the British, except ginger; and even that support was majorly from the 1940s. The thrust of this paper is that, if few or some of these sylvan crops and industries were developed by the British, the 'investment' could have definitely ushered in a lot of economic development to the area. The neglect was because the British were only

interested in maintaining Southern Kaduna as a colonial food and labour reserve to feed the colonial economy in Northern Nigeria. Below is an examination of some of these crops, and how their neglect affected the economies of Southern Kaduna.

1.1 Rubber

A variety of rubber vine called *Ja'a Donko* in Hausa was fairly plentiful in the *Kurmi* (forests) that infested Southern Kaduna and *Awayo* rubber tree was also much. The Ninzo Patrols of 1909, was another British attack to force them into permanent subjugation. During the attack, the Assistant Resident of Jama'a, Captain Tremearne reported some 70 rubber workers in Waiwai, part of Ham area (and in the neighbouring towns and villages). This was contrary to the two or three workers that were formerly known to the government. Tremearne also reported the likelihood of a profitable trade in this product being developed by the Niger Company here. It was in recognition of this that Major H. D. Larymore in 1911 said:

There is a considerable quantity of rubber also to be found in the Eastward portion of the Province. But the Pagan apparently is prejudiced against collecting rubber, and is more than willing to allow outside Hausas to come and take what they want, accepting small presents of salts etc., from them as an acknowledgement.

“What they want” as stated in this paragraph meant that the product was too plentiful in the region. But even Larymore did nothing to encourage the indigenes towards sustaining rubber product. The Ham and others had to allow the Hausa take what they wanted for the reason that there were no trading companies sent to the region by the government. The Hausa traders were either trade agents or middlemen for European companies located in Zaria, and elsewhere. They profited from the presence of the trading companies stationed in most parts of Hausa land. In fact, at this time, the Niger Company was only interested in using the peoples as head carriers for the tin mining syndicates (as discussed in the last chapter).

By 1912, Francis also reported that rubber, as sylvan crop was very common among the Adara, with a similar report given by Kirkpatrick of the Ham and Gong. It is also observed that as it was impossible to get the colonialists to immediately enforce the by-laws of the Forestry Proclamation and as the standard of the purity of rubber remained unfixed in the region, it was not long before this rich sylvan product became an endangered species. This was occasioned

by two factors. First, it was not legally protected by government against bush fire. Secondly, there was no meaningful trade to encourage the cultivation of the sylvan crop in large commercial quantities.

Also, in 1912, the Rubber Plantations owned by the Atsam were specifically attacked by some pests. The attack was more terrible at Badaru. In a single farm the people had planted 116 trees from a variety which was also plentiful on the Bukuru Plateau called “Awoso.” Francis visited these Atsam plantations early in December and found that about 40% of these trees had been destroyed by white ants, but the remainder appeared to be thriving. From this record, no step was taken by Francis to get the Agricultural Department Zaria to protect the remaining 60% from white ants and other dangerous pests.

However, the people continued to struggle and maintained few of their rubber trees into the post-colonial period. By the 1940s, colonial agents were already an established profiteering class on the few surviving crops. Instead of selling directly to the trading companies, Zaria Native Authority sent a Hausa man trained from the Samaru farms to come and purchase the aforementioned product. He was sent as an Agricultural Officer to the Zonkwa experimental farm. In 1943, he bought some 5,500 lbs of rubber from the Llandolphic Vine specie at the Zonkwa market.

This was a greater number compared with the 2,823 he bought in September, and extending to December 1942. But this sylvan crop was never developed into any significant industrial scale. The inhabitants of districts, such as Kachia, Zangon Kataf, Asholio axis, etc., had to keep using local means and methods of growing rubber crop due to government refusal to participate. Only the colonial government had the wherewithal to industrialise the production of rubber in the area. But because they did not, rubber production kept dwindling up to the end of the colonial period.

1.2 Ginger

Studies have shown that ginger, *Zingiber officinale Roscoe*, was commonly grown in Southern Kaduna as cash crop long before British colonialism. A particular variety of the ginger crop, the black or dark-bluish variety was the most popular in the area. This became an important trade commodity in the 18th century through the caravan trade routes that traversed the area of study. The colonial records indicate that by 1911, the colonialists and their agents had taken special notice of ginger in the area. Aliyu, the Emir of Zaria in 1911 met some of the Peoples of

Southern Kaduna in Sarkin Zana and Ma'aji Districts who were experts in ginger production.

He introduced them to the Niger Company and they were treated kindly. But beyond verbal kindness, the Niger Company had thorny problems in pursuing this trade in the region. This was because at that time, ginger sold locally far much more than the Niger Company offered. But experiment with cotton and other cash crop products showed the Niger Company how the certainty of a constant market attracts trade even at a low price. However, the company was not ready to commit itself very meaningfully in the region. In addition, Grier, the Zaria Resident in 1911 did nothing either practically to get the Niger Company to improve the amount they were willing to pay for ginger in Southern Kaduna, or to stimulate serious ginger producers among the indigenes.

However, the Emir of Zaria actually saw this as a golden opportunity to pursue his personal selfish gains and that of the aristocratic corrupt class he represented. Being greatly impressed by the industry and its economic potentials among the people, the emir discussed with the Resident Zaria (Grier) his intension of having an experimental farm of ginger made for him in Zaria town. He proposed that this was to be done by the Ham people that were under Zaria Province.

For this project, the colonial government gave him full support to summon some of the men to Zaria town for the purpose earlier mentioned. But influencing the Resident to stimulate the Niger and perhaps other companies to pick up the trade and expand the industry among the peoples was not in the Emir's interests. This would only bring cash and the accumulation of capital to a people he had no moral or economic commitment. The peoples were simply subjected to him by the British, and he saw nothing wrong in exploiting them. Therefore, their economic empowerment and development were of little or no importance to him.

Furthermore, there were so many trading companies in Zaria that were directly and aggressively fighting themselves for want of business environment in Zaria town. There were at least three vibrant European trading firms that were well established, and others were also teeming in. The rivalry among them reported since from the June Report had continued into the September quarter. The Emir had to place *dogarai* on the roads to prevent their Native African Agents from interfering with the free access of traders with produce to any firm they chose to go to.

The *dogarai* were to also stop them from directly fighting themselves. Despite several warnings by Grier, early in September 1911, the matter came to a head. The European traders took to fighting among themselves on the public roads defying the pleas of their African Agents and interventions of the *dogarai*. They brought complaints against one another, and Mr. Pike (Government Officer in charge of trade), summoned and charged them with offence. He therefore found them guilty and fined them as a punitive measure, but efforts were not made to find better trading regions for them even within the same province.

Fremantle (Resident Zaria Province), testified that in 1913, "The Jaba tribe are the most advanced, and never give trouble. Their special industry is ginger." The Ham that were summoned by the Resident Zaria to start the experimental farm for the emir Aliyu arrived in 1914. Migeod reported their efforts thus:

A small plantation of this was started by the Emir on his experimental farm at Zaria. Some Jaba Pagans, in whose country ginger grows abundantly, were got up to show the Zaria people how to cultivate it; but it is too early yet to prophesy as to the probable result.

It seemed like Migeod had no high hopes for a growing ginger economy. He refused to 'prophesy,' and that became the last time the experimental farm was mentioned in the records we were able to lay our hands on. This most likely meant that the result was completely negative. We are not sure if the emir and his subjects paid their Ham neighbours any price for their labour or for royalty rights. But since the crop failed in Zaria, the Emir found no ground in encouraging the British to stimulate the Ham into great professionalism, innovations, commercialisation and industrialisation of the product. The production of ginger continued with local seeds, skills and methods, until around 1930.

A.C. Francis wrote that in 1918, "The Jaba of course, go far afield to trade ginger – even to Zaria." In this sense, the Ham had to go that far because the Hausa middlemen class was not ready to pay anything meaningful for the crop. Moreover, the government insistence that they should only produce food and supply labour, and yet pay taxes in cash, made it compulsory for them to cross lands and sea to market their cash crops, which readily put little cash in their hands. By 1922, ginger was not only extensively cultivated among the Ham, but was beginning to become popular among the Bakulu and Bajju. Brice-Smith advised the Resident Zaria that the industry worth an increased attention from the colonial government, but again nothing was done about it.

In fact, this same suggestion from Brice-Smith did not arouse serious interest from the government until the close of the 1920s, by this time, major railway construction works were over in the area of study. So, the British knew that apart from providing labour to the tin mines, they had to get newer ways of extracting labour from the area. Thus, the British now remembered the same ginger they refused to encourage from the beginning of the colonial period. Worthy of note is the Baro-Kano and Bauchi-Light Railways which were in use before 1910 and 1914 respectively. So, the colonial government's inability to give attention to ginger until late 1920s was not due to lack of transport networks. It was just an attempt to maintain their focus of exploiting the region as a food and labour reserve.

It was not until the close of 1928 that the investigations, with regard to developing an export trade of ginger in the area was really given attention. An instructor was then stationed at Kachia for some weeks, primarily for the purpose of giving demonstrations in ginger curing. The farmers there showed considerable interest of course, and government was very glad about the great prospects of starting a lucrative trade. In all, 1,600 people were taught to cure ginger using the Jamaica peeling method. The Native Administration that year arranged to buy 5 tons of the finished products for examination at the Imperial Institute. Although favourable reports were received already on the small samples previously sent to England for examination by the brokers the previous year.

By the following season (1929), over six tons of cured gingers, including a commercial sample of nearly four tons were shipped to England for examination and valuation by the Imperial Institute. The latter parcel was mainly classed as grade 1 ginger, and bought in the producing areas for £29 a ton. But a small quantity still classed as grade 1, was paid for at the rate of £39 a ton. These consignments were sold in England for £65 and £67.10.0 a ton respectively, with Jamaican ginger at £75-£100, and other West African at £63 per ton. Fresh "plant" ginger was sold same year in the producing areas at an average price of about £1.8.4 a ton, and it took six tons of this to produce one ton of the cured product.

Experimental and demonstration plots were started in June 1929 at Chikun, Kagarko, Bishini and Jere. New seeds from the farms were to be distributed among local farmers the following season. Demonstrations in curing were still in progress, and a market at Kwaturu in Kachia District was to be opened early in

January 1930. Government was then very optimistic about the future of this crop in the region. Thus, by the end of 1930, demonstration plots showing the improved methods of cultivation had been laid out side by side with indigenous crops in eight villages in Kachia District, two villages each in Kagarko, Bishini and Chikun Districts. In Lere, the conditions were found unsuitable and the work was abandoned, but selections from ginger obtained the previous season, which showed the best curing, were now planted in a special farm at Kwaturu in Kachia for further selection and eventual distribution to improve existing crops.

By the end of 1931, the statement of exports for three years viz: 1929-1931 were as follows: 1929 - 13,859 lbs, 1930 - 26,127 lbs purchased by United African Company alone and 1931 - 34,048 lbs. At this time, ginger farming was now firmly established in Kachia and Ham districts. It was also becoming very popular in Kagarko, Zangon Kataf and Bishini districts. The ginger was purchased by Zaria Native Administration, and consigned to the Imperial Institute. The price obtained by Zaria Native Administration was £36 per ton.

However, another major corrupt practice introduced in 1931 was that the Peoples of Southern Kaduna were not allowed to directly sell the product to the trading companies but through mediation. This introduction of the middleman in keeping with the indirect rule system, led to so much economic abuse of the peoples. In this context, any Hausa-Fulani, who had any little capital from the sale of cotton or other cash crops encouraged by the British, came and posed himself as a Native Authority agent, and price the ginger at whatever amount he wanted. And any person who refused to sell was reported to the Alkali, charged for hoarding and fined. This completely discouraged the indigenous trading class that was seriously developing. Since the latter had no legal and morale to pose themselves also as government officials, they were simply ousted out of the business cliques.

Moreover, special varieties of ginger were obtained in same 1931 from the West Indies, but were experimented at Maigana and not within Southern Kaduna. One variety in particular was excellent. And one government Mallam and two Native Administration Mallam were employed in demonstration of sowing and curing ginger in the area. It is also interesting to note that the new special specie was shared in the area of study, because it was not going to survive in Zaria emirate.

By 1946, it was discovered that:

The crop increases annually, and an increase of 40% in the area planted has been estimated in 1946. There is a considerable demand in local markets for Zaria ginger which is found in the distant Provinces of Sokoto and Borno, the favourable local market price drawing the uncured ginger away from the export buying centres at Zonkwa and Kachia.

Note that Zaria ginger above referred to the ginger produced by the Peoples of Southern Kaduna that were exploited under Zaria Province. We have said and it is a common knowledge that the crop did not survive in the northern parts of Zaria Province. And since the Hausa-Fulani colonial agents offered meagre prices at Zonkwa and Kachia, the peoples preferred selling the product to local Hausa traders from the neighbouring provinces of Sokoto, Kano, etc. The farmers travelled to trade at distant places to avoid the colonial created profiteering Hausa-Fulani class that was operating in the region.

Thus, if the ginger industry was developed early in the region and the Zaria Native Administration did not introduce the profiteering middlemen class, it could have helped in diversifying the economy of the region. This could have of course put substantial cash in the hands of the people and delivered them from poverty or economic deprivation. But, since colonialism could be likened to an armed bandit, it robbed the economic resources of the region with the worst meagre sorts of compensation.

1.3 Shea-Butter

M. P. Porch in 1911 assessed Woinya District that is, part of present-day Kaduna town, Kujama, Katari, etc. The areas were inhabited by Gbagyi and Adara communities. Porch was greatly impressed by the prosperity of the Gbagyi people. He observed that: *As in Jisambo's District I was greatly astonished at affluence of the Gbagyis. Whereas Jisambo Gbagyis put their money on their backs, Woinya's Gbagyis buy meat. Most of the towns in this District own from five to twenty bullocks each: these cattle will be killed during the rainy season when meat from Fulani sources is no longer procurable.*

Jisambo District referred to above, also basically covered parts of present day Kaduna town. These are Gbagyi areas and the northernmost parts of Southern Kaduna region derogatorily referred to as "Pagan" Districts in the colonial arrangement. But by September same 1911, in a separate report, Grier (Resident Zaria Province) reported that Mr. Francis was beginning to take interest in the wide presence of shea-butter among the Peoples of Southern Kaduna.

In fact, Grier reported that Francis was successful in getting the Adara of Sarkin Zana District to take the shea-nuts to Kaduna station for sale. They were conducted by a man nominated by the Acting District Head. One can imagine the stress the Adara passed through to convey such products to Kaduna town. This of course was not a strategic way of encouraging trade in shea-butter. However, the peoples, who were at the mercy of British soldiers, had no alternative than to accept whatever was given to them in the colonial arrangement.

Moreover, Porch claimed in his report of travels around the region that, "The object of my tour was to ... enquire into and encourage the shea-butter industry." But the subsequent sentences and a close look at the whole report of his travels showed that his interest was practically different. He wrote in his own words that:

Every town in the district was visited by me and from individual house-holders I obtained a statement of the number of their hoes. The result shows an increase of 30% on the 1909-10 Assessment.

The phrase shea-butter industry did not appear again in that report. What concerned his mind was the issue of tax assessment and raising enough labourers in the region for the construction of Baro-Kano-Railway. So, his whole energies were channelled into assessing individual houses to increase the number of tax paying individuals. He also gave some compensation to local rulers that did well in labour conscriptions for the railway construction. Thus, the abundant existence of the shea-butter industry in the area could not influence the British colonialist to encourage and expand this industry into any meaningful commercial capacity in the region.

Therefore, since shea-butter had no meaningful economic value in the region at that point, Adara and some other ethnic groups in the region collected the nuts and extracted the butter for their own direct consumption. Around the same time that Porch reported such a dismal situation in Zaria, Sciortino was also reporting for June 1913 in Nasarawa Province. He stressed that the Shea nuts were only just ripening and a good harvest was assured, but one unfortunate thing was that the trees were often attacked by pests. Sciortino and other colonialists who observed these dangerous pests neither sent agricultural experts nor instructed the Divisional Officers to encourage the trading companies to sell relevant insecticides to the peoples. Even though the major pest was not rampant in 1913, it was a constant threat in other years. Though the pest was an article of diet among the Nupe, among the Peoples of

Southern Kaduna it was not. Sciortino wrote accordingly about this pest, stating that:

The caterpillar which destroys the foliage and young shoots of the shea-tree not having been much in evidence this year. This caterpillar is an article of diet in Nupe Districts; it is dried and sold in markets being called "Mani-mani" by Nupes.

As destructive as this pest was, it was not the real challenge that confronted the shea-butter industry that year among the Gbagyi in metropolitan Kaduna. Fremantle reported that it was the attitude of the British colonialists that affected the Gbagyi in their effort to sustain large shea-butter production. This was compounded by the fact that colonial government only encouraged the production of cotton and groundnuts in Zaria Province. Though the latter was not much encouraged by government in Metropolitan Kaduna, the Gbagyi, whose cotton made their textiles prominent in pre-colonial times, partly took into the sale of cotton apart from their foodstuffs. This was especially because they could sell cotton at a higher rate. Thus they began to give it more attention than anything else.

Therefore, in 1913 much attention was not given to shea-butter production by the Gbagyi in metropolitan Kaduna, but this was also because they were afraid of the brutality of the colonial troops stationed at Kaduna town. Some of the soldiers were molesting the indigenous citizens of metropolitan Kaduna. Therefore, the shea-nut season at Kaduna was very poor that year. Mr. Chaytor told Fremantle that the Niger Co. Agent there could only purchase nine tons as compared to 100 tons in 1912. Fremantle reported this dismal situation thus:

As regards produce, there has been a decrease in shea-nuts and hides and an increase in ground-nuts and cotton. Two reasons are given for the failure off in the shea industry, the Gwaris' fear of the troops and small-pox.

However, the crop still survived in so many other parts of Southern Kaduna. A. C. Francis observed in his assessment report that the shea trees on farms and cleared ground were laden with fruit. He observed that this was because those good ones have been for a few years protected from bush fires and hence have had a chance to mature. Thus, the shea trees he saw on the uncleared bush on the other hand were stunted in size and their limbs charred. The fruit borne on their topmost branches were only from those branches that evaded scorching by fire. Interestingly, Francis procured from the Niger Company at Kaduna some shea nuts in the exact form in which Niger

purchased them, namely boiled and then dried with the outer husk removed.

Francis, distributed samples of these nuts in Sarkin Zana District (Adara areas near Kaduna town), and told them that on taking loads of similar nuts to the company at Kaduna they would be paid in cash for same. He further promised to send a Government Messenger to accompany them to the District Chief at Kaduna. He endeavoured to impress on the Adara that with proper care, each female Shea is capable of producing nuts according to its size of annual value of 6d upwards and he felt that once they realise what an asset these trees really were and when the conditions of transport to the market were improved that the Adara would bestow more care on the trees than they did at that moment.

It was however incomprehensible why Francis did not immediately recommend the stationing of a forestry officer here to stimulate the production of the cash crop to a great commercial scale. From his report, the crop was "common throughout the entire District." It is clear that if there was encouragement, shea-butter alone would have been enough to transform the economy of the Adara and other ethnic groups in the area, but neither the colonialists nor the trading companies had the interest in really developing the cash crop industry in the area. One other thing at least Francis could have done to encourage the people was to stimulate the Niger Company to send or station a marketing officer in the region, but both the colonial and oral sources proved that nothing was done by government to support the development of this product.

1.4 Tobacco

Southern Kaduna had a flourishing home-grown tobacco industry before the arrival of the British. The most popular areas were the Gong, Ayu, Ham, Adara and Agworok country sides. A few ethnic groups used brass pipes to smoke their home grown tobacco; but the majority used wooden pipes of their own made. A daily market was held at the Adara town of Girku in 1911, and was well attended by Adara and Hausa. "A good class of tobacco grown by Adara at Gefe is sold at this market." In Wali's District, Gefe appeared at that time to be the most important of the Adara towns. Extensive tobacco-plantations were made on the river banks. The tobacco leaves after being cured were twisted and wounded round sticks about four feet long. In this form, it was taken by the Adara to the Girku and Rubu markets where it was readily bought by Hausa traders. Porch imposed a tax of 1/- per plantation in 1911. The tax was paid by the

Adara people immediately. Moreover, it was in this vicinity that Porch noticed a great complete indigenous, scientific agricultural innovation by the Adara of Rimmo. He stated that Rimmo was founded by the help of the Adara of Gefe, but the land- south of this town was to a great extent low lying and swampy. The people of Rimmo, however, evolved a system of artificial drainage and transformed their marsh lands into a first class agricultural land.

But regarding the value of the tobacco crop in some parts of Southern Kaduna that were in Nasarawa Province in 1913, its importance was the subject of a special report by Mr. Cadman. His scheme for the establishment of a tobacco industry in the area was submitted to His Excellency, the Governor Northern Provinces, under Sciortino's NO.1235/13 of 6/5/1913. Sciortino felt that if this was well-thought of, it should be taken up before the American Trust reached Northern Nigeria, but this scheme was definitely not followed through. However, by 1921 in Agworok District, "on an average each compound had an eighth of an acre of tobacco." But like other sylvan crops in the region, the product was also not developed.

1.5 Palm Produce

One of the most important sylvan products around the area of study was the large number of palm oil trees. Although, found in most parts of the region, the most important habitat of this product was the Yug area. It was also found in large number among the Ham, Gbagyi, Gong, Ninzo, Anemuen, etc. in fact, the Yug were generally rich and stayed at home because they had palm oil at their doors, but up till 1912 there was no form of effort showed by the British to encourage this crop. All the 1907 assessment reports from Nasarawa and Zaria Provinces recognised the great potentials in this crop, but it was never mentioned again in any of the Annual, Half Yearly and Quarterly Reports of any of the two provinces until 1912. In fact, even in 1912 it was only reported by M.P. Porch, the Resident Zaria,

but all he could say in that Annual Report was "PALM-KERNELS. There is a good district in the south." This indifference and inactivity was simply consistent with the general lack of interest in all the rich sylvan crops that were in the area.

However, in 1913, Sciortino of Nasarawa Province reported that all trading posts reported an increase in palm kernels purchased that year. Again, there was nothing to show that the colonial government was committed to improve palm kernels product in the region as cotton and groundnuts were encouraged in Abuja and Zaria Emirates. These were some of the immediate neighbours of the Peoples of Southern Kaduna in the colonial arrangement. In fact, Cadman reported that a stranger, settling among Yug might see a nice piece of untilled ground and farmed it, but he was not allowed to touch the palm trees on this land. The people would not sell the rights of harvesting palm oil to any stranger. The government, on the other hand, had no similar commitment to the industry. All energies were channelled towards massive propaganda for food crop production and labour supplies to the colonial economy.

The non-indigenes resident in Yug by 1916 were a few Hausa, who had settled near Amanshi and comprised of 15 males, 13 females and six children. The commercial wealth of the Yug depended not just on their farms, but on the number of palm trees produced by the inhabitants. The palm trees were of two classes viz the palm trees belonging and inherited by the individual; and the palm trees which grew in bush land. Such 'wild' growing palm trees did not belong to any member of the community. However, any member of the village had the right to any palm tree in the bush land he cared to work in; but the palm trees on the tilted farms were carefully guarded and preserved. Cadman made an attempt to ascertain the value of the palm oil of each individual. The following villages in Yug District were visited in 1916, and a record made of the number of palm trees growing on the farm of each male inhabitant of the village. The following figures were arrived at:

Table 13. Palm Oil Trees Statistics in Yug District in 1916.

S/N	VILLAGE	ADULT MALE POPULATION	PALM OIL TREES ON FARM
1	Tigwam	46	2751
2	Gwadai	22	875
3	Tayu	47	2031
4	Bokane	18	690
5	Gokwi	42	946
TOTAL	5	175	7293

Source: NAK: File NO: 541p/1916 "Nasarawa Province: Ayu District-Jama'a Emirate Assessment Report 1916." By H. Cadman. In: *Simple List of Records Related to Historical, Anthropological and Social Studies among Provincial Administration Record Groups Kaduna vols. 1 & 2.* (Ed) by E.J. Alagoa. 1962. Pp. 23-26.

Since the statistics above were taken among five villages in 1916, when the Yug area was “composed of 21 villages,” it would mean that the whole region on the average had over 30,000 palm trees on their farms alone. It is stated that palm trees were also plentiful in their bushes. It would therefore, mean that Yug area alone must have housed about or over 50,000 palm trees in 1916. Yet, this could not make the colonialists to transform these great potentialities into large industrial scale to attract foreign investors. The quantity and quality of this sylvan product in Southern Kaduna was enough to attract the government to link these native producers with international marketers, like those that patronised the product in eastern Nigeria.

Moreover, in Cadman’s statics, he stated roughly an average of 42 trees per adult male on their farmlands alone. One tree carefully worked was worth in palm kernels and oils between 4/- to 7/- per annum to the owner. Hence taken an average of 5/- per tree, every male individual might view his palm trees as worth an annual turnover exceeding £10, per annum from farming palm trees alone. Adding the gain gotten from those in the bush, one could have realised an average annual turnover of about £15 per annum, i.e. for each male in 1916. Therefore, if this crop alone was encouraged, it could have brought related agro-allied industries to the region, and led to the massive generation and accumulation of cash and capital among the Peoples of Southern Kaduna.

Even when Francis tried to encourage this crop in 1918, he was not very committed about it. It was the few days that he was in the Adara and Ham country that he discovered that the people had begun a systematic planting of the seeds of these trees with the idea of later transplanting to their farms at latter date. Therefore, he told the chiefs to ask each town to plant 500 seeds every year. Reporting this assessment in his capacity as Acting Resident of Zaria, he did not make any recommendations to the Lieutenant-Governor Northern Provinces to send experts from the Agricultural department as a way of encouraging the cultivation of the cash crop in Southern Kaduna. But this initiative he saw among the Ham and Adara, seemed to have had some positive influence on him.

Although he did nothing to encourage the Adara and Ham, he was tempted to start an experimental farm that would encourage the Gbagyi, who inhabited Kaduna town, and their Adara neighbours. These peoples actually had plenty of oil-bearing palms, but through the government policy of non-encouraging, there was no visible sign to boost its cultivation. He reported that:

With a view to encouraging the Gwaris and natives near Kaduna where the conditions appear suitable for the cultivation of the bearing palms an experiment has been made with seed of the ‘tin shelled’ variety procured by the Acting Senior Conservator of Forest, Zaria, from Ibadan. Nurseries were made and approximately 40 lbs of seed (numbering about 4,000) was planted out during May last. It is at present too early to prophesy whether this experiment will be a success or not for it takes, I am told, at least six months for the seed to germinate. If they germinate, the young plants will be moved into the “Kurmis” where they will be looked after by and become the property of the community.

Good idea but no mention of this project was made again in Zaria Provincial reports! The Kurmi (forest) which were occupied by the Peoples of Southern Kaduna, indeed were good grounds. But again, nothing came out of this proposal.

However, by 1921, the production of palm oil in the region was beginning to increase, especially in Kaje-Kagoma-Yeskwa and Ayu Districts. The people made every effort to foster its growth and development. For instance, Amadu, Sarkin Yug, commanded an immense amount of respect in his District. He was appointed District Head by Cadman in 1916 to replace the promiscuous and ineffective Hausa-Fulani that was initially imposed on the Yug by the British, as the Emir’s appointee, but Amadu was a direct descendant of the hereditary chiefs of Yug. He was a charismatic young, energetic and the 20th reigning chief of Yug in the direct line of succession. In 1921, Captain Traill found him to be one of the most enlightened and intelligent District Heads in Jama’a Division. Amadu did everything in person to foster the palm oil industry found in the area.

Captain Traill commended his efforts, saying accordingly:

The staple trade of the Ayu District is Palm Oil. This trade is increasing yearly and the number of palm trees is practically inexhaustible. The Pagans are still exploited largely by the Hausa middlemen although in some instances they are beginning to dispense with the services of the latter. Sarkin Ayu is fully alive to the advantage of direct trade and is bending all his energies in that direction.

Although, the people were seriously cheated by the Hausa-Fulani middlemen, it is glaring that government on his part did nothing to encourage trading companies or international industrialists to become involved in the trade just as the government

did in eastern Nigeria. As a result, palm trees, as recent as 1921 in most parts of the region were “neither used for making palm oil or wine to any extent.” That is, the full potentials of this sylvan crop were not meaningfully developed. In fact, even the Yug were discouraged by lack of good trading partners, business incentives, etc. They were forced to carry by head their produce and trekked to distant places, just to have them sold and acquire fair prices. Captain Lace in his report on cash crop products reported their effort thus:

The most promising trade in the Division is the Palm Oil trade of Ayu District. This is assiduously fostered by the Ayu pagans and is assuming quite imposing proportions. Although they have not yet altogether discarded the use of the ‘middleman’ the pagans are fully alive to the advantages of direct trade and may be seen carrying their wares so far afield as Jama’a, Moro’a and Jos.

Market availability and prices were completely discouraging. So, the peoples had no alternative than to cross lands and seas to sell their produce. Surprisingly, the Niger Company then had a store in Fadan Kagoro under a native-foreign Clerk, who paid his tax in Jama’a Town. The chief products bought by this Company were hides, beeswax, and flake and balatu rubber. Of course, of all these there was only a very small quantity brought in. The reason was that in that particular vicinity, the products were not the most popular cash crops. Their marketing strategies were poor and unprofessional. Also, the cash offered for all produce brought in were very low: - 4d. a 1b hides and 5d a 1b rubber. The prominent cash crops e.g., palm oil in this particular neighbourhood of Agworok were not purchased by the Niger agents.

The practice of lack of encouragement from the colonial government was so bad that it was not until 1950 that a palm oil crusher was acquired for Yug district. Unfortunately, it arrived rather too late that season to be given a fair trial. Some trial crushing was later carried out. But the government did not follow this innovation through in their attempt to develop the industry in Yug and other parts of the region. Even though the Yug considered the labour put into local methods of palm oil processing as excruciating, but they had no alternative means of production. It is rather too sad to say that we have observed that these local means and methods are still in use till date in the region.

1.6 Cotton

Mr. Migeod in charge of the Jama’a Division in 1910 reported that:

The cotton crop grown on the Government experimental farm at Jama’a is a failure – due entirely to the seed having received and planted too late in the year. I saw some wonderful cotton plants in the Mada District. The Mada are more likely than any others in the Division to take up seriously the cultivation of cotton.

The Mada cotton like those of the Gbagyi, Koro, etc was home grown, but this was never encouraged. On the contrary, by the end of 1913, “A hand gin had been sent to Abuja.” And by March 1914, some 50, 000 lbs of cotton seed had been bought, and four hand gin were at work in non-Southern Kaduna parts of Nasarawa Province. It was at the end of June same year that an experiment was being made with cotton on the Agworok Plateau land, which was approximately 300 ft. above sea level.

But again this was not followed through. This research is by nature not comparing the colonial experience of Southern Kaduna, with that of others, but the kind of efforts and energies invested by the British in Zaria Emirates and Abuja countryside leaves one wondering why the case was completely different in the area of study? But again, the answer will be that the British focus was to maintain the region as one of the colonial food and labour reserves in Northern Nigeria. The British also invested too much on the cotton production in Abuja and Zaria Emirate. So the proceeds from these places gave them every reason to insist that Southern Kaduna should only supply food and labour to the colonial economy.

1.7 Groundnut

In Southern Kaduna, groundnut was commonly cultivated in large quantities before the coming of the British colonialists. For instance, it was discovered in the early period of colonialism that in many areas, as “in the neighbourhood of Karshi, ground nuts were grown on an extensive scale.” With little government interest, this sylvan crop could have become a prominent cash crop, but as early as 1913, the market prices were too low and completely frustrating. In effect, fluctuation in prices was discouraging to the producers of the crop. In June 1913, Sciortino reported this situation in the following lines:

Increasingly large crops of ground-nuts are being grown it having got about that there is a demand for these. The price is paid low – practically the same per ton as in Kano. But whereas in Kano cash is paid, on the Benue only goods are offered in exchange. This means that the ground-nuts bought on the Benue cost about half the price of those

purchased in Kano and along the rail, and their transport is also much cheaper.

The Baro-Kano Railway was already in operation in the country before 1913. Thus, one sees no reason why the crop was encouraged by the British in Kano, and not here. However, the report at the end of the year was still, "greatly crops of ground-nuts have been grown." Thus, groundnut cultivation was still maintained among the peoples, but with meaningful government encouragements, there could have been taller groundnut pyramids in the region, perhaps better than Kano.

2. Conclusion

Southern Kaduna forms part of the heartland of Central Nigeria. It has states like Niger, Plateau, Nasarawa and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, as its neighbours. The British colonialists divided this area and dominated it under Zaria, Plateau, Nasarawa, Bauchi and Niger provinces. It was not until 1957 that the British brought the entire area under Zaria Province. Thus, the entire area is now located in Kaduna State of Nigeria. The Colonial experience had far reaching socio-political and economic impact on the area. In this paper, an aspect of the economic exploitation has been ex-rayed.

This area houses the Nimbia forest; perhaps the largest man-made forest in West Africa. This forest was founded by the colonialists, seeing that the area was largely forested before the arrival of the British in 1900. But in an attempt to secure food to feed the Colonial establishment in Northern Nigeria, and forced labour for the mining industry in Southern Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa and Niger; the British systematically designated Southern Kaduna as a food "Colonial Food and Labour Reserve.". It was from here that came most of the food that fed the Northern Nigeria and the labour that tin and other minefields in Central Nigeria. The most popular minefields were the Plateaus and some parts of Southern Kaduna.

Consequently, as most human and other economic potentialities of the region, were invested into supplying food and labour to the Colonial economy in Northern Nigeria., the natural potentials that the forests in Southern Kaduna contained, were systematically abandoned and eventually destroyed. This is the major contention of this paper. According to the Nigerian National Assembly records, Southern Kaduna currently produces the second largest supply of ginger to the global market; coming after India alone. But research has shown that if this sector was properly invested on from the Colonial period,

Southern Kaduna had and still has the potential of becoming the largest supplier of ginger to the global market. Groundnuts, Palm and Palm produce, Rubber, Acacai, Shea-Butter, Tobacco and Cotton have also been discussed in this paper. The Onus now lies on the current Nigerian government, to attempt to develop these Sylvan cash crops to an international industrial scale in Southern Kaduna.

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